

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2001

Present: Dr JG Roberts (Convener), Mr C Buchanan, Dr A Clarke, Mr D Cockburn, Professor JH Farrington, Dr WF Long, Professor M Player, Professor AA Rodger, Professor PJ Sloane, Professor IR Torrance and Professor DW Urwin with Mr JLA Madden, Professor E Matthews, Mrs M Park, Dr T Webb and Dr G Mackintosh (Clerk) in attendance

Apologies were received from Professor PR Duff, Professor SD Logan, Ms C Macaslan, Professor PA Racey, Professor LD Ritchie, Dr D Comber and Mr G Pryor

MINUTES

426. The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2001.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/307)

**REGISTRY REVIEW OF ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION IN REGARD TO
STUDENTS' PROGRESS, ADVISING & REGISTRATION**

427.1 The Committee received, for consideration, a Report from the Registry outlining the outcome of their Review of Academic Administration in regard to Students' Progress, Advising and Registration together with a further paper summarising issues raised by a sub-group of the Working Group on Advising and Students' Progress Review who considered the Registry Review at a meeting on 23 November 2001.

(copies filed as UCTL/071201/308a+b)

427.2 The Committee noted that the Registry Review had been considered by the UPCs at their meetings in November 2001 and that a joint meeting of all UPCs was to be held in January 2002 to consider Recommendation 2 which proposed amendment to the General Regulations governing Student Progress.

427.3 The Committee gave consideration to the recommendation and agreed their response as detailed below:-

Recommendation 1

The Committee noted the revised wording proposed by the sub-group of the Working Group on Advising and Students' Progress Review and the addition of a further recommendation asking Deans to discuss with those Heads of Department/School who failed to meet the deadline for submission of results following the August 2001 deadlines, their reasons for failing to meet this deadline.

The Committee endorsed this recommendation.

Recommendation 2

Dr Roberts informed the Committee that consideration of this recommendation had been deferred until a joint meeting of all UPCs to be held in January 2002. However, he invited the Committee members not on the UPCs to comment on the recommendation. The President of the Students' Association welcomed the proposals in the recommendation as he felt they would give students a more flexible approach to learning which was particularly important in the current climate where many are forced to work. It was also noted that, if approved, consideration should be given to whether a similar approach could be applied to postgraduate degrees although in many cases the Research Councils dictate the timescale for completion of degrees. It was further noted that, for those degrees accredited by Professional or Statutory Bodies, the views of these organisations would need to be taken into account as some set more stringent progress requirements.

Recommendations 3 and 4

The Committee noted that consideration of these recommendations had been deferred until after the meeting in January 2002 when Recommendation 2 would be considered.

Recommendations 5 to 9

The Committee noted that these recommendations were for consideration by the UPCs. A report on the outcome of their considerations would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

427.4 The Committee recorded its thanks to Dr Webb and the staff of the Registry for undertaking this Review.

WORKING GROUP ON PROGRESS FILES FOR HE

428.1 The Committee received, for consideration, a paper from the Working Group on Progress Files for HE detailing a number of recommendations in regard to student transcripts.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/309)

428.2 Dr Roberts informed the Committee that there was still much debate taking place on this issue in the HE sector. In particular, the data set for transcripts had yet to be finalised and may be brought in line with the European Data Supplement.

428.3 It was therefore agreed to defer consideration of these recommendations until clearer guidance becomes available. However, it was noted that the Registry would, in the meantime, give consideration to consolidating the 3 versions of the transcript into one composite version.

Action: MIP

WORKING GROUP ON ACADEMIC APPEALS AND STUDENT

COMPLAINTS – FINAL REPORT

429.1 Dr Roberts informed the Committee that the Working Group on Academic Appeals and Student Complaints on Academic Matters had analysed the University's compliance with the QAA *Code of Practice: Section 5: Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters* and had brought forward a number of recommendations which the Committee was invited to consider.

(copies filed as UCTL/071201/310a-f)

429.2 Dr Roberts drew the Committee's attention to the proposal from the President of the Students' Association that Court Appeals Committees should include a student member. Mr Cockburn informed

members that it was practice at St Andrews University for the President of the Students' Association to sit on the Court Appeals Committee. He reminded the Committee that students are stake-holders in the University Court and as such should be included on the Appeals Committee. Such a move would increase the confidence of students in the appeals system.

429.3 Following discussion, an amendment to the proposal was made that a decision on this issue should be deferred pending a review of the practice in other ancient Scottish universities. In a vote, this proposal was not carried, following the Convener's casting vote. The original proposal was therefore approved in principle.

429.4 However, it was noted that, in the light of this decision, review of the composition of the Court Appeals Committee would be needed to determine whether the student representative should be an additional member of the Committee or whether the student representative should replace one of the existing members with a membership of three being maintained.

429.5 It was noted that the Students' Association may also wish to recommend inclusion of a student representative on the Senate Appeals Committees.

429.6 It was noted that the Academic Appeals Guidance Note would need to be revised to take account of the change in composition of the Court Appeals Committee. It was agreed that proposals in regard to this would be made and circulated to the Working Group for approval prior to being submitted to the February meeting of the UCTL

Action: Clerk/TW

429.7 It was further noted that the guidance notes, while comprehensive, may not be easily understood by all users. It was therefore proposed that flow diagrams for each of the guidance notes should be developed together with an over-arching flow diagram explaining the different appeal routes. These flow diagrams should include a clear statement that students must refer to the actual guidance notes for full details. The President of the Students' Association reported that the Students' Association was currently developing flow diagrams to explain the appeals process to students. It was agreed that the Registry should draft flow diagrams, in consultation with the Students' Association, and bring these forward to the meeting of the Committee in February 2002.

Action: Clerk

429.8 The Committee, for its part, approved the draft guidance notes subject to the relevant amendments to the composition of the Court Appeals Committee (minute 429.4 refers) as detailed below:

(a) Academic Appeals: Draft Guidance Note

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/310a)

a. Student Complaints on Academic Matters: Draft Guidance Note

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/310b)

b. Termination of Study on Academic Grounds or Termination of Candidature for an Award: Draft Guidance Note

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/310c)

c. Student Complaints on Non-Academic Matters: Draft Guidance Note

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/310d)

429.9 The Committee considered the paper on status of students pending the outcome of an academic appeal, decision on representations against termination of study or outcome of a complaint on an academic matter.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/310e)

429.10 The Committee approved this paper, but agreed that a flow diagram should also be prepared to clarify the process for students. It was also agreed that this flow diagram should clearly highlight the obligations of the student in this process.

Action: Clerk

429.11 The Committee noted the document to be forwarded to the University Management Group setting out draft guidelines regarding the payment of incidental expenses necessarily incurred by a successful appellant or complainant.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/310f)

429.12 The Committee noted that the University Secretary had invited the Working Group to consider proposals regarding a UK-wide scheme for the independent review of student complaints developed by University UK (UUK), comments on those proposals from the Associations of Heads of University Administration (AHUA), and proposals regarding a separate Scottish scheme for independent review of student complaints put forward by Universities Scotland and the Standing Conference of Principals. The Committee noted that the Working Group had considered the concerns of AHUA regarding the UUK scheme to be well-founded and to apply equally to the Scottish proposals. The Working Group had also noted that the other Scottish Ancients were not content with the proposals as currently drafted. In the light of the above, the Committee noted that the Working Group had recommended to the UMG that the University of Aberdeen should not enter the proposed Scottish scheme for independent consideration of student complaints but should await the outcome of UK-wide consultation. The Committee further noted that the UMG had accorded with the Working Group's recommendation.

429.13 The Committee agreed to record its thanks to Ms Strachan, Clerk to the Working Group, for the vast amount of work she had undertaken in drafting these guidance notes.

FUTURE QUALITY PROCESSES FOR SCOTTISH HE

430.1 Dr Roberts drew members' attention to the letter of 5 December 2001 from SHEFC (HE/55/01) detailing the Council's decisions on future quality assurance arrangements.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/323)

430.2 In summarising the key issues of the letter, he informed the Committee that SHEFC had recognised the sector's concern that Scottish institutions should not be disadvantaged by any new system and that a key feature of the new proposals was that, as far as possible, the reported outcomes in Scotland should be the same as elsewhere in the UK to ensure comparability. However, SHEFC was also keen in developing the new system to ensure that it also takes full account of the distinctive nature of the Scottish sector. The key principles of the new system were:-

- an Institutional Audit Process, relating to institutional quality assurance;
- the removal of 'drilling down' to subject level;
- a strong prominence to enhancement;
- a strong emphasis on effective student feedback.

430.3 He further informed the Committee that there would be a Public Information Set produced to inform stakeholders of the nature and quality of provision, but that in the Scottish system this would not include publication of External Examiner reports.

430.4 The Committee welcomed the withdrawal of Subject Review from session 2002/03 and agreed that those Departments currently preparing for Subject Review in session 2002/03 should be informed of this decision as soon as possible.

Action: TW

430.5 The Committee noted that, while there would be no Subject Review in 2002/03 and the new process would not commence until 2003/04, session 2002/03 would be used to ensure that the institutional internal quality assurance processes are appropriate, the QAA Codes of Practice and Subject Benchmarks are incorporated into the 'academic infrastructure' and that improved institutional information for students and applicants is developed.

430.6 Dr Roberts informed the Committee that HEFCE/QAA/SCOP/UJK had published a consultation document setting out proposals on what information on the quality and standards of learning and teaching should be available in each HEI and which elements should be published. While these proposals only apply to HEFCE funded institutions, it was noted that, in the interests of ensuring a high degree of parity between the arrangements throughout the UK, Scottish institutions were being encouraged to provide HEFCE with feedback on the proposals, and to copy any response to SHEFC. Dr Roberts and Dr Webb agreed to draft a response for submission to HEFCE and SHEFC.

Action: JGR/TW

ROLE OF THE UCTL: REVISED REMIT & COMPOSITION

431.1 One of the aims of the Strategic Plan for the current academic year was to 'review the role of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning and its links with Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees and central support services, to ensure that it could exercise its responsibilities more effectively'. It was proposed that the primary mechanism for liaison with Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees (or their equivalent) should be by Conveners of those committees being in attendance at the UCTL; and, in regard to central services, by the Convener of the Learning Technology Unit Steering Group also being in attendance.

431.2 In the light of this, the Committee approved the revised remit and composition for the UCTL. Drafts of this document had been circulated to Deans, the Director of DISS and the Director of Human Resources for comments and their comments had been taken into account in the production of this draft.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/311)

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

(UCTL minute 400.3, Senate minute 498.2 refers)

432.1 At the meeting of the UCTL on 12 October 2001, the Committee had agreed that the publication of honours handbooks on departmental websites was appropriate as a primary way of delivery of this information but that departments must also make available this information in hard copy, which students should be able to purchase, if they wished, at cost price. At the meeting of the Senate on 14 November 2001, this recommendation had been discussed and following questions in regard to the definition of Honours Handbooks, particularly where web-based versions of these currently provide much general information, including hyperlinks to other websites, which it would not necessarily be appropriate, and might indeed be impractical, to provide in hard-copy, it had been agreed that the Conveners of the undergraduate Academic Standards Committees be asked to submit further proposals to the UCTL to specify the information which Departments must make available in hard-copy to students.

432.2 The Senate had further agreed that the UCTL be asked to clarify the policy concerning whether Departments could charge students for hard-copies of such information. The Committee agreed to endorse the current policy that Departments may charge students the cost price of producing

information that it makes available in hard-copy (including that specified in minute 432.3), provided that it is also freely available (i.e. by placing copies in Departmental or University Libraries or placing material on the web) so that students who cannot afford, or do not wish, to purchase the documents can nevertheless gain access to them.

432.3 The Committee approved the recommendations from the Conveners of the undergraduate ASCs in regard to the information to be provided in hard-copy for all students, subject to amendment of the first bullet point to remove the recommendation that Departments also consider developing CAS descriptors for different types of assessment. It was felt that this should be deferred pending consideration of issues relating to CAS descriptors by the Working Group on the Credit Framework and Levels Descriptors.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/312)

Action: Clerk

PROGRAMME REVALIDATION

433.1 The Committee noted that, in August 2000, all Departments had been asked to submit, by 31 October 2001, new programme proposal forms, programme specifications and curriculum maps for all degrees for revalidation in the current Planning Cycle. A number of departments had had extensions from this deadline agreed by the Convener of the relevant UPC or the ASC(Postgraduate), on application.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/313)

433.2 The Committee approved the recommendation that Deans be asked to ensure that those Departments / Schools that had not submitted documentation for revalidation by 31 October 2001 and had not sought extension, should be asked to submit documentation by 28 February 2002.

Action: Clerk

NORTH AMERICAN EXCHANGE

(minute 386 refers)

434. Following the publication of the QAA Code of Practice on Placement Learning, the University's compliance with this code would be reviewed in the coming session. The Committee approved the recommendation that the recommendations made by the Conveners of the two undergraduate Academic Standards Committees in regard to the North American Exchange be considered as part of the review of Placement Learning.

REVIEW OF SCEF FORM - REPORT FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(Arts & Social Science, Divinity & Law)

435.1 The Committee noted the report of the review of the SCEF Exercise which had been carried out by the Academic Standards Committee (Arts & Social Sciences, Divinity and Law).

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/314)

435.2 Since current indications were that the new arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement (minute 430 refers) would include an increased emphasis on student feedback, the Committee approved the recommendation that implementation of the recommendations of the above report be deferred until further guidance was received on the requirements for increased student feedback.

ADMISSIONS TARGETS

436. The Committee noted that an updated analysis of the University's population, prepared on 14 November 2001, indicated that for full-time students, although the University this year exceeded its admissions target by c70., the projected out-turn of population for 2001/2002 (after allowing for second half-session entrants and premature withdrawals) would be some 220 to 240 below the figure included in the Strategic Plan. This was because the non-progression rate from year 1 to year 2, assumed on the basis of past experience to be between 9 and 10 per cent, had risen in the current year to 14 per cent. There had also been a steady decline in the number proceeding to Honours (as measured by the progression rate between Programme Years 3 and 4) from 88% in 1998/99 and 83% in the current academic year. This meant that more students needed to be admitted to achieve the same total population.

INTERIM REPORT FROM WORKING GROUP ON ADVISING & STUDENTS' PROGRESS REVIEW

437. The Committee noted the interim report from the Working Group on Advising and Students' Progress Review. The Group would be holding one further meeting early in the New Year with the intention of submitting its final report to the February meeting.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/315)

WORKING GROUP ON STUDENT RETENTION

438. The Committee noted the progress made in regard to the taking forward of the recommendations of the Working Party on Student Retention that were considered by the UCTL in May 2001, as detailed below.

(i) Monitoring of Failure Rates

The Registry now routinely sends Deans and the Conveners of the undergraduate ASCs pass rates on all Level 1 and 2 courses at the end of the first half-session, second half-session and August diets. Deans were asked to obtain feedback from Heads of Department on the likely causes and possible remedies for failure rates of over 20% for the relevant cohort.

(ii) Review of Progress Regulations

The Registry had produced a report of a review of academic administration in regard to students' progress, advising and registration (minute 427 above refers). Recommendation 2 of this report (which had been prepared in consultation with Dr Townsend) related to the progress regulations: in summary, it had been proposed that students should be eligible to continue with their studies and take as long as they wished to complete Levels 1 and 2, although students would not always be entitled to fees support for what might be deemed to be repeat years of study. No change was proposed to the current progress regulations: students would need to achieve 16 Level 1 and 40 Level 1/2 credits before being eligible to proceed to the next Programme Year and become automatically eligible for continued fee support.

(iii) Class Certificates, (iv) Progress Committees and (vii) Introduction of a formal category of "Students Suspended from Study"

The UCTL had referred the above issues to a Working Group on Students' Progress Issues (minute 439 refers) of the Conveners of the UPCs, to be convened by Dr Roberts.

(v) Study to identify types of students at risk

This issue was still under consideration. The UCTL agreed to formally record their support for such a study.

Action: Clerk

(vi) Using the Student Record to plot progression

Mr Jones had submitted proposals and believed that these addressed the recommendation. However, there might be some misunderstanding as to whether these proposals were what the Working Group intended. The Student Retention Working Group at its meeting on 12 December 2001 would consider these and would agree the way forward.

(viii) Advisers

This Recommendation had been approved by the UCTL.

(ix) Continuation of the Working Group

This Recommendation had been approved by the UCTL.

WORKING GROUP ON STUDENTS' PROGRESS ISSUES

439.1 The Committee noted that the first meeting of the Working Group would be held in mid-December. This meeting would address issues including class certificates and medical certificates.

439.2 The Committee also received for information a paper which detailed the remit and composition of the Working Group on Students' Progress Issues.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/324)

CODE OF PRACTICE ON ADMISSIONS

440. The Committee noted that the QAA *Code of Practice on Recruitment and Admissions* had now been published. A paper would be prepared for the UCTL in due course in regard to actions to be taken. Copies of the Code of Practice were available from the Senate Office or could be accessed at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>. The Head of Undergraduate Admissions and the Assistant Registrar (Postgraduate Registry) had been asked to produce a composite response to indicate the compliance with the code and to bring forward recommendations. This response would be considered by the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee (SRAC) and the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate) with a view to recommendations being brought to the March meeting of the UCTL.

Action: YSG/RA

CODE OF PRACTICE ON CAREERS GUIDANCE

441. The Committee noted that the final report from the Working Group on Careers Guidance, which had been considered at the meeting of the UCTL on 25 May 2001 (minute 382 refers), would be considered by the Senate at its meeting on 23 January 2001.

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

442. The Committee noted the attached paper entitled 'Provision of Services to Students with Disabilities - the effect of the QAA Code of Practice and the Disability Discrimination Act (Part IV)'

which had been recently considered by the Sub-Committee on Disabilities and the University Management Group. It was anticipated that a report on the University's compliance with the QAA Code of Practice would be brought to the February meeting of the Committee.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/316)

PROJECT BOARD ON SPACE MANAGEMENT AND THE TEACHING TIMETABLE: REVIEW OF COURSES

443.1 The Committee noted the report from the Project Board on Space Management and the Teaching Timetable.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/317)

443.2 The Committee also noted that a meeting in early January had been arranged of the committee established by the UCTL to consider requests for change of ownership of teaching pool accommodation (minute 396.4). Recommendations in regard to changes to teaching pool accommodation would be brought to the February meeting of the UCTL for endorsement.

Action: MIP

443.3 The Committee further noted that the Teaching Accommodation Advisory Board would be meeting early in the new year. The Board would make recommendations, *inter alia*, in regard to the allocation of funds for improvements to teaching accommodation and facilities.

OUTCOME OF SUBJECT REVIEWS - DIVINITY & GEOLOGY

444.1 The Committee noted that the draft Subject Review Reports for the 2000/01 reviews of Theology and Religious Studies and Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies had been received.

444.2 The Report for the review of Theology and Religious Studies commended the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of student progression. The quality of learning resources for all undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, except the Certificate in Christian Studies, the Diploma in Christian Studies and the Bachelor of Theology (distance learning), was commended. In regard to those programmes not commended, it was recommended that a more structured process of staff development for distance learning staff be provided and that there is a need to develop an IT strategy for distance learning to ensure that the learning experience of 'local' and non-local cohorts is equalised. The reviewers expressed confidence in the academic standards of all programmes and highlighted, in particular, appropriate, demanding and explicit programme aims; suitable learning outcomes; curricula informed by scholarship of international standing and appropriate assessment which includes a number of innovative methods. The reviewers also expressed confidence in the comprehensive quality assurance procedures of the University.

444.3 The Report for the review of Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies commended the quality of teaching and learning and highlighted in particular innovative teaching practice, staff research clearly informing teaching and emphasis on transferable skills as being strengths. The quality of student progression was also commended with strengths including effective level 1 tutorials, a supportive adviser of studies system, good support for MSc students and low withdrawal rates being highlighted. The quality of learning resources was also commended. The reviewers expressed confidence in the academic standards highlighting, in particular, the clear and appropriate learning outcomes and an effective and appropriate assessment system. The reviewers further stated that the institution's approaches and processes for reviewing and maintaining standards are rigorous and thorough and that they had confidence in the University's procedures for maintenance and enhancement of quality and standards.

444.4 The Committee agreed to record its congratulations to the Departments and relevant Faculties for the excellent outcome of these Subject Reviews. The Committee further noted that the reports should be published in December 2001/January 2002. It was agreed that it may be helpful to those Departments undergoing Subject Review in 2001/02 to see copies of the draft reports. Professor Torrance agreed to circulate copies of the report on Theology and Religious Studies to the relevant Departments.

Action: IT

STUDENT COUNSELLING

(minute 397.7 refers)

445.1 Concern was raised at the meeting of the Committee on 12 October 2001 regarding the length of the waiting list at the Student Counselling Service, with some students having to wait up to two months to receive an appointment.

445.2 This issue was raised with the Director of Student Support Services who had confirmed that the problem had arisen due to a shortage of staff within the Service. Interviews were currently taking place for replacement staff. It was hoped that once the unit was fully staffed that the problems would be alleviated.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

446.1 The Committee received, for information, a paper which highlighted the Strategic Aims in regard to learning and teaching in the Strategic Plan for session 2001/02 and indicated the progress made to date in regard to the achievement of these aims.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/318)

446.2 The Committee noted the following update on progress made in regard to those Strategic Aims as detailed below:-

SA2.6 Review our programme for Promoting Independent Learning

- The funds of £15,000 for year three of the Independent Learning Programme have been allocated to 12 projects out of a total of 17 submissions. Approximately 3,600 students are now participating in these projects. The projects are currently under development with an implementation split:

Semester 2 of 2001/02 – 58% of projects

Semester 1 of 2002/03 – 42% of projects

Evaluation reports will be requested on completion of the projects and the Principal Investigators will be contacted by members of the Educational Development Unit early in 2002 to monitor interim progress.

SA2.9 Complete the development of our institutional strategy for promoting flexible and web-based learning

- No progress has been made to date.

SA2.12.2 Review the outcomes of the Teachability Project, and develop an implementation strategy for all departments

- The Teachability Project is being rolled out to all departments over the next two years.

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEWS

447.1 The Committee received, for information, a paper which detailed the current status in regard to the Internal Teaching Reviews carried out in session 2000/01.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/319)

447.2 The Committee also noted that the Internal Teaching Review for the Department of Management Studies which had been scheduled for Autumn 2001 had been deferred to session 2002/03 due to staff changes in the department. The Department had been asked to submit documentation by 1 December 2002.

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

448. The Committee noted that a workshop on Quality Enhancement Strategies was being held jointly with RGU on 11 December 2001. The primary speaker at this event would be Dr Bill Harvey from SHEFC who would outline SHEFC's current thinking in regard to its requirement that institutions prepare quality enhancement strategies. Representation from the University of Aberdeen would include the Conveners of the UCTL, the ASCs and Faculty Teaching Committees, the Director of DISS, the Manager of the LTU and representatives from Human Resources and the Registry.

AUPHET - MINUTES OF MEETING OF 29 OCTOBER 2001

449. The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the AUPHET Programme Committee of 29 October 2001.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/320)

STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEES

(minute 397.4 refers)

450.1 The Committee noted that a summary of Professor Urwin's report on the Students' Progress Committee for Arts and Social Sciences had been circulated to relevant Deans. Deans had been asked to discuss the increase in the number of students deemed withdrawn or required to discontinue with the relevant Heads of Department / School and to report back by 23 November 2001. The Committee received, for information, responses from the Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering and from the Head of the School of Law.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/321-322)

450.2 The Committee further noted that the Faculty of Arts and Divinity had considered the report at their Faculty Management Group. Queries had been raised at the meeting regarding whether the position in terms of percentage drop out was any worse than in previous years. Following subsequent discussion, it had been confirmed that there were no specific concerns within the Faculty of Arts and Divinity. However, the Faculty had noted that there were general issues regarding students' progress within the MA Degree. The Faculty was establishing a Working Party to look at recruitment and retention (both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels) within the Faculty.

450.3 The Committee noted that these responses together with any further responses received would be considered at the February meeting of the UCTL.

HIGHER QUALITY - BULLETIN OF THE QAA

451. The Committee received, for information, the November 2001 edition of 'Higher Quality' the bulletin of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

(copy filed as UCTL/071201/325)

PROMOTING EMPLOYABILITY - THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAREERS SERVICES

IN HE EXTRACT FROM NOVEMBER EDITION OF SHEFC HIGHLIGHTS

452.1 The Committee noted that SHEFC had adopted the objective of promoting employability as a significant element in its overarching quality enhancement strategy.

452.2 The potential for developing the role and scope of careers services in the higher education sector had been recently discussed by the Council and it had agreed to include employability, and particularly the role of the careers services, in its dialogue with higher education institutions on quality enhancement of teaching and learning.

452.3 A time-limited working group would be created to analyse the current provision of careers education information and guidance in the Scottish higher education sector and make suggestions accordingly, for example, identifying and disseminating good practice and developing the evidence base. The group would include a range of participants such as careers service practitioners, Universities Scotland and representatives of other stakeholders. If appropriate, it would work together with a similar Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) working group.

452.4 As well as developing dialogue with Careers Scotland and Future Skills Scotland and other interested organisations, the Council had agreed to host a major conference on the broad themes associated with promoting employability, jointly with SFEFC, in autumn 2002 or early 2003."

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

453.1 The Committee noted that, in the light of a recommendation from SHEFC Financial Appraisal and Monitoring Service (FAMS), a formal item on declaration of interests would be included on the agendas of all meetings of the Court, all Court Committees and joint Court-Senate Committees.

453.2 The following declaration would be included on all papers:

"Declaration of interests: Any member and individual in attendance (including officers) who has a clear interest in a matter on the agenda should declare that interest at the relevant meeting, whether or not that interest is already recorded in the Register of Members' Interests held in the Court Office.

453.3 In respect of the agenda item on Future Quality Processes for Scottish HE (minute 430 refers), Mr Cockburn, President of the Students' Association, stated that he was a member of the QAA Advisory Group.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

454. The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 1 February 2002 at 2.00 pm in F61/62, Edward Wright Building.

