

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE (TAUGHT)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING 12 DECEMBER 2019

Present: Ekaterina Pavlovskaja (Chair), Hannah Burrows, Sandie Cleland, Peter Hicks, Donna Maccallum, Anne-Michelle Slater, Robert Wishart, Sarah Woodin with Colin Calder, Robert Findlay (Clerk), Natalie Kinchin-Williams, and Kerry Harrison (Minute Secretary) in attendance.

Apologies were received from: Amy Bryzgel, Jarosław Kędra, Dariya Koleva, David Muirhead, Graeme Nixon, Sandra Paterson and Allan Sim.

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 1 MAY 2019

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- 1.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2019.
- 1.2 In regard to minute 4.2, the Committee is asked to review population figures for their respective areas and report back to the Clerk.

ACTION: ALL, CLERK

CHAIR'S REMARKS

- 2.1 The Committee noted that recruitment for University Deans was ongoing.
- 2.2 Committee members were encouraged to attend the Centre for Academic Development's Learning & Teaching Event in the New South King's Quad Development on January 8th.

LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPGRADE UPDATE

- 3.1 The Committee received a presentation from Janet McKay about the progress of the upgraded Library Management System, due early January 2020.

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2019

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- 4.1 Committee members highlighted key points from their school's response to the results and action plans for 2020.
- 4.2 The Chair noted that the Divinity, History and Philosophy Enhancement Plan contained elements of another school's response and requested that this be amended.
- ACTION: CLERK**
- 4.3 The Committee felt that a template for formatting their responses would be helpful.
- ACTION: CLERK**
- 4.4 The Committee raised a concern around whether the requirement of a School response and action plans was a repetition of Annual Programme Reviews. The Chair clarified that the exercise was intended to look broadly at the Schools PGT provision rather than specific programme issues.
- 4.5 The Committee were invited to contact Colin Calder to further explore the data to reduce ambiguity before the Senate paper.

PROGRESSION IN FLEXIBLE PGT PROGRAMMES

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- 5.1 The Committee approved the updated paper on the proposal to allow students to select alternative courses to make up credit for failed elective courses, subject to minor changes in wording. It was agreed that the recommendations made on 24 October 2019 were reflected.
- 5.2 The Committee agreed that restricting the number of credits a student could make up with alternative courses to stages was too restrictive and that the limit of 60 credits or three courses accounted for all programme structures and courses including those that are worth 30 credits each.
- 5.3 The Committee requested that fee implications be considered and clarify whether students will need to pay additional fees and how this will be calculated.
- ACTION: CLERK**
- 5.4 The Committee agreed that it should be clear to students that alternative elective courses should be taken at the next available opportunity which may be in the next academic year and that only electives listed on the programme prescription should be offered. It was agreed that the Quality Assurance Committee should be asked for their view.
- ACTION: CLERK**
- 5.5 The Chair reiterated that the guidance would not benefit students whose programme is fully prescribed. The Committee was encouraged to investigate the development of options for programmes that were fully prescribed where possible.

RESITS FOR PGT PROJECTS/DISSERTATIONS

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- 6.1 The Committee considered a proposal to introduce a policy to allow students to resubmit their PGT project or dissertation under specified circumstances. It was noted that most other Scottish universities have a variation of this policy in place and that resubmission was available to undergraduate and PGR students.
- 6.2 The Committee agreed that students should have the opportunity to resubmit work where they have a marginal fail on the CGS (E1, E2, E3).
- 6.3 The Committee discussed whether a time limit for resubmission should be to account for personal circumstances and programme length. It was noted that the length of time for projects and dissertations was variable across programmes and therefore the exact time limit should be the decision of the Programme Coordinator or Exam Board, but there was scope to specify a maximum period to minimise inconsistencies.
- 6.4 The Committee wanted to make it clear that this was a resubmission of existing work, not an opportunity to undertake some extra supervised work, for students who have marginally failed.
- 6.5 The Committee agreed that the resit should be capped at D3 to align with undergraduate.
- 6.6 The Committee raised concerns over access to labs and what this means specifically. For example, some students will require access to computing labs to run additional simulations and this might be considered acceptable. On the other hand, access to scientific labs to conduct experiments again would not normally be permitted.
- 6.8 The Committee requested that guidance to enable a resit for PGT projects/dissertations be drafted for approval.

ACTION: CLERK

LATE SUBMISSION OF WORK POLICY

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- 7.1 The Committee agreed that the main changes recommended on 24 October 2019 were reflected in the updated paper.

- 7.3 The Committee noted that Appendix 2, point 2.4 may need to be amended should the resit for PGT dissertations/projects policy come into practice as it may not be required in this situation.
- 7.4 The Committee raised concerns about 2.1.i and 2.2 in Appendix 2. In the situation where a student would be awarded a low CGS, with penalties applied for 1-7 days late submission, they would not pass. However, if the student waited until 7-10 days, they would be awarded a D3, thus it would be in their interests to hand the work in after 7 days. The Committee would like to clarify whether students accumulate daily penalties in addition to the maximum of D3 for submission after day 7.
ACTION: CLERK
- 7.5 The Committee recommended that all aspects regarding the approval of extensions be removed from the current paper and that a separate paper proposing a policy on extensions be prepared.

NEW ENTRANTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2019

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- 7.1 The Committee noted the PGT admissions for September 2019 and stated that it was useful to see this.

MEMBER ROLE DESCRIPTORS

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8. The Committee noted the PGT Committee Member Role Descriptors.