

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING**

DRAFT Minute of the Meeting held on 13 September 2017

*Present:* Professor P McGeorge (Convener), Dr M Barker, Mr C Duncan, Professor H Hutchison, Professor A Jenkinson, Professor J Masthoff, Professor E Pavlovskaja, Professor K Shennan and Dr S Tucker, with Dr R Bernard, Ms K Christie, Mr P Fantom, Ms N Kinchin-Williams, Ms P Spence and Ms E Hay (Clerk) in attendance

*Apologies:* Ms D Connolly, Mr L Ogubie and Dr B Scharlau

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 MAY 2017**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/001)*

- 1.1 The Convener opened the first meeting of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL) of the 2017/18 academic year, welcoming all members and specifically the new members of the Committee.
- 1.2 The Committee approved the minute of the meeting held on 3 May 2017. The Committee agreed that the minutes were representative of discussions held.

**REMIT AND COMPOSITION**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/002)*

- 2.1 The Committee agreed that the Remit and Composition of the Committee for 2017/18 was both accurate and representative, subject to the addition of 'the Court' to the Committee's formal reporting line. The Committee acknowledged that the UCTL is a joint Committee of Senate and Court.
- 2.2 The Committee also proposed the addition of the Dean for Transnational Education, Professor Wells, to the membership of the Committee.

**Action: Clerk**

***Clerk's Update: Remit has been amended and Professor Wells added to the Committee membership.***

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

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

**POLICIES AND/OR GUIDANCE IN RELATION TO EXAMINATIONS**

**(i) Duties and responsibilities of Examinations Officers**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/003)*

- 4.1 The Committee considered the paper on the duties and responsibilities of Examinations Officers, acknowledging its revision since initial circulation, following consideration by Heads of School and the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Committees. The Conveners of the respective sub-Committees agreed that the paper had been amended appropriately, to cover the feedback given. Overall, the UCTL felt that the paper was a step forward in articulating the role of Examination Officers.

- 4.2 Members of the Committee noted that Examinations Officers are not always academic members of staff. The Committee agreed that while responsibilities can be delegated to administrative staff, however, an academic member of staff should have overall responsibility.
- 4.3 The Committee agreed that each School should have one lead Examinations Officer and as many further officers as required, where Schools have multiple disciplines.

**(ii) Staffing of Exam Venues**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/004)*

- 4.4 The Committee considered the paper on the Staffing of Exam Venues, noting the proposal to provide staff by venue and not by exam for the purposes of invigilation. The Committee acknowledged that where exams are individually staffed, venues can often have several more invigilators than are required and to revise this practice would be considerably more efficient.
- 4.5 Members of the Committee noted concerns as raised by the Undergraduate Committee, regarding the presence of School representatives at Exam Venues should any paper specific questions arise. The Committee noted that exams often take place over several venues and, as such, if an issues arises, the most sensible point of contact is the School office. The Committee further noted other Institutions hire Invigilators and therefore no School staff are present in the exam hall.
- 4.4 Overall, the Committee expressed positivity for the paper and agreed that it should be brought back for further consideration and approval following the consideration of operational matters, such as an appropriate gender split in invigilating staff, a list of the roles and responsibilities of invigilators and the training of invigilators.

**(iii) Capping of Resit Exams**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/005)*

- 4.5 The Committee considered the paper on the capping of Resit Exams. The Committee noted the proposal, arising from feedback from External Examiners, that marks for failed courses are no longer included in the calculation of a student's degree classification and instead a 'resit pass' equivalent to a 'CGS D3' be included following a successful pass at resit.
- 4.6 The Committee discussed whether or not a 'RP' (resit pass) or 'RF' (resit fail) should appear on a student's transcript in addition to the actual grade achieved by resit. The Committee agreed that this would perhaps prove confusion and, as such, as per practice already in place across Postgraduate Taught programmes, RP or RF would appear on a transcript and actual marks, where applicable, would be released by way of the MyAberdeen Grade Centre.
- 4.7 The Committee noted that compensatory credits would continue to be available to students at levels 4 or 5 of study, where a marginal fail had been achieved.
- 4.8 The Committee agreed the importance of a consistent approach across Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes.

**(iv) The Format of Resit Exams**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/006)*

- 4.9 The Committee agreed with suggestions made in the paper to allow different formats of resit assessment. The Committee noted proposals made regarding the award of compensation

across all years of study were currently on hold, pending their return for discussion to a future meeting of the Committee.

- 4.10 The Committee agreed that papers (iii) and (iv) be revised and combined and circulated to the Committee for final approval.

**Action: Professor Shennan and Clerk**

**Clerk's Update: Paper amended and circulation. Deadline for response, Wednesday 27 September**

#### **POLICY ON RECORDING EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/007)*

- 5.1 The Committee received the draft policy on the Recording of Educational Activities. The Committee acknowledged that the issue of recording lectures had been discussed previously and noted that this revised draft policy was based on policies in use at other Institutions.
- 5.2 Members of the Committee noted the benefits of lectures being available to students, particularly where English is not a students' first language.
- 5.3 The Committee were reminded that under this proposed policy, recording would be considered standard practice with staff required to 'opt-out' of recording, providing reasons to their Head of School as to why they cannot record. The Committee acknowledged confidentiality and copyright as legitimate reasons for opting-out.
- 5.4 The Committee expressed some concern over the technology available for the recording of lectures and agreed that the capabilities of the software should be clarified and communicated to staff.
- 5.5 Members of the Committee agreed with the proposal to pilot the policy and to forward to Senate for an academic view.

**Action: Policy to be considered at the Senate**

**Clerk's Update: Policy added to the Senate agenda, for an 'academic view'**

#### **PROOFREADING GUIDANCE PAPER**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/008)*

- 6.1 The Committee considered the Proofreading Guidance paper, prepared in response to a query received from a Proofreading company on the University's policy in this regard. Members of the Committee expressed their support for the paper, however, noted that guidance of a similar vein was already made available to students with dyslexia by Student Support. The Committee agreed that Student Support should be contacted regarding their practice and the guidance paper appropriately amended to align with this, as appropriate. The Committee agreed that the revised paper should be considered by the UCTL and its sub-Committees by way of circulation.

#### **ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (ELIR) UPDATE**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/009)*

- 7.1 Members of the Committee received an update on the forthcoming Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR), scheduled for October and November 2018 and were informed that ELIR would be a standing item on the Committee's agendas as the University reflects on its practice and prepares the documentation required for submission.

### **QAA ENHANCEMENT THEME**

- 8.1 The Committee received an oral update on the new QAA Enhancement Theme, Evidence Based Enhancement ahead of its launch in October 2017. The Committee noted the importance of engagement with the theme and acknowledged that further information would follow in due course.

### **FEEDBACK FRAMEWORK**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/010)*

- 9.1 The Committee noted that the existing Feedback Framework was now out of date and agreed that the Assessment and Feedback Task Force should consider the Framework in detail and return to the next meeting of the UCTL with proposed amendments to it.

**Action: Dr Barker, Assessment and Feedback Task Force**

### **STUDENT COMMUNICATION, SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION RECORDING**

- 10.1 The Committee received the paper on Student Communication, Support and Intervention Recording. The Committee noted that the paper had its origins in discussions held at the Retention Task Force and its proposals were designed to engage specifically with students considering withdrawing from study.
- 10.2 Members of the Committee noted the proposed development of a CRM system, to be used alongside the CRM for Personal Tutors, to allow for an issue to be logged and brought to the attention of a Personal Tutors quickly, to allow for appropriate contact/intervention. The Committee noted that the system could ensure reminders were issued where a matter had not been addressed.
- 10.3 Members of the Committee acknowledged the proactive nature of the proposal, seeking to engage with students who don't otherwise engage.
- 10.4 Members of the Committee noted concern regarding the lack of face to face interaction such a system would encourage, in addition to concerns regarding the potential over-complication of issues easily addressed outwith such a system.
- 10.5 Members of the Committee agreed that the Undergraduate Deans should be included in discussions regarding the proposal and that the paper should be expanded upon and should return to a future meeting of the UCTL for further discussion.

**Action: Dr Tucker, Retention Task Force**

### **UPDATES AND MINUTES FROM SUB-COMMITTEES**

- 11.1 The Committee noted the minutes as provided from the sub-committees of the UCTL. The Conveners of the Sub-Committees confirmed that issues raised by their Committees had been considered elsewhere on the UCTL agenda.

- 11.2 The Convener of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) raised the issue of the cost of field trips for students and the impact this may be having on students for whom the costs are too high. The Committee agreed that this issue and the options available to students should be further investigated.

**Action: Professor Shennan, Quality Assurance Committee**

#### **AOCB**

- 12.1 The Convener reminded members of the Committee of the decision taken as part of the Senate Effectiveness Review that the attendance of Committees, including UCTL and its sub-Committees, would now be published. The Convener noted that should individuals not be able to attend, nominees could attend on their behalf.
- 12.2 The Convener noted his intention to form a group on induction to review work undertaken in this regarding following the dissolution of Colleges.
- 12.3 The Convener also noted his intention to seek feedback on Scholarships in existence and the practice associated with these and to form a group to further expand upon this.

**Action: Convener**

**Action: Convener**

#### **CHANGES TO POLICY**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/012)*

- 13.1 The Committee, for its part, approved changes to the following policies for immediate introduction. These changes are largely typographical in nature and include: amendments to policy wording for consistency across the University's policies; the removal of 'Director of Student Affairs' and the decision to increase academic members of Grounds to Proceed Panels (the Policy and Procedures on Academic Appeals refers) from one to two.
- (i) Policy and Procedures on Academic Appeals
  - (ii) Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP)
  - (iii) Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic)
  - (iv) Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Non-Academic)
  - (v) Status of Students Pending the Outcome of (a) an Academic Appeal or Complaint; or (b) Undergraduate Student Progress, or Fitness to Practise

#### **LATEST DATES FOR THE RETURN OF EXAMINATION RESULTS 2017/18**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/013)*

- 13.2 The Committee approved the latest dates for the return of examination results in 2017/18.

#### **DATES OF TERM TO 2028**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/014)*

- 13.3 Members of the Committee approved the Dates of Term to 2028, noting that the start of term for academic year 2018/19 (paper UCTL/130917/014 further refers) and subsequent years, have been moved back by a week, with a view to ensuring term does not close as late as Friday 21 December and in so doing, improving the Student Experience and allowing students who require to travel (possibly overseas) for the Winter break to do so.

**TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION: MEDICINE IN SRI LANKA**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/015)*

- 13.4 The Committee, for its part, approved the paper on Transnational Education: Medicine in Sri Lanka.

**UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE OPEN DAY PLANNING 2017-2019**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/016)*

- 14.1 The Committee noted the paper on Undergraduate and Postgraduate Open Day Planning, 2017-2019.

**OMNIBUS RESOLUTION**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/017)*

- 14.2 The Committee noted further changes to general regulations approved by the Convener of the University Committee on Teaching & Learning during the summer.

**DATES OF TERM FOR 2018/19**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/018)*

- 14.3 The Committee noted the dates of term for 2018/19 as approved by the Convener of the University Committee on Teaching & Learning during the summer.

**ACADEMIC FLEXIBILITY**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/019)*

- 14.4 The Committee noted the attached Policy and Procedures on Academic Flexibility as approved for use as a pilot exercise in 2017/18 by the Convener of the University Committee on Teaching & Learning during the summer.

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK SCOTLAND**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130917/020)*

- 14.5 The Committee are asked to note the [Student Engagement Framework Scotland](#) as developed and agreed by agencies including the QAA, SFC, HEA, NUS and SPARQS.

**GRADUATION DATES**

- 14.6 The Committee noted the dates and allocation for the November Ceremonies as summarised below, approved by the Convener of the University Committee on Teaching & Learning during the summer:

**Thursday 23 November at 11.00 a.m.**

Higher and First Degrees in the Business School, School of Law and School of Psychology

**Thursday 23 November at 3.00 p.m.**

Higher and First Degrees in the Schools of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition and School of Biological Sciences.

**Friday 24 November at 11.00 a.m.**

Higher and First Degrees in the School of Engineering, School of Natural & Computing Sciences and School of Geosciences.

**Friday 24 November at 3.00 p.m.**

Higher and First Degrees in the School of Education, School of Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture, School of Social Science and School of Divinity, History & Philosophy.

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