

UNIVERSITY OF ABEREEN
POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING 15 DECEMBER 2011

Present: Dr B. Connolly (Convenor), Ms J. Batty, Prof. P. Edwards, Mr P. Fantom, Prof. P. Hannaford, Prof B. Naphy, Dr E. Pavlovskaja, and with Ms C. Croydon, Ms E. Forster, Mrs K. Slesser, Miss K. Strangward, and Mr R. Findlay (Clerk) and Ms Tamara Szucs in attendance.

Apologies: Mrs K. Allan, Mr L. Butler-Perks, Dr L. Leiper, Prof P. McGeorge, Dr M. Pinard, Ms A. Slater, Prof. C. Wallace.

STUDENT-LED CONFERENCE ON PHD JOURNEY

13.1 The Committee noted that the item would be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

REST OF UK FEES FOR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

14.1 The Committee discussed a paper detailing the options considered for determining RUK PGT fees for 2012/13.

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14.2 The Committee noted that, at the time of discussing, no information had been made available to suggest that the rest of the sector had announced their taught postgraduate tuition fees for 2012/13. Given both this and the need to declare tuition fees in a reasonable time-frame, the Committee felt that PGT tuition fees for 2012/13 should remain at the same rate as 2011/12.

14.3 The Committee recommended that a review of the postgraduate fee structure be conducted in advance of the 2013/14 academic year.

UPDATE ON PSAS FUNDING FOR 2012/13

15 The Committee noted an update on SAAS in regard to PSAS funding for 2012/13.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING ON 10 OCTOBER 2011

16.1 The Committee requested that minute 5.2 be amended as follows:

The Committee noted that, Admission Selectors had been appointed for cognate areas within each College as far as possible, and that back-up Selectors had been also been put in place to provide cover should a particular Selector not be present. The Committee noted that for certain programmes, particularly ones that were accredited, it would not be appropriate to assign selectors on the basis of cognate areas.

16.2 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on 10 October 2011, subject to the above amendment.

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MATTERS ARISING

Minute 6.4

17.1 The Committee noted that no money had been identified for the development of new PGT programmes by distance learning.

Minute 8.6

17.2 The Committee noted that the Students' Association had collated feedback on students in regard to pastoral care for postgraduates and that a paper would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee for discussion.

Minute 8.8

- 17.3 The Committee noted the request from the Convenor of UCTL that the view of Heads of Schools be sought in regard to the development of a standard system of referencing.

ACTION: CLERK

SNAPSHOT 2 – NEW REGISTRATIONS FOR 2011/12

18. The Committee noted figures regarding the number of new postgraduate entrants registered during the 2011/12 academic year, up until 15 December 2011.

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ADMISSION FIGURES FOR JANUARY 2012 START PROGRAMMES

19. The Committee noted the admission figures for PGT and research postgraduate programmes starting between 1 January 2012 and 30 September 2012.

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UPDATE ON ONLINE ADMISSION FORM FOR POSTGRADUATES

- 20.1 The Committee noted that there were four planned phases for amendments to the postgraduate admission system: the automatic update of the admission system once an applicant submits an application to the University, a brand new online application form, a new online prospectus, and applicant/agent/selector portals.

- 20.2 The Committee noted that the new system would not allow an application form to be submitted for consideration without a transcript and a personal statement.

- 20.3 The Committee requested that its thanks be given to Karen Grant for her and her team's work on the new online admission system.

SKILLS FOR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME

- 21.1 The Committee noted that it had been confirmed that the £200 from the tuition fees of each research postgraduate would be collected by finance, held centrally and ring-fenced for research training.

- 21.2 The Committee noted that it had been agreed that 1 fte at Grade 6 would be appointed to help develop the training programme and work with academic staff to deliver workshops. It was also noted that the individual would have a careers adviser portfolio. The Committee further noted that it still had to be decided as to which department the new position would be formally based within.

- 21.3 The Committee noted that further discussion would be required in regard to who would be responsible for maintaining the training record for each research postgraduate student and whether training courses could be formally recorded on the student record system.

TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

- 22.1 The Committee discussed the set of Graduate Attributes for PGT students proposed by the working group of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning.

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- 22.2 The Committee noted that the working group recommended amending the point regarding 'a readiness for citizenship in a civilised and inclusive society' to 'an engagement with citizenship in an inclusive and internationalised society'. The Committee agreed that it should be recommended to UCTL that this point also be amended in the undergraduate Graduate Attributes.

- 22.3 The Committee requested that the point 'a breadth of critical knowledge, understanding and skills beyond their chosen discipline(s), including competencies developed in non-credit

bearing courses and co-curricular activities' be re-drafted to take account of the fact that a standard PGT programme is normally 12 months full time and, consequently, it may not be desirable or appropriate for PGT students to pursue study beyond their chosen discipline.

LEARNING TO WORK UPDATE

- 23.1 The Committee noted an update regarding the 'Learning to Work Two' programme. In particular, the Committee noted that the programme was now to be rebranded as 'Making the Most of Masters'.

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- 23.2 The Committee requested that Dr Hickman be invited to provide a verbal update at the next meeting of the Committee.

ACTION: CLERK

PROGRAMME ADVISORY BOARDS

24. The Committee discussed a paper submitted from the Careers Service regarding the establishment of Programme Advisory Boards for engagement of industry in the development of new programmes/courses. The Committee noted that it had been envisaged that there would be flexibility in approach and composition of Programme Advisory Board in order to take account of the differences between Colleges and disciplines.

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EXAMINATIONS HELD OFF-CAMPUS

- 25.1 The Committee discussed whether or not a change to University policy should be considered in regard to examinations being held off campus for non-distance learning programmes.

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- 25.2 The Committee agreed that, provided assurances were in place with regards to invigilation and facilities, then examinations could be held off campus on a more routine basis.

- 25.3 In order to share good practice, the Committee recommended that the School of Engineering be contacted with regard to how they organised off campus examinations for their distance learning programmes.

ACTION: CLERK

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE

- 26.1 The Committee discussed the current procedures and penalties for plagiarism at postgraduate level.

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- 26.2 The Committee agreed that the late submission of mitigating circumstances, with particular regard to submission at the actual hearing, should not normally be permitted as part of the disciplinary procedure. The Committee agreed that it needed to be made clear in the Code of Practice that this was the case. A proposal to amend the Code of Practice to incorporate the appeals procedure, and the references to late submission of mitigating circumstances contained therein, was felt to be the appropriate way forward.

ACTION: CLERK

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

27. The Committee noted that Professor Edwards was stepping down as Head of Graduate School for the College of Physical Sciences and thanked him for his work in this capacity.