

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Minute of the Meeting held on 23 February 2016

Present: Professor P McGeorge (Convener), Dr A Arnason, Dr T Baker, Ms K Christie, Professor B Connolly, Professor S Davies, Mr P Fantom, Dr G Mackintosh, Professor J Masthoff, Professor K Shennan, Professor R Wells, Dr R Bernard (Clerk), Miss E Hay (Minute Secretary)

Apologies: Ms G Clark, Mr C Duncan, Mr L Fuller, Professor W Naphy, Mr D Philips, Dr B Scharlau, Ms P Spence, Dr S Tucker

EXPLANATION AS TO WHY WE REQUIRE A MODERATION PROCESS

(copy filed as UCTL/230216/001)

- 1.1 The Committee noted the paper on the *Explanation as to why we Require a Moderation Process*, following the decision taken at Senate to return the process to Committee for discussion. The Committee noted that the issue had been thoroughly discussed at meetings of the College Teaching and Learning Committees (CTLCs), the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and at a joint meeting of the Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) Committees.
- 1.2 The Convener, informed the Committee that, following the action taken by Senate, four options (as listed below) were open to the Institution:
 - (i) a return to the Moderation procedures in place prior to November 2015
 - (ii) a revised Moderation Procedure be developed and passed through Committee
 - (iii) all scripts (at levels 3 and above, contributing to degree classification) be double marked
 - (iv) all scripts (at levels 3 and above, contributing to degree classification) be single marked only
- 1.3 Members of the Committee agreed that point (i) could be ruled out of discussion as it represented an unfair system to students following the introduction of the use of a Grade Point Average. Members of the Committee further agreed that point (iv) could also be ruled out of discussion on the basis that it did not represent a Quality Assured method of marking.
- 1.4 Members of the Committee noted option (iii) and the implications this requirement would have across the Institution. Members of the Committee agreed that a revised moderation procedure, option (ii) was the appropriate approach to take.
- 1.5 The Committee acknowledged the importance of highlighting the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education in explaining why the University required a moderation process and, more specifically, a process different from that in operation prior to November 2015.

PROPOSED MODERATION PROCEDURES

(copy filed as UCTL/230216/002a, UCTL/230216/002b and UCTL/230216/002c)

- 2.1 Members of the Committee acknowledged the paper as presented by Professor Shennan detailing changes to the paper previously considered by the Senate, as made following consultation at CTLCs, QAC and the join UG and PG meeting. Members of the Committee considered each point in turn.

2.2 The key changes as suggested and agreed by the Committee can be summarised as follows:

- Members of the Committee agreed to the inclusion of 'and disciplines' within the introductory text to the process. Members of the Committee agreed that the text should be amended to state that more extensive moderation procedures put in place would require the approval of the QAC.
- Members of the Committee noted concern raised at the joint meeting of the UG and PG Committees regarding the requirements of moderation and the ability of Schools to meet the deadline for the return of results. Members of the UCTL noted this concern and acknowledged that this was not a topic for discussion at this time. The Committee did, however, note the importance of alternative methods of assessment in addressing this issue.
- Members of the Committee agreed to the revision of terminology within the paper to reflect 'representative' rather than 'random' sampling. The Committee agreed that the sample taken should be representative of all CGS grades award.
- Members agreed to the revised wording of point 3.1, as proposed by the QAC, to reflect the intent that this covers independent learning (such as a dissertation or project) and not all assessments.
- Members of the Committee acknowledged the revisions as made to section 4, agreeing with the removal of the former 4.1.
- Members of the Committee acknowledged the amendment to the revised section 4.3 to define 'major disparity' as 3 or more alphanumeric grades. Members of the UCTL agreed to amend section 4.1 to reflect 'broad agreement' as within 2 alphanumeric grades. Members of the Committee noted agreement in this change and also to the removal of 'generally' from the text, acknowledging its ambiguity.
- Members of the Committee agreed to the proposed revision to section 4.4, that an External Examiner provide scrutiny in instances where agreement cannot be reached between the first and second marker. Members of the Committee agreed to the inclusion of 'exceptionally' to reinforce that this course of action was to be taken only in exceptional circumstances.
- Members of the Committee agreed to add 'and appropriate feedback to students' to section 5 to reflect that the outcome of moderation must also be explained to students.

2.3 The Committee confirmed their approval of the paper with the changes as outlined above.

2.4 Members of the Committee noted that, should the process be approved at Senate, implementation would be immediate. Members further noted the importance of immediate implementation in ensuring a process fair and consistent in nature be in operation as soon as possible. Members of the UCTL agreed that the Senate should be asked to 'approve the Moderation Procedures as detailed in Appendix 7 for immediate implementation'.

2.5 Members of the Committee confirmed their approval of the flowchart (subject to the amendments above) appended to the paper as a means of providing clarity on the process.

2.6 The Convener expressed his thanks to the Committee for their careful and detailed consideration of the paper and the efforts of Professor Shennan, Convener of the QAC, in preparing the paper for discussion. Members of the Committee agreed that Professor Shennan would propose the paper to the Senate for approval. All Academic Committee members present agreed to act as seconders to the proposal.

- 2.7 The Committee acknowledged that, as a consequence of the agreed changes, Section 7.10 of the Academic Quality Handbook (AQH) 'Selection of Scripts and other work to be sent/made available to the External Examiner' would need to be amended. Members of the Committee agreed with the revisions as tabled, subject to the same typographical revisions as made to the Process itself.
- 2.8 The Committee considered the consequences should Senate not approve the revised process. Members of the Committee agreed that double marking (section 1.2 above refers) would remain the only option available to the Institution. Members of the UCTL agreed that the Senate should be asked to approve the following; 'in the event that the Moderation Procedures are not approved, Senate is asked to approve that all summative assessments at levels 3 and above that contribute to degree classification should be double marked until agreed Moderation Procedures are approved'.
- 2.9 In concluding, the Committee acknowledged the concerns of some schools/disciplines in being able to adhere to the deadline dates for the return of results, specifically degree classifications, in recognition of both the new moderation process and the changes to the Grade Spectrum. Members of the Committee acknowledged the likelihood of this issue being raised at Senate and agreed that schools/disciplines should be reassured that the support available in reaching these deadlines be reviewed.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 3.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 11 May 2016 at 2pm in the Court Room, University Office.