UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

Minute of the Meeting held on 23 June 2021

Present: Ruth Taylor (Chair), Alfred Akisanya, John Barrow, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Jason Bohan, Abbe Brown, Stuart Durkin, Bill Harrison, Richard Hepworth, Gerry Hough, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Ondrej Kucerak, Lucy Leiper, David McCausland, Tim Mighall, Rona Patey, Shona Potts, Kath Shennan, Susan Stokeld, Steve Tucker, Russell Williams and Adelyn Wilson with Julie Bray, Rachael Bernard, Scott Carle, Nick Edwards, Tracey Innes, Graeme Kirkpatrick, Gillian Mackintosh, Fiona Ritchie, Patricia Spence and Emma Hay (Clerk) in attendance

Apologies: Harminder Battu, Alison Jenkinson, Hazel Hutchison, Graeme Nixon, Michelle Pinard, Lindsay Tibbetts, Simon Bains, and Brian Henderson

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE UCTL HELD ON 25 MAY 2021
(copy filed as UEC/230621/001)

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to a meeting of the University Education Committee (UEC). The Chair noted that a further meeting of the Committee was scheduled for August 2021, but that this would only go ahead if required. Members of the Committee approved the minute of the meeting held on 25 May 2021 as an accurate representation of discussions held.

MATTERS ARISING
(copy filed as UEC/230621/002)

2.1 Members of the Committee noted the actions arising following the meeting of UCTL held on 25 May 2021. The actions were recorded as complete or in progress. In particular, members of the Committee noted:

• With regard to minute point 2.1, that work to establish an appropriate fee for the consideration of Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) remained ongoing. It was further noted that an update would follow by way of circulation;
  
  **Action: Rachael Bernard**

• With regard to minute point 4.2, that work on the 2021/22 Risk Register remained ongoing and that an update would follow to the UEC and its sub-committees in due course;
  
  **Action: Chair**

• With regard to minute point 5.4, that a meeting had taken place between the Chair and the Dean for Postgraduate Research (PGR) to discuss the UEC remit and to make changes to better reflect the engagement of the UEC in PGR. It was further noted that the Dean for PGR would provide a presentation on PGR to the UEC in 2021/22;
  
  **Action: Graeme Nixon/Clerk**

• With regard to minute point 11.3, that work with regard academic integrity remained ongoing. The Dean for Quality Enhancement and Assurance informed the UEC that the development and update of the academic integrity webpage, lunchtime sessions for staff and the preparation and issue of guidance to students were all underway.
HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

3.1 Members of the Committee noted the Campus Planning Group (CPG) papers and minutes of meetings, available here. In addition, members noted the recent communication regarding a return to campus in academic year 2021/22.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2021/22 ACADEMIC YEAR

4.1 Members of the Committee discussed the preparations for the 2021/22 academic year, including the Education Covid-19 Roadmap Action Plan (copy filed as UEC/230621/003a) and the Institutional Covid-19 Roadmap Action Plan (copy filed as UEC/230621/003b).

4.2 Members of the Committee acknowledged the role taken by the Blended Learning Implementation Task and Finish Group (BLITFG) in monitoring preparations for the 2020/21 academic year, as the point of the initial transition to blended learning. The Committee noted that while the UEC would offer support to Schools as required, the monitoring of their preparations for the coming academic year would not be undertaken in the same way.

4.3 Members of the Committee noted that the actions listed in the Education Covid-19 Roadmap were underway.

4.4 Members of the Committee noted that some international students may be prevented from returning as a consequence of travel restrictions. The Committees noted that UKVI regulations may also impact upon this cohort of students and impact on when/if students in this position can travel and the visa implications associated with this. The Committee noted that a communication for students in this position was being prepared for issue.

4.5 The Committee further acknowledged that there may be some students who would seek to continue studying online, for personal reasons. The Committee noted that the expectation of the University was that students would return, where possible. It was acknowledged, however, that it may be difficult and/or uncomfortable for some to return and that support should be provided to students in this position. Members of the Committee noted that, with the exception of certain areas (including Education and Medicine) that online learning would be permitted for the first half session.

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (QAC) UPDATE

5.1 Members of the Committee noted that the Dean for Quality Enhancement and Assurance and Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), Kath Shennan, was retiring in August 2021. Members of the Committee were informed that a Kath was currently working closely with the Chair and other colleagues in regard to a handover. The Committee were asked to direct any queries in respect of quality assurance to academicservices@abdn.ac.uk.

BLENDED LEARNING EVALUATION UPDATE

6.1 Members of the Committee received the update on the ongoing blended learning evaluation. The Committee noted that, overall, staff had been positive about how they had managed the move to blended learning. The Committee noted the following feedback in particular:

• The ‘sense of community’ the approach had created;
• that support for delivering in a physical environment, where students are socially distancing, would be beneficial to staff;
• a wariness amongst staff as to whether students would return to campus;
• the integrity of assessment, undertaken at a distance;
• an increase in workload, particularly in regard to student engagement and retention;

6.2 Members of the Committee acknowledged that a further analysis of blended learning would follow to a future meeting of the UEC.

**ENHANCEMENT THEME ANNUAL REPORT**
*(copy filed as UEC/230621/004)*

7.1 Members of the Committee received the Enhancement Theme Annual Report. Members of the Committee agreed to disseminate the report amongst colleagues and return feedback.

*Action: Committee*

**TIMING AND ASSESSMENT FOR DISABLED STUDENTS**
*(copy filed as UEC/230621/005)*

8.1 Members of the Committee discussed the paper on Timing and Assessment for Disabled Students, noting the proposed approaches to time for completion of assessment by disabled students with provisions for extra time in academic year 2021/22.

8.2 Members of the Committee acknowledged issues arising, under existing guidance in this regard, from students used to receiving extra time in assessment. The Committee noted the proposals laid out in the paper, however, expressed concern regarding the appropriateness of their implementation. Members of the Committee agreed that the paper should be taken away for further consultation, before returning to the Committee for consideration by way of circulation.

*Action: Abbe Brown*

**READMISSION SUPPORT PROCESS**
*(copy filed as UEC/230621/006)*

9.1 Members of the Committee noted the proposed readmission support process. Members of the Committee acknowledged the positive proposals contained within the paper. The Committee queried the role of Admissions Selectors, noting that greater structure would be beneficial to them.

**PASTORAL REVIEW**
*(copy filed as UEC/230621/007)*

10.1 Members of the Committee noted that work on the Pastoral Review had begun. Feedback from the Committee was welcomed.

**UPDATE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION IN UNIVERSITY POLICY**

10.1 Members of the Committee noted that work in regard to Accessibility and Inclusion in University Policy was underway. Feedback from the Committee was welcomed.
DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12.1 Members of the Committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 10 August 2021, at 2pm, by Microsoft Teams. Members of the Committee noted that they would be advised if this meeting will go ahead in due course.

AOCB

13.1 Members of the Committee expressed their sincere thanks and best wishes to the Dean for Quality Enhancement and Assurance, Kath Shennan, ahead of her retirement in August 2021.

UPDATE REPORTS FROM THE UEC SUB-COMMITTEES

14.1 Members of the Committee noted reports from the UEC sub-committees as follows:

(i) Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) (copy filed as UEC/230621/008)
(ii) Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) (copy filed as UEC/230621/009)
(iii) Student Support Committee (SSC) (copy filed as UEC/230621/010)

UEC REMIT AND COMPOSITION

(copy filed as UEC/230621/012)

14.2 Members of the Committee noted an updated version of the UEC Remit and Composition.

EDUCATION RISK REGISTER

(copy filed as UEC/230621/013)

14.3 Members of the Committee noted an updated version of the Education Risk Register.

TERM DATE EXCEPTIONS

14.4 Members of the Committee noted the following exceptions to the agreed 2021/22 term dates, as approved by the Chair by way of Chair’s Action:

- Degree of Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Childhood Practice (1HS commences August 2021)
- Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Autism and Learning (1HS commences 6 September 2021 and 2HS commences 10 January 2022)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) (Primary and Secondary) (2HS commences 4 January 2022)
- Degree of Master of Arts (MA) in Education (2HS commences 4 January 2022).