

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Minute of the Meeting held on 4 October 2023

- Present:* Steve Tucker (**Chair**), Will Barras, Qiang Cai, Selma Carson, Isabel Crane, Nadia DeGama, Isa Ehrenschwendtner, Mark Grant, Faye Hendry, Jacqui Hutchison, Rhiannon Ledwell, Laura McCann, Gareth Norton, Fiona Stoddard, with Scott Carle, Darren Comber, Gillian Mackintosh, and Liam Dyker (**Clerk**) in attendance.
- Apologies:* Lois Gall, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Lucy Leiper, Morag MacRae, Ann Simpson, Thanga Thevar, and Jo Vergunst.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(copy filed as QAC/041023/001)

- 1.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on 23 August 2023.

MATTERS ARISING

(copy filed as QAC/041023/002)

- 2.1 Vacancies on Senate (minute 7.2 refers): The Committee was advised to contact the Clerk if there were any expressions of interest.
- 2.2 Course Proposal Forms (minute 5.4 refers): It was noted that this action is now complete, and that the course proposal forms had been updated as part of Item 4.
- 2.3 Differences between MRes and MSc by Research (minutes 7.2 and 7.6(i) refer): There was no update provided at the meeting.
- 2.4 AFG College Annual Report 2021/22 (minute 10.3 refers): The Committee was advised that this was included as part of the agenda (Item 10.2 refers).

REMIT AND COMPOSITION

(copy filed as QAC/041023/003)

- 3.1 The Committee approved the Remit and Composition for 2023/24, subject to the addition of a further student representative. It was advised that student council elections will take place in mid-October, and that it is anticipated a member will be sought following the election results.
Action: RL/SC

**ANNUAL MONITORING AMENDS IN RELATION TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION,
AND DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM**

(copy filed as QAC/041023/004)

- 4.1 The Committee heard a summary of the paper and proposed amends to annual monitoring documentation in relation to EDI and Decolonising the Curriculum. It was noted that the amendments to existing processes allow for decolonising the curriculum and EDI activities to be embedded.
- 4.2 In discussion, clarity was sought regarding the comparison between activities in Aberdeen and at Transnational campuses, such as Qatar and whether this will be undertaken. It was suggested that responses should be discussed at School Education Committees where comparative

information can be shared and discussed. It was also noted that reports for Annual Programme Reviews and External Examiner Reports will be considered by QAC. Further, it was suggested that Decolonising the Curriculum leads within Schools are consulted as part of this process.

Action: Chair

4.3 Clarity was sought regarding the means of implementation of the decolonising the curriculum activities, and whether any training was being provided to staff in their roles. In response, it was advised that all Schools have a timeline for implementation, which aligns with that of the Institutional timeline. Further, it was highlighted that resources have been made available online. It was suggested that discussions take place offline with the Dean for Educational Innovation and colleagues in Qatar to provide an update on the decolonising work.

Action: GM with KK

4.4 A query was raised in relation to the publication of Examiner Reports retrospectively. In response, members were advised that communications had been issued to External Examiners to advise that reports would now be published.

4.5 Subject to the amendment of a formatting issue on the course proposal form and the removal of reference to colleges in the External Examiner report form, the Committee approved the proposal.

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT RESIT ASSESSMENTS

(copy filed as QAC/041023/005)

5.1 The Committee heard a summary of the proposals in relation to Postgraduate Taught resit assessments, noting a working group had been established with Schools represented to build a timeline for resit diets. It was stressed that resit assessments are not required to be formal examination. It was advised that the proposed model included a resit opportunity in the following term for the students.

5.2 Clarity was sought in relation to the definitions of formal and flexible resits. In response, it was advised that formal resits are exam-based, and flexible resits would be alternative assessment. Further, clarity was sought regarding the availability of the resit assessment period in the summer. It was advised that this remained. Concerns were raised regarding the workload associated with duplicate assessments required, and also in relation to the PSRB requirements in some programmes which require formal examination. It was noted that where Schools have alternative arrangements, this can be discussed with QAC.

5.3 Concern was raised regarding the lack of a formal Examiners' Meeting to consider the students, and clarity was sought as to whether this approach was robust enough. It was suggested that it is hoped the numbers of students requiring additional consideration will be small, and that a statement could be added to the guidance to ensure full consideration is given to mitigation within the circulated discussion.

5.4 In terms of next steps, the QAC was content to approve the proposals and endorsed their circulation to Schools, including guidance on managing cohorts of students.

EDUCATION POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW SCHEDULE

(copy filed as QAC/041023/006)

6.1 The Committee heard a summary of the Education Policy and Regulations Review Schedule. It was noted that the schedule maps out indicative timelines for policy and regulatory review across the next two academic years, aligning with committee cycles. It was further noted that,

in relation to PGR policy, these will be considered by the PGR Committee before consideration at QAC.

- 6.2 In discussion, clarity was sought as to the timeline for review of Fitness to Practise policy and procedures in Academic Year 2024/25. It was suggested that, through supporting students in the process, there are potential opportunities to streamline the processes. In response, it was advised that the policy review has been prioritised in terms of immediate necessity, and that resource implications were a factor. Further, it was noted that external factors may have an impact on the review schedule.
- 6.3 The Committee was content to approve the Schedule.

EXTERNAL QUALITY REFERENCE POINTS

(i) UPDATES TO SFC GUIDANCE TO UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ON QUALITY FOR 2022/23 AND 2023/24

(copy filed as QAC/041023/008)

- 7.1 The Committee heard a summary of the paper, noting the development of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework between Universities and Colleges. A summary of the key changes was provided in relation to reporting, TNE requirements, and requests for information. It was suggested that, given the University was early in the former ELIR cycle of review, it is likely the University will be early in the revised quality review process.

(ii) UPDATED TERTIARY ENHANCEMENT TOPIC OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

(copy filed as QAC/041023/009)

- 8.1 The Committee heard a summary of the paper, noting the requirement to report on the Tertiary Enhancement Topic as part of the interim quality arrangements. It was noted a reflective account of the topic will be prepared ahead of the University's Institutional Liaison Meeting with QAA Scotland in January 2024. It was noted QAC will review this ahead of submission.

PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES

(i) CIPD ACCREDITATION (BUSINESS SCHOOL)

(copy filed as QAC/041023/010)

- 9.1 The Committee heard a summary of the paper, noting the requirement for amendment to the supplementary regulations for postgraduate taught to include the inability to use compensation on the MSc International Human Resource Management programmes. It was advised that this rule would apply on both the MSc and PGDip programmes. If a student cannot obtain the credits for the respective programmes, they will be exited with a lower award. It was noted that numbers of students requiring compensatory credits at PGT-level is very small.
- 9.2 Clarity was sought in relation to a resit opportunity for students on these programmes. It was confirmed that there was still a resit opportunity. Further, it was suggested that the Annual Programme Review for this programme includes explicit comment on this issue and whether there has been any impact on the students.
- 9.3 The QAC was content to approve the proposal, and noted that the regulatory amend will come forward to the Committee for approval as part of the Omnibus Resolution.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

(i) TOTAL UK ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

(copy filed as QAC/041023/011)

10.1 The Committee heard a summary of the amends made, following previous consideration at the Committee. It was advised that the Committee had sought further information on the feedback gathered from students and how feedback has been acted upon.

10.2 The Committee was content to approve the report.

(ii) AFG COLLEGE WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

(copy filed as QAC/041023/019)

11.1 The Committee heard a summary of the amends made, following previous consideration at the Committee. It was noted that the student monitoring section had been updated, as had the action plan.

11.2 Concern was raised regarding the data recorded for student monitoring, which indicated that all C7s were removed from students' records, which it was confirmed was not the case. It was agreed that the data will be clarified with colleagues at AFG College and brought back to the Committee for consideration.

Action: Clerk/NDeG

[Clerk's Note: Shona Potts joined the meeting at this point.]

SHORTFALL OF CREDITS ON STUDY ABROAD

(copy filed as QAC/041023/007)

12.1 The Committee heard a summary of the proposed approach in relation to students who acquire a shortfall of credits on periods of study abroad. It was advised that the proposals addressed concerns whereby students were arriving back in Aberdeen following a period abroad with a credit shortfall. It was further noted that the proposals sought to provide consistency across the School and an accurate record of what was agreed.

12.2 Overall, the Committee was supportive of the proposals. Clarity was sought regarding whether this could be rolled out across the University to ensure consistency across all Schools. It was agreed that it would be useful to audit other areas to review their processes for dealing with students who return from study abroad with a credit shortfall. It was further agreed that a small group will meet to discuss general aspects of the proposals involving the Chair, Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship, Director of Academic Services and Online Education, Director of Education for School of LLMVC, and GoAbroad Manager. It was noted the group will explore any broader relevant or areas to consider beyond that within the School of LLMVC.

12.3 The Committee approved the proposals in the paper.

[Clerk's Note: Shona Potts left the meeting at this point.]

STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEE REMIT AND COMPOSITION

(copy filed as QAC/041023/012)

- 13.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the Students' Progress Committee Remit and Composition for 2023/24.

STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEE (MEDICINE & DENTISTRY) REMIT AND COMPOSITION

(copy filed as QAC/041023/013)

- 14.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the Students' Progress Committee (Medicine and Dentistry) Remit and Composition for 2023/24.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE (MEDICINE & DENTISTRY) REMIT AND COMPOSITION

(copy filed as QAC/041023/014)

- 15.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine and Dentistry) Remit and Composition for 2023/24.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE (EDUCATION) REMIT AND COMPOSITION

(copy filed as QAC/041023/015)

- 16.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the Fitness to Practise Committee (Education) Remit and Composition for 2023/24.

UPDATES FROM SUB-COMMITTEES OR REPORTING COMMITTEES

(i) ACADEMIC POLICY AND REGULATION GROUP (APRG)

(copy filed as QAC/041023/016)

- 17.1 The Committee noted the report from the Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG).

MATTERS APPROVED BY CONVENOR'S ACTION

- 18.1 The Committee noted the following matters approved by Convenor's Action:

- (i) Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine and Dentistry) Composition.
(copy filed as QAC/041023/017)
- (ii) Additional In-Absentia Graduation Date
- (iii) Student Monitoring Key Dates
(copy filed as QAC/041023/021)

QAA QUALITY CODE

(i) QUALITY CODE MAPPING: EXTERNAL EXPERTISE

(copy filed as QAC/041023/018)

- 19.1 The Committee noted the Quality Code Mapping in respect of Section 6: External Expertise, and the amends made therein.

(ii) QUALITY CODE REVIEW SCHEDULE

(copy filed as QAC/041023/020)

- 20.1 The Committee noted the Quality Code Review Schedule.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 21.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 13 December 2023 at 2:05pm via Microsoft Teams.

- 21.2 In discussion, it was noted that papers were currently not available to download which prevented School QA Representatives from consulting with their Schools. It was noted that going forward discussions will be had with the Governance and Executive Support team to highlight these concerns and that papers would be made available on Sharepoint to allow members to consult.