

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
ACADEMIC POLICY AND REGULATIONS GROUP

Minute of the Meeting held on 28 February 2024

Present: Gillian Mackintosh (**Chair**), Selma Carson, Faye Hendry, Rhiannon Ledwell, Miles Rothoerl, and Steve Tucker with Liam Dyker (**Acting Clerk**) in attendance.

Apologies: Isabel Crane

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(copy filed as APRG/280224/001)

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the Academic Policy and Regulations Group and welcomed Miles Rothoerl and Selma Carson as new members of the Group. The Group was content to approve the minute of the previous meeting.

MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LOG

(copy filed as APRG/280224/002)

- 2.1 The Group noted that all actions, as per the Action Log, were complete. It was noted that in line with the response provided for minute point 5.4 in relation to Ask sessions, that the wording of the relevant Quality Code section will be reviewed.

Action: Clerk

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION 2024/25

(copy filed as APRG/280224/003)

- 3.1 The Group heard a summary of the regulatory changes proposed as part of the Omnibus Resolution, to be enacted for Academic Year 2024/25. In particular, the change in terminology from half-session to term was highlighted, as well as the changes to the regulations for the Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, Bachelor of Dental Surgery, and Master of Science in Physician's Associate Studies. The Group noted that additional changes were likely to require consideration at a future meeting, including changes to postgraduate regulations, and regulations for the University's partnership with Harbin Engineering University.
- 3.2 The Group discussed, in detail, the regulatory changes proposed by way of Omnibus Resolution. In discussion, the following was noted:

General Regulations for First Degrees

- Clarity was sought regarding the definition of 'session', in particular the prospective amendment which might result in varying definitions dependent on level of study. A suggestion was made in relation to providing a definition without mentioning the number of terms required. It was agreed that this would be reviewed ahead of circulation to QAC.
- In relation to Regulation 1.1 and 21(d), amendment was required in order to only display changes which had been made to the original regulations, as opposed to tracked changes to amendments proposed.

Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Laws (LLB)

- Clarity was sought in relation to Regulation 63, in particular regarding 63(i) and (ii) and the number of sessions required to undertake full and part-time study.

Supplementary Regulations for the Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB)

- Generally, comments were raised in relation to the detail provided in the regulations, which could likely be reduced in some instances, particularly in relation to Section 6.
- Concern was also raised in relation to section 6(i) and the ability to issue a C7 with no further warning.
- Concern was raised in relation to section 6(ii), particularly the ability of the Students' Progress Committee to determine the exemption in whole or in part from instruction and/or assessment in any component for the degree.
- Further concern was raised in relation to section 9(i) and its relation to the Policy and Procedures on Student Absence, particularly regarding fitness to sit an assessment. It was suggested that this is amended to reflect the Absence Policy.

Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)

- Concern was raised in relation to section 5(ii), particularly the ability of the Students' Progress Committee to determine the exemption in whole or in part from instruction and/or assessment in any component for the degree.

Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Master of Science (MSc) in Physician Associate Studies

- Concern was raised in relation to section 4(ii), particularly the ability of the Students' Progress Committee to determine the exemption in whole or in part from instruction and/or assessment in any component for the degree.

3.3 Additionally, it was noted that additional amendments will be made to the Resolution to include the timeframe for students to graduate which had been inserted into the undergraduate regulations, but not into the postgraduate regulations. Further, clarity was sought whether a further regulatory change would be forthcoming pertaining to the accreditation requirement of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), which does not allow compensation, for the degree of MSc in International Human Resource Management. It was noted that this would be reviewed.

3.4 The Group, for its part, was content for the Omnibus Resolution to proceed to the Quality Assurance Committee for approval.

MARKING AND MODERATION PROCEDURES

(copy filed as APRG/280224/004)

4.1 The Group heard a summary of the proposed changes in respect of the Marking and Moderation Procedures. In particular, it was noted that a review had taken place of the Procedures with workload in mind, specifically to review the levels of double marking and moderation and to simplify the Procedures overall. It was highlighted that current Procedures were more extensive than that of other Higher Education Institutions. The process for development was noted, highlighting the proposed Procedures provide the minimum requirements, where Schools may choose to operate more extensive moderation procedures.

4.2 The Group discussed, in detail, the proposed amendments to the Marking and Moderation Procedures. In discussion, the following was noted:

Section 2: Marking

- Clarity was sought regarding the degree of flexibility pertaining to anonymous marking, particularly the process by which Schools might offer a rationale for not marking anonymously.

- The ability for administrative staff to identify students who had late submissions and additional support, for example, was highlighted as important.
- Further clarity regarding instances where non-anonymous marking might be applicable would be useful, particularly in relation to consistency across Schools. A suggestion was raised in relation to storing information in course handbooks for students.
- Clarity was sought in relation to dissertations, theses and projects (as identified in section 2.2.2) which require double marking, particularly in relation to the definition of projects. A suggestion was made in relation to inclusion of clarification pertaining to 'where a piece of work is the sole piece of assessment and worth x amount of credits'.
- A suggestion was made in relation to allowing double marking where a student appeals a grade; it was noted that this would be challenging in the context of workloads.
- In relation to instances to which 'broad agreement' is referred (particularly in relation to Section 2.2.3 and Section 2.3), clarity was sought regarding the principle that the first marker's marks should stand. It was suggested that there should be a negotiation between markers.
- It was suggested that some issues pertaining to discrepancy in marking might be resolved by a fuller explanation in section 2.1 regarding the preparation for marking, which would help with standardisation across Schools. It was noted that Schools have different approaches.
- Concern was raised in relation to the timelines in which marking is expected to be completed.
- Clarity was sought in relation to section 2.2.4, where agreement is to be reached with QAC in relation to TNE provision, regarding the process which should be followed. It was noted that initially, it is anticipated that there will be higher levels of double marking for a new partnership compared with a mature partnership. Additionally, annual reports provided to the QAC will allow reflection on the level of double marking required, as the partnership matures.
- Clarity was sought regarding the level of anonymity for third markers (section 2.3.3 refers), and the level to which the work is double marked versus moderated.

Section 3: Moderation

- Concern was raised regarding the timescales for moderation (and relatedly, marking). It was noted that the amendments to the Procedures will reduce the level of moderation and double marking required, which should allow marking and moderation to be completed in a timely manner.
- A suggestion was made to include the definition for major discrepancies, particularly in relation to section 3.2.
- Clarity was sought regarding the process for disparity in moderation whereby marks might be uplifted for an entire cohort. It was noted that the process allows for discussion between marker(s) and moderator. It was further noted that this informed by previous instances where this rule was applied.
- Clarity was sought in relation to exam marks and the requirement to ensure all marks are totalled. It was noted that this will vary by School and is perhaps better reflected in the Examiners' Meetings guidance.
- The numbering of section 3.2.2 is missing, and section 2.3.4 requires to be changed, given it is in section 3.

4.4 The Group, for its part, was content for the Marking and Moderation Procedures to proceed to the Quality Assurance Committee for approval.

UK QUALITY CODE MAPPING

(i) SECTION 1: ADMISSIONS, RECRUITMENT AND WIDENING ACCESS

(copy filed as APRG/280224/005)

- 5.1 The Group heard a summary of the changes proposed to Section 1: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access, which were tracked changed on the document presented to the Group.
- 5.2 The Group discussed, in detail, the proposed amendments to Section 1 of the UK Quality Code Mapping. In discussion, the following was noted:
- In relation to section 2, addition of the approval by the Quality Assurance Committee pertaining to entry requirements.
 - In relation to section 3, inclusion of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP) projects which focused on direct entry and articulations.
 - In relation to section 4, addition of the Unibuddy scheme in relation to support provided to prospective students.
- 5.3 Subject to further amendment, the Group was content for Section 1 of the UK Quality Code Mapping to be presented to QAC for routine approval.

(ii) SECTION 5: ENABLING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

(copy filed as APRG/280224/006)

- 6.1 The Group heard a summary of the changes proposed to Section 5: Enabling Student Achievement, which were tracked changed on the document presented to the Group.
- 6.2 The Group discussed, in detail, the proposed amendments to Section 5 of the UK Quality Code Mapping. In discussion, the following was noted:
- In relation to section 1, (i) inclusion of a definition and context for the Student Partnership Agreement, and (ii) update the section pertaining to student-related strategic matters.
 - In relation to section 5, (i) update required in relation to the recent approval of the Graduate Attributes and Skills by the University Senate, (ii) inclusion of reference to University's Gaelic Language Plan, and (iii) confirmation regarding terminology for autistic spectrum condition.
 - In relation to section 6, inclusion of the Emily Test training.
 - In relation to section 7, replacement of Enhancement Themes with Thematic Enhancement work.
 - In relation to section 8, update required in relation to the recent approval of the Graduate Attributes and Skills by the University Senate. Additionally, the inclusion of the MySkills functionality.
 - In relation to section 9, (i) inclusion of the PTES, PRES and ASES surveys, (ii) additional information pertaining to professional services review, in relation to Internal Teaching Review, (iii) replacement of 'sparqs training' with 'in-house Students' Union training', and (iv) confirm the position in relation to wider student community members of the Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC).
- 6.3 Subject to further amendment, the Group was content for Section 5 of the UK Quality Code Mapping to be presented to QAC for routine approval.

(iii) SECTION 11: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

(copy filed as APRG/280224/007)

- 7.1 The Group heard a summary of the changes proposed to Section 11: Student Engagement, which were tracked changed on the document presented to the Group.
- 7.2 The Group discussed, in detail, the proposed amendments to Section 11 of the UK Quality Code Mapping. In discussion, the following was noted:
- In relation to section 1, inclusion of a definition and context for the Student Partnership Agreement.
 - In relation to section 2, inclusion of reference to the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) in monitoring and supporting outcomes of Internal Teaching Reviews.
 - In relation to section 3, (i) inclusion of proposed removed first paragraph, and (ii) addition of information pertinent to employability and external engagement.
 - In relation to section 6, confirmation that the Enhanced Transcript and STAR award are still applicable, and addition of MySkills.
 - In relation to section 7, addition of reference to publication of External Examiner Reports on MyAberdeen.
- 7.3 Subject to further amendment, the Group was content for Section 11 of the UK Quality Code Mapping to be presented to QAC for routine approval.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 8.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 24 April 2024 at 2:05pm via Microsoft Teams.