

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Minute of the Meeting held on 22 April 2019

Present: Professor P McGeorge, (Convener), Dr T Baker, Mr C Duncan, Professor A Jenkinson, Mr O Kucerak, Professor E Pavlovskaja, Dr B Scharlau, Professor K Shennan and Professor R Wells, with Dr R Bernard, Ms K Christie, Dr D Comber, Ms T Innes, Ms N Kinchin-Williams, Ms P Spence and Ms E Hay (Clerk) in attendance

Apologies: Ms D Connolly, Dr S Tucker and Dr G Mackintosh

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 FEBRUARY 2019

(copy filed as UCTL/220419/001)

- 1.1 The Convener opened the meeting and welcomed members of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL). The Committee approved the minute of the meeting held on 19 February 2019 as an accurate representation of discussions held.

MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 The Committee noted that the actions arising from the meeting held on 19 February 2019 had been taken forward, as reflected in the minute by way of Clerk's Note.

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

- 3.1 The Committee identified no specific issues arising relating to Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

(i) WEIGHTING OF HONOURS YEARS

(copy filed as UCTL/220419/002)

- 4.1 The Committee received the paper on the Weighting of Honours Years, noting its consideration by the Senate had been postponed to allow for it to be considered and amended, as appropriate, following the publication of the recommendations of the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) panel. Members of the Committee noted the two approaches of classification proposed by the paper as follows:

- (i) equal weighting across levels 3 and 4 and;
- (ii) an exit velocity model of a 30% weighting of level 3 and a 70% weighting of level 4.

The Committee noted that the paper detailed that only these models of weighting should be permitted, for reasons of consistency and transparency. The Committee were informed that the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) would have oversight of the models in use across each School.

- 4.2 Members of the Committee expressed concern as to how joint honours degrees would be classified, should the two Schools involved have different models of classifying. The Committee agreed that the issue of joint degrees required further work, not just in relation to degree classification. The Committee agreed that in the meantime, classifications would continue to be calculated manually.
- 4.3 The Committee discussed whether the weighting of levels 3 and 4, to allow for exit velocity, was appropriate at 30%/70%. The Committee noted that the approach had been modelled appropriately, to allow for a lesser weighting of 3rd year and to allow for exit velocity.
- 4.4 Members of the Committee agreed that the paper should be sent to the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Committees by way of circulation before being considered by the Senate.

(ii) CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT

(copy filed as UCTL/220419/003)

- 4.5 The Committee considered the revised Code of Practice on Assessment. The Committee noted that two versions had been prepared, to reflect the changes and the years in which they would be introduced.
- 4.6 Members of the Committee agreed with the proposal that the recently revised borderlines should be introduced for all students from 2019/20. The Committee noted that to delay the introduction of the revised borderline and the criteria associated with it would be very complex for Examiners' Meetings.
- 4.7 The Committee agreed that appropriate notes should accompany the transcript to ensure grades are appropriately interpreted.

Action: Clerk

Clerk's Note: Papers were considered by the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Committees and by the Senate at the meeting held on 15 May 2019.

REVIEW OF THE STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

(copy filed as UCTL/220419/004)

- 5.1 Members of the Committee received the paper on the work of the Student Course Evaluation Form (SCEF) review Working Group. The committee acknowledged that the group had been set up in response to a University wide marked reduction in the completion of SCEF forms.
- 5.2 The Committee noted that the Working Group had reviewed the form and the questions which comprise it, in addition to holding focus groups to gauge feedback on the SCEF process. Members of the Committee noted that such feedback had demonstrated a misunderstanding of the SCEF process, negativity regarding it and a lack of communication as to how it could be used within Schools.
- 5.3 Members of the Committee noted the proposals of the Working Group, including suggestions that students are better informed of the purpose of the form and that staff are better engaged in the process. Members of the Committee agreed that there were areas of the University who do this well and that examples of good practice which can be drawn on do exist.

- 5.4 The Committee sought clarification as to how forms were, or could better be, setup. They noted the importance of the role of the Course Coordinator in owning and creating a form and creating/amending questions, appropriate to their course(s).
- 5.5 Members of the Committee discussed whether commercial course evaluation software could be useful not only to the SCEF process, but of the Annual Course Review (ACR) and Annual Programme Review (APR) processes.
- 5.6 The Committee agreed the importance of not asking students to complete several feedback forms. They agreed other technology, such as Ombea, might be useful in gathering feedback during a course. The Committee agreed the importance of communicating the purpose, flexibility and immediacy of the system.

Action: Clerk

Clerk's Note: Paper was considered by the Senate at the meeting held on 15 May 2019.

PGDE TEACHING TIMETABLE

(copy filed as UCTL/220419/005)

- 6.1 Members of the Committee considered a paper from the School of Education, seeking permission to deliver teaching to students registered on the the PDGE (Primary) and PGDE (Secondary) Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. Members of the Committee noted that PGDE students are a distinct student cohort and, as a consequence of placement activity, are on campus for a short period of time. It was further noted that their term dates also differ. Members of the Committee questioned why teaching was proposed for delivery on a Tuesday and Wednesday and not on the other days of the week and sought clarity around this.
- 6.2 Pending an answer as to the rationale for teaching on a Tuesday and Wednesday only, members of the Committee were generally supportive of permitting the request. The Committee agreed that as a consequence of the nature of the programme and it's duration, teaching on a Wednesday could be exceptionally permitted.
- 6.3 Members of the Committee agreed that the it would be appropriate to review teaching hours across the Institution as a whole. The Committee noted that not permitting teaching on a Wednesday was presenting challenges for other programmes. The Committee further noted that new technologies may allow for a more flexible approach to timetabling on a Wednesday. It was agreed that the issue would be investigated further.

Action: Clerk

Clerk's Note: The School of Education provided further information, circulated to the UCTL for consideration on 6 June 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ENHANCEMENT-LED INSITUTIONAL REVIEW (ELIR) PANEL:

PREPARATION FOR TEACHING

(copy filed as UCTL/220419/006a and UCTL/220419/006b)

(i) PREPARATION FOR TEACHING: POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

- 7.1 The Committee received the paper on Preparation for Teaching: Postgraduate Reasearch Students. Members of the Committee welcomed the proposals contained within the paper and recommended that they be extended to take into consideration undergraduate students who teach. It was suggested that this could be made available by way of an online course. The Committee proposed that the TA1 recruitment form be amended, in liaison with Human

Resources (HR) to state that it is a requirement that the individual concerned must have undertaken appropriate training. It was agreed that a record of training given must be kept.

(ii) PREPARATION FOR TEACHING: STAFF

- 7.2 The Committee also received the paper on Preparation for Teaching: Staff. The Committee was supportive of the proposals detailed. Members of the Committee asked whether the proposals would extend to bought-in staff teaching on courses. It was acknowledged that this was an area that the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) would be investigating. The Committee agreed that it would need to be determined whether the Partnership and Negotiating Consultative Committee (PNCC) would be required to consider and/or approve the paper.

DISABILITY PROVISION: EXAM SCHEDULING AND EXAM LOCATION

(copy filed as UCTL/220419/007)

- 8.1 Members of the Committee received and considered the paper on Disability Provision: Exam Scheduling, acknowledging the increasing problem faced by the University, to comply with legal requirements in terms of providing appropriate adjustments for students undertaking exams. The Committee noted problems being experienced included the lack of time to schedule exams and the space in which to hold them. The Committee agreed that the current position was no longer sustainable.
- 8.2 Members of the Committee discussed whether different ways of assessing students, such as take home exams, may help the issue.
- 8.3 The Committee agreed that it would appropriate to convene a Working Group, tasked with discussing and considering what could be done to address the issues arising and to alleviate concerns. Members agreed that the composition of the Working Group should include representation from IT Services, Student Support and the Assessment and Feedback Taskforce.

Clerk: Action

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 9.2 The Committee noted that that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 12 June 2019 at 2pm in Committee Room 2, University Office.

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (ACADEMIC)

(copy filed as, UCTL/220419/008)

- 10.1 Members of the Committee received the revised Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic), noting that changes to the Code included the addition of information regarding Contract Cheating (section 3.4 refers). The Committee stated their support for the inclusion of collusion alongside plagiarism. Members of the Committee noted concern as to the challenges associated with proving the intent of a student when providing work to another student. It was therefore agreed to amend section 3.5 (h) to read, '*producing work for another student to use*'.
- 10.2 Members of the Committee agreed the importance of ensuring students are aware of what collusion is. It was suggested that including such information within course handbooks would be useful.

- 10.3 The Committee was informed that a new Research Misconduct Policy was being developed and would be considered by the Research Policy Committee for implementation from academic year 2019/20. Members noted that once approved, the Code would be appropriately amended.

Action: Clerk

Clerk's Note: Paper was considered by the Senate at the meeting held on 15 May 2019.

MINUTES AND UPDATE REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

- 11.1 Members of the Committee noted the minutes of the sub-committees, copy filed as follows:

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| (i) | Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) | <i>(copy filed as UCTL/220419/009a)</i> |
| (ii) | Postgraduate Taught Committee (PGTC) | <i>(copy filed as UCTL/220419/009b)</i> |
| (iii) | Undergraduate Committee (UGC) | <i>(copy filed as, UCTL/220419/009c)</i> |