

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN**

**POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE**

**10 OCTOBER 2011, 2PM, COMMITTEE ROOM 2**

**Minutes of Meeting Held on 9 May 2011**

## UNIVERSITY OF ABEREEN

### POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF MEETING 9 MAY 2011

Present: Dr B. Connolly (Convenor), Prof. P. Edwards, Prof. D. Houlihan, Prof. B. Long, Prof. P. McGeorge, Dr E. Pavlovskaja, and with Ms Y. Gordon, Dr M. Pinard, Dr M. Pryor, Ms R. Sandison, Ms K. Strangward, Ms A. Slater, and Dr H. Weitz, and Mr R. Findlay (Clerk) and Mr A. Wallace in attendance.

Apologies: Ms K. Christie, Mr P. Fantom, Prof B. Naphy.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING ON 7 MARCH 2011

41 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on 7 March 2011

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#### MATTERS ARISING

##### *Minute 36.3*

42.1 The Committee noted that the proposal for the addition of 'Merit' to the classification system for the award of taught postgraduate degrees had been reviewed by the working group. The group did not recommend the addition of 'Merit', but asked that the Quality Assurance Committee consider whether the classification of Commendation should be abolished or the marks required to achieve a Commendation or Distinction normalised so that the minimum mark levels are more even spread across the range of pass marks. The Committee noted that the postgraduate strand of the Quality Assurance Committee felt that the issue should be discussed after the revised Common Assessment Scale had come into operation, which the Committee agreed with.

#### LEARNING TO WORK 2

43.1 The Committee received an update from Dr Weitz on the progress of the Scottish funding Council funded Learning to Work 2 project.

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43.2 The Committee noted Schools would need to be consulted on whether placements would change a programme significantly enough to require appropriate SENAS forms to be submitted for approval.

43.4 The Committee requested confirmation of the reporting structure for the project and who was to be ultimately responsible for reporting within the University.

**ACTION: DR WEITZ**

43.3 The Committee agreed that regular updates should be provided to the Committee on the progress of the project.

**ACTION: DR WEITZ**

#### STATUS OF POSTGRADUATE APPLICATIONS, 28 APRIL 2011

44 The Committee noted the number of postgraduate applications received and processed as of 28 April 2011.

### **UPDATE ON UKPASS**

- 45 The Committee received a verbal update from Ms Sandison, who confirmed that UKPASS was no longer being considered as a replacement admissions system for postgraduate admissions applications. The Committee noted that SRAS had looked at other potential systems. The Heads of Graduate School requested that they be invited to any demonstrations given by companies of potential new systems.

**ACTION: SRAS**

### **UKBA – UPDATE ON CHANGES TO TIER 4 RULES**

- 46 The Committee noted that the UKBA had published a list of countries that it considered to be 'English speaking' countries. The Committee requested that SRAS seek confirmation as to whether offers to students from countries not on the UKBA's list of 'English speaking' countries, but who may have previously been granted an exemption, should now stipulate English language as a condition

**ACTION: SRAS**

### **PROPOSAL FOR POST-ROBERTS' TRANSFERABLE SKILLS TRAINING FOR RESEARCH POSTGRADUATES**

- 47.1 The Committee discussed a paper from the Convenor that detailed proposals from the Graduate Schools to deliver transferable skills training for research postgraduate students, following the end of Roberts' funding.

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- 47.2 The Committee noted that appropriate reporting mechanisms would need to be put in place to ensure that money is allocated in a transparent and fair way.

- 47.3 The Committee noted that administrative support would need to be put in place for the day-to-day operation of the programme. The Committee agreed that a sub-group of the Postgraduate Committee should be set up to coordinate and monitor the programme once it is ready to be implemented.

### **POSTGRADUATE ACCOMMODATION CONTRACTS**

- 48 The Committee discussed the response from the Director of Student Affairs in regard to length of contracts for taught Postgraduate students and noted that 50 week contracts were now possible for Kings Hall, Elphinstone Road, Burnett House and North Court.

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### **SUPERVISORY TEAMS**

- 49.1 The Committee discussed changes to the Code of Practice for Research Postgraduates to clarify the change made to 2011/12 regulations specifying that supervisors will work as part of a supervisory team.

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- 49.2 The Committee agreed that each student should have a minimum of two supervisors appointed, with one designated as the lead supervisor, to supervise their research.

- 49.3 The Committee requested that paragraph 5 of the section entitled 'Supervision' be amended to state that it was the responsibility of the lead supervisor to contact their student prior to the student's start date in order to arrange a meeting with the supervisory team. The Committee agreed that the wording should be further amended to emphasise that the first meeting should take place as soon as possible after the student's arrival in Aberdeen.
- 49.4 The Committee requested that the phrase 'or as soon thereafter as possible' be removed from paragraph two in the section entitled 'The Early Stages', in order to emphasise the importance of supervisors meeting their students soon after their arrival in Aberdeen.
- 49.5 The Committee requested that the wording in paragraph two in the section entitled 'Responsibilities of Secondary Supervisors' be amended to clarify that the requirement to 'provide input into assessment' was for feedback on assessment.
- 49.6 The Committee requested that a more appropriate term than 'secondary' supervisor be sought, as supervisory teams may consist of more than two supervisors.
- 49.6 The Committee approved the changes to the Code of Practice on the proviso that the above amendments be made.

**ACTION: CLERK**

- 49.7 The Committee requested that the responsibilities of Heads of Graduate Schools set out in the Code of Practice for Research Students be amended to state that it was the responsibility of Heads of Graduate Schools to ensure the appointment of supervisory teams each research student within their respective College.

**ACTION: CLERK**

#### **AMENDMENT TO REGULATION 4, POSTGRADUATE SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS**

- 50 The Committee discussed and agreed with changes to the permitted length of research theses, but did note concerns raised by the postgraduate strand of the Quality Assurance Committee in regard to confidentiality of interview transcripts.

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#### **AMENDMENT TO REGULATION 6, SCHEDULE B – GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE DEGREES: CLASS CERTIFICATES**

- 51 The Committee discussed a change concerning the length of validity of class certificates, and agreed that it was a sensible proposal and in line with regulations at undergraduate level.

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#### **CODES OF PRACTICE 2011/12**

- 52 The Committee approved changes to the Codes of Practice for both Taught Postgraduates and Research Postgraduates for the 2011/12 academic year.

Copies filed as PGC/090511/036 and PGC/090511/037