1.1 The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) approved the minute of the meeting held on 11 March 2015 subject to a few minor typographical revisions.

Action: Clerk

MATTERS ARISING

2.1 With reference to section 2.5 of QAC/300415/002, where the Committee sought the specific process for External Examiner (EE) nominations at PGR level, the Committee discussed what the role of QAC should be. There seemed to be discrepancies in how the process is run in different Colleges. The Committee agreed it was necessary to check that procedures have been followed and to determine whether QAC members require any subject expertise when signing off on EE nominations.

Action: Clerk

GENERAL DENTAL COUNCIL REPORT 2014

3.1 The Committee received an overview of the General Dental Council (GDC) Report from Professor Rona Patey from the School of Medicine and Dentistry. The Committee was informed that the report relates to the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) degree which has graduated three cohorts of students thus far. Professor Patey proceeded to outline the process that GDC undertakes for reviewing new BDS degree programmes before awarding ‘sufficiency’. This requires a full inspection, which includes a two day visit, and review of students’ progress at final assessments as well as attendance at exam boards. The Committee noted the challenges the School has had in relation to the timing of these visits.

3.2 The Committee was made aware of the standards for education set out by the GDC. There are 29 standards used to review the programme. For each standard, the School is required to provide evidence. This is evaluated and then used to determine whether the standard has been ‘met’, ‘partially met’ or ‘unmet’. The Committee was informed that the School was measured as having ‘partially met’ many of those standards and having fully ‘met’ some of those standards. There were no standards outlined by the GDC that the School had ‘unmet’.

3.3 Professor Patey discussed a series of adverse events that had taken place while students were treating patients which were reported correctly and in accordance with School procedures. The Committee was informed that this led to substantial adverse publicity which proved to be challenging for both staff and students. Professor Patey advised the Committee that the GDC had recently visited and the feedback received from that visit showed that a lot of progress has been made and that students were positive and engaged in the curriculum.
3.4 Professor Patey was asked how the School was intending to address the issues raised by the GDC. The Committee was informed that all feedback has been taken on board and the School is looking at ways of addressing them. The School has adopted four workstream strands which include assessment, patient safety, staff training and staff development. The Committee noted that this has been helpful in allowing the School to evaluate progress more easily. The Committee was informed that the Internal Teaching Review (ITR) Panel during the recent ITR, was impressed with the measures the School had put in place to address the areas for development.

3.5 The Committee enquired about the dropout and failure rate. Professor Patey stated that the figures reported in the press were inaccurate and proceeded to outline the different training paths for students undergoing the BDS programme. The Committee was informed that unlike other programmes ‘not achieved’ does not necessarily mean that a student has failed, just that the stage of clinical practice achieved at that time was not sufficient for that student to progress, or sit their finals.

3.6 The Committee enquired as to the effect the publicity has had on recruiting patients. Professor Patey stated that there does not appear to have been an effect thus far. The Committee was informed that the School does face a challenge in acquiring a good patient base providing students with a wide range of clinical practice; however this is not unique to the University of Aberdeen.

3.7 The Committee further enquired as to the effect the publicity has had on recruiting students. Professor Patey stated that so far there has been no negative effect but it is an ongoing concern within the School. The Committee noted that the School has sought for, and received, strong and repeated re-assurance from NHS Education for Scotland and the Chief Dental Officer that the School that funding will not be stopped. Professor Patey was of the view that there is no immediate threat with regards to student recruitment.

3.8 The Committee noted the enormous challenges the School is facing in staff recruitment. The Committee was made aware of the scarcity of dental academia and that this is not a challenge unique to the University of Aberdeen. The Committee noted the recent appointment of a new Directory of Dentistry as being an encouraging development.

3.9 The Convenor thanked, and expressed appreciation to, Professor Patey for taking the time to speak to the Committee regarding the GDC report.

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW

ITR Report Response: Physics and Maths (QAC/300415/003)

4.1 The Committee noted that the ITR for the Chemistry Department is due to take place on November 2015. The Committee agreed that it is necessary to determine whether the individual disciplines within the School of Natural and Computing Sciences ought to be reviewed together under one ITR process or whether they should be reviewed separately. The Committee considered the One Year Follow-Up Report received from the Physics and Maths departments in the School of Natural & Computing Sciences. Overall, the Committee was content with the report provided. The Committee did however note concerns relating to the lack of engagement between the Maths department in particular and the University’s central professional services. In addition the Committee noted issues relating to the Personal Tutor system and was informed that feedback regarding the Personal Tutor System
would be forwarded to the Vice Principal for Learning and Teaching. The Committee acknowledged problems relating to the class representative system and agreed that Aberdeen University Students’ Association (AUSA) would be approached to discuss this.

Action: Clerk

COURSE AND PROGRAMME APPROVAL

5.1 The Committee was informed that there were a number of proposals sitting at Level 4 on the SharePoint site. Members of the Committee were asked to inform the Clerk of any proposals they would like to be approved. A reminder will be sent to all Committee members.

Action: Clerk and Members of Committee

COURSE AND PROGRAMME REVIEW

6.1 Several issues relating to the annual course review of PX1016 were brought to the attention of the Committee regarding the naming of individuals and the marking of the course. The Committee agreed this was concerning and matters should be investigated with feedback being provided to both the Head of School and Course Co-ordinator.

Action: Clerk

6.2 The Committee was informed that samples of Annual Course Review (ACR) reports had been received from 7 Schools and were awaiting QAC members’ comments. The Committee agreed that those Schools should receive an acknowledgement email thanking them for their prompt submission.

Action: Clerk

STUDENT PARTNERSHIPS PROCESS

7.1 The Committee noted that a new process for collaborative provision had been developed. The Committee was informed that the purpose of the new process was to make processing collaborative provision proposals more efficient and to ensure Quality Assurance matters are addressed early in the process and particularly at the contract stage. The Committee discussed the importance of QAC’s involvement in assuring the quality of these partnerships even in instances where there is a strong business case for a particular proposal.

7.2 It was agreed that the Committee should keep the new partnerships process under review following its implementation. The Committee discussed the ‘Quality Assurance’ section of the ‘Managing a Partnership’ section of the ‘Partnerships Lifecycle’ paper. There was confusion amongst Committee members as to who ‘All’ was referring to at the start of the second sentence of the paragraph. The Committee agreed that this needed to be clarified.

Action: Clerk

MSC IN MINDFULNESS

8.1 The Committee approved, for its part, the Final Report of the Panel and the School Response for the revalidation of the MSc Studies in Mindfulness. Discussions ensued as to the programme and the revalidation report by the end of which the Committee was happy to endorse the decision of the Panel. The Committee did note however, the concerns some
members of the Committee in relation to the language used on the web pages relating to Mindfulness.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

9.1 The Committee approved the distribution of responsibility for the QAC in relation to External Examiner Reports and SENAS submissions for the 2015/16 Academic Year. The distribution of responsibility for the QAC is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Paul Bishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Steven Lawrie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divinity, History and Philosophy</td>
<td>Bill Harrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Malcolm Hole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>David Lurie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geosciences</td>
<td>David Hendry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language and Literature</td>
<td>Marie-Luise Ehrenschwendtner (Backup Malcolm Hole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Steven Lawrie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Sciences</td>
<td>Mhairi Beaton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Dentistry</td>
<td>Mhairi Beaton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and Computing Sciences</td>
<td>Kath Shennan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>David Lurie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>Paul Bishop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 23 September 2015 at 2.00pm in the Court Room, University Office.