

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING 10 DECEMBER 2012

Present: Prof B. Naphy (Convenor), Dr H. Battu, Ms J. Bjorkvist, Dr B. Connolly, Dr J. Masthoff, Dr E. Pavlovskaja, Dr M. Pinard, Prof C. Wallace, and with Mrs K. Allan, Ms C. Croydon, Dr L. Leiper, Mr D. Milne, Mr A. Monteith, Mrs K. Slesser, Ms K. Strangward and Mr R. Findlay (Clerk) in attendance.

Apologies: Dr H. Battu, Prof. P. Hannaford, Ms R. Sandison, Prof. C. Wallace.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING ON 12 OCTOBER 2012

- 13.1 Regarding minute 4.1, the Committee noted that the College of Physical Sciences had been in the process of gathering project proposals but had not passed them on to SRAS at the time of the meeting.
- 13.2 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on 12 October 2012 subject to the above amendment.

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MATTERS ARISING

Minute 6.3

- 14.1 The Committee noted that discussions had not yet taken place with the Students' Association in regard to a system for applicants to communicate with current student representatives from taught postgraduate programmes.

ACTION: CLERK

Minute 6.4

- 14.2 The Committee noted that, under amendments to the Academic Quality Handbook approved by Senate on 14 November 2012, students would be entitled to see their examination scripts, but that this would be done on individual request.

Minute 6.5

- 14.3 The Committee noted the response from Academic Services confirming that the feedback exercise had been conducted for both undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, but expressed concern over what individual Schools had been advised. Further clarification was requested.

ACTION: CLERK

Minute 7.3

- 14.4 The College of Arts and Social Sciences agreed to circulate its amended monitoring forms, which included a question on whether students have discussed career opportunities with supervisors, to the other Colleges.

ACTION: PROF. NAPHY

Minute 11

- 14.5 The Committee noted that the structured management framework still had to be developed for 3.5 and 4 year funded PhDs.

ACTION: CLERK

POSTGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

- 15.1 The Committee expressed concerns over the figures for Snapshot 2, i.e. that the totals did not appear to add up, and requested that further action be taken to resolve them.

ACTION: CLERK

- 15.2 The Committee noted the admission figures for entry to postgraduate programmes between January 2013 and July 2013.

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RECRUITMENT

- 16.1 The Committee noted an update on recruitment activities for 2013.
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- 16.2 The Committee noted that Student Recruitment and Admissions Services had been working towards developing a template to enable academics involved in recruitment trips abroad to make offers in-country, where appropriate. The Committee noted that further information would be sent out to Colleges from SRAS regarding this.
- 16.3 The Committee asked about the possibility of concentrating more resources on recruitment from South America. The Committee noted that there were opportunities in this area, but mainly in the area of research.

RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT UNIT

- 17.1. The Committee noted an update on recent activities regarding the Researcher Development Unit.
- 17.2 The Committee noted that 65 workshops had been delivered since September 2012, and that approximately 29% of the research student population had engaged with the skills training programme.
- 17.3 The Committee also noted that there had been 800 requests for attendance during 2012/13 and 172 'no shows' without a reason given for non attendance. The Committee noted that Colleges had been asked to contact repeated 'no shows' about their lack of attendance. Lists of these students had been provided to Colleges on a quarterly basis.
- 17.4 The Committee noted that a new Grade 6 appointment to the Researcher Development Unit was due to start in January 2013.
- 17.5 The Committee requested that further clarification be sought on whether the budget would still be held centrally from 2013/14 onwards or whether some of the budget would be held within the Colleges.

ACTION: PROF WALLACE AND DR LEIPER

ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

18. The Committee noted that Colleges had been asked to submit case studies of quality enhancement activities relevant to postgraduate study.

CONTINUATION FEES FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS DURING THEIR EXTENSION PERIOD

- 19.1 The Committee discussed a paper concerning how fees are charged during the extension period for research students.
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- 19.2 The Committee felt that there was no substantive difference between the extension period and supervised study in terms of the level of supervision that students receive.
- 19.3 The Committee noted that other comparable UK institutions charged higher fees during the extension period.

- 19.4 The Committee recommended that full time PhD students in an extension period from 36 to 48 months should continue to be charged the flat-rate continuation fee linked to the associate student fee. However, the Committee also recommended that full time PhD students in an extension period post 48 months should be charged a flat-rate continuation fee of £600. This was mapped onto other research degrees and part time equivalents as follows:

DEGREE	STAGE OF STUDY	FEE
Masters full time	12 to 24 months	£120
	Post 24 months	£600
Masters part time	24 months to 36 months	£120
	Post 36 months	£600
MPhil full time	24 to 36 months	£120
	Post 36 months	£600
MPhil part time	42 to 54 months	£120
	Post 54 months	£600
PhD full time	36 to 48 months	£120
	Post 48 months	£600
PhD part time	60 to 72 months	£120
	Post 72 months	£600

Note: the fee of £120 was based on 2012/13 fee levels.

- 19.5 The Committee requested that the University Committee on Teaching and Learning consider the above proposal and, if approved, whether these charges could apply to students who started prior to 2013/14.

ACTION: CLERK

ANONYMOUS MARKING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

- 20.1 The Committee discussed a report from the Students' Association regarding anonymous marking of in-course assessment.
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- 20.2 The Committee agreed that, in principal, it was in favour of anonymous marking, where appropriate. However, the Committee noted that consideration would need to be given as to how submissions of work through MyAberdeen could be made anonymous.

ANNUAL REPORT ON IDENTIFICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING

21. The Committee noted the annual report from Centre of Learning and Teaching on dissemination of good practice.
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POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

22. The Committee approved the set of postgraduate research graduate attributes.
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RESITS FOR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

- 23.1 The Committee noted that the Quality Assurance Committee had not approved the proposal, recommended by the Committee at its meeting on 19 June 2012, for restricted resits on taught postgraduate programmes. The Committee noted that QAC had suggested that students should be able to resit any failed course on their programme, except the project/dissertation.
- 23.2 The Committee reaffirmed its position that the option of re-sitting no more than 30 credits should be extended to all taught postgraduate programmes and that re-sits should not be used in conjunction with compensatory credits.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

24. The Committee noted that next meeting would be held at 2pm on 25 March 2013, in room MR314, MacRobert Building.