

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
STUDENT SUPPORT  
COMMITTEE**

**Minute of the meeting held on 21 March 2022**

*Present:* Abbe Brown (Chair), Lyn Batchelor, Tim Baker, John Cavanagh, Grainne Ferrigan, Charlotta Hillerdal, Alison Jenkinson, Stevie Kearney, Graeme Kirkpatrick, Ondrej Kucerak, Wendy Lowe, Martin Barker, Heidi Mehrkens, Russell Moffatt, Jemma Murdoch, Carolyn Porter, Mary Pryor, Megan Smith, Duncan Stuart, Jacqui Tuckwell, Bekah Walker, Zeray Yihdego and Lesley Muirhead (Clerk)

*Apologies:* Nick Edwards, Heather Branigan, Jaye Carr, Ivana Drdakova, Oghenamega Erivona, Katrina Foy, Bryony Garford, Iain Grant, Lucy Leiper, Martin Mills, Emma Richards, Fiona Ritchie, Julie Timms, Steve Tucker, Melanie Viney

**Welcome and Chairs' Update**

- 1.1 Abbe Brown (AB) opened the meeting and welcomed members to the fifth meeting of the Student Support Committee (SSC).
- 1.2 Many students and staff have been in touch with concerns about the war in Ukraine. Students and staff have been contacted to ensure that they are aware of the financial and other forms of support available. There are ongoing discussions about other paths of support which could be offered. AB advised that if anyone would like to be involved in the discussions that they should contact her in the first instance.
- 1.3 Martin Barker (MB) noted that it was great to see the institutional support for Ukrainian students and staff. He noted that it would be good to see support to Russian students and staff. AB confirmed that the support is available to everyone affected by war, to ensure that all students and staff are supported.

**Approval of the Minute of the SSC held on 03 February 2022**

*(copy filed as SSC/210322/002)*

- 2.1 Members of the Committee approved the Minute of the meeting of the SSC held on 03 February 2022.

**School Actions in response to the NSS and ASES**

*(copy filed as SSC/210322/003)*

- 3.1 AB advised that at the last SSC meeting on 03 February 2022 it was agreed that time would be dedicated in this meeting of the Committee to discuss the School actions in response to the NSS and ASES, in relation to the ASES paper discussed at the last SSC meeting. No feedback was received from members of the Committee.

- 3.2 AB confirmed that this is an ongoing piece of work for which the Schools are working with the Student Experience Team and relevant Directorates.
- 3.3 Duncan Stuart (DS) provided reassurance to the Committee that the Student Experience Team are following up with the different stakeholders and Directorates who feed into the ASES to ensure that the actions being taken are captured. This exercise was recently completed with the Qatar campus. The actions being recorded are being used for benchmarking and are reported back to students. This ensures that the feedback loop is closed. Grainne Ferrigan (GF) noted that the Online Team have had an effective meeting with the Student Experience Team in which they identified actions for their Team.
- 3.4 Tim Baker (TB) highlighted the dissatisfaction in the feedback around inductions for PGT students. The LLMVC School has been trying hard to improve the process. He asked if the University has considered making changes to the induction process, to ensure that it is effective and whether changes could be implemented for the start of the new academic year. DS advised that TB's views are shared by many others and the Student Experience Team continue to review and develop the process to try to engage students to access the induction materials. It is known that students do not read much of the information sent to them. Over the last few years, the Student Experience Team have adapted how they deliver the materials; it has been difficult to measure the effectiveness of this due to the Covid-19 pandemic as students were compelled to access the materials in one way only. This year the Student Experience Team are looking to make it compulsory for students to access the materials. How this will be delivered and monitored is currently being considered. The Student Experience Team are doing their best to try to assess what works and what changes are required to better engage with our student community. Ideas on the process are welcome as it is a challenging area. AB added that in addition to the central orientation, there are School based orientation programmes; some students engage with one or the other of these options.
- 3.5 Alison Jenkinson (AJ) asked whether the central communication could be sent out by Schools via MyAberdeen as at times, we know that students engage with this more effectively and perhaps it would be helpful to do this a few weeks after term commences. This coordination may help to reinforce the requirements for engagement. AB advised that the 'drip-feeding' of information is being considered and work is ongoing in relation to this. DS advised that students do often engage more with communication from their Schools rather than when it is centrally provided. Many of the communications sent to students are administered via the Schools to ensure peak engagement. DS noted that there is no one method that works for everyone and we need to be careful not to bombard students with the same information from different channels. We need to ensure that the variety of content is spread through different channels, in different ways, in the hope that it reaches a larger number of people. The Student Communication Policy was recently revised and approved; this provides guidance to Directorates and Schools

in relation to the best ways to communicate with their students and it aims to provide uniformity to try to reduce the volume of traffic and ensure that the important messages stand out more. The information is now on the University website.

- 3.6 John Cavanagh (JC) highlighted a recent discussion with a student who was distressed as a result of being found to have self-plagiarised. The student was unaware of the rules and regulations in relation to plagiarism as they had not read the Student Handbook which contains a substantial amount of information that is rarely read by students. JC is addressing this on his programme by creating an induction video which all students watch, and he delivers an interactive session on plagiarism, self-plagiarism, referencing and critical thinking at the beginning of each semester. This has been prompted as it has been identified that Engineering experiences a high number of plagiarism cases. JC noted that we need to think about how we can encourage students to engage with the information as it is not being read in the current format. He also noted that it is difficult for students to understand the regulations and it can be challenging for staff to do this, as they are very complex. JC added that he does not feel that it is fair for the University to make decisions on areas such as plagiarism, based on the reliance that students access the information provided in the current format and are aware of the complex regulations. Martin Barker (MB) noted that he likes the idea of the video guidance as students tend to respond better to information in this format. AB noted that this is a good example of how Schools can complement the information being provided centrally to ensure that students are aware of this. AJ agreed that there is more collectively that we need to do to help ensure that students are supported in the early stages of their studies and as they progress, in the knowledge that all of the information shared with students at the beginning of their studies will not be remembered. We need to ensure that we re-enforce this information. The induction material provides information about areas such as plagiarism in different ways and it explains the different ways in which students can fall foul of the rules. The information is there but there is a recognition that it is challenging to engage with this, especially as students commence their studies. AJ advised that the disciplinary regulations were changed a few years ago to ensure that the first stage can focus on educating students who have unintentionally or accidentally, through not fully understanding the regulations, been found to have plagiarised. This enables Schools to take the decision to confirm that a student has committed an offence but the penalty applied is not so severe that it would affect the student's career. If the student was to commit the same offence again, the penalty applied would be more severe. Schools now have significant control over how to deal with these cases. The aim is to support and educate students rather than to penalise them at the first offence.
- 3.7 Wendy Lowe (WL) noted that in society generally there is a constant overwhelm of information; it is key to consider how we narrow down and prioritise what we communicate to students and staff. This has to be at the fore-front of our minds as otherwise people switch off and the information is not processed effectively. AB agreed with this and advised that the Communications Policy goes some way

to addressing this in terms of consideration being provided to the volume of information being communicated.

- 3.8 AB asked SSC members to liaise with School colleagues involved in responding to the results from last year's NSS and ASES and make them aware that we will provide some time for School colleagues to share practices at our next SSC.

***Action: School Committee members (item 3.8)***

**Follow up on Student Withdrawals report from SSC meeting on 03 February 2022**

*(copy filed SSC/210322/004)*

- 4.1 AB highlighted the report presented at the last meeting of the SSC by Chris Souter in relation to student withdrawals and the statistics around this. It was agreed at the last meeting of the SSC that members of the Committee would review the information and discussed at this meeting to explore the actions we as a Committee would recommend.
- 4.2 AB suggested the Committee consider points such as that students are leaving continuously across the academic year. There is some variety in the statistics across the Schools. There is not a large difference in the numbers of students withdrawing from year to year. There is some difference in the numbers as a result of students arriving late to commence their studies.
- 4.3 Martin Barker (MB) noted that in his experience some students who initially intend to withdraw do not always realise that suspension of studies is an option. AB agreed with this and highlighted the work of the Readmissions Group and the work of the Resilient Learning Communities Group. There is a script and resource available online to try to encourage students if they are struggling with their studies or with anything else, to engage with the available support and to be aware that suspension of studies is an available option. It is also made clear that for some students leaving their studies, perhaps with a certificate, diploma or designated degree is the right course of action for them. We have to acknowledge that this is an absolutely fine outcome for students and move away from thinking of students leaving early as a 'failure'; this is a really inappropriate message to send students. It is extremely important that we are careful in everything we do that we are encouraging students to choose to stay and supporting them through this but if they feel that a different path is the right one for them, then we support them to take this path.
- 4.4 Tim Baker (TB) highlighted concern about the information highlighted in the report. TB looked at the statistics in his school. He highlighted a spike for UG withdrawals in August, which hasn't yet been considered at these meetings. These students would have passed their courses and then decided to withdraw in mid-late August. He noted that this may be due to the Covid-19 pandemic and students deciding that they do not wish to study in a blended way. TB was very surprised by this spike. He feels that in his School they have a lot of plans in relation to

particular demographics and particular time periods but this is one area where institutionally we may find it difficult to identify students who may withdraw at this time and to engage effectively with these students about their decision at the time, when it matters. TB suggested that we look at this an institution as it may not just be in his School, in the last academic year. AB suggested that students may feel that in August there is nobody available for them to speak with about their decision to withdraw; which is not the case. AB highlighted that this may also tie into the work of the Student Progress Convenors' as this is when the letters on student progress will be issued. The letters are aimed to be supportive but perhaps there is some work to be considered in relation to this.

- 4.5 TB advised that one thing that has helped in his School is that they repeatedly circulated in December, his contact details and the contact details of the Director of Education, advising that any student who wasn't sure what they wanted to do in relation to their courses, could speak with them confidentially (that is, as opposed to a course convenor or personal tutor; they were offering general institutional/School knowledge). TB advised that uptake was not huge, but they retained a lot of students, and the students he spoke with really liked that the option was available, even though they had not accessed it. The School are aware that many students indicate that they have chosen the wrong subject and they see many students withdraw when they would be happier to change courses.
- 4.6 AB noted that a lot of work has taken place to look at issues for particular cohorts of students. Discussions are taking place around late starts and raising awareness of the expectations of students and the support available.
- 4.7 John Cavanagh has followed up on what happens when students leave and the documentation received. The website with information for students on the process was to be updated. JC highlighted that we do not have a mechanism for following students up to support them to return to their studies and to highlight their options for achieving diplomas and certificates. AB advised that Registry were amending the website to make the options clear to students. AB confirmed that whilst students are away from their studies and return is an option, they will receive communication. Schools and services are continuing to work on improving the communication about this.
- 4.8 AB highlighted that it may be helpful to map the student journey, documenting what happens at different phases (from pre-entry to completion) and the support that is offered. This will help us to identify gaps and how can these be addressed. This could be a complimentary way to highlight services and support. It would be available to all students and staff and it could also perhaps target information to particular groups of students, such as estranged students over holiday periods. The preparation of this is being considered across the University and with Advance HE.
- 4.9 Jacqui Tuckwell (JT) noted a potential gap between academic support and the support provided by the Accommodation Team. It may be helpful to create a more

joined-up system. AB and JT noted that there aren't many gaps in the current system but perhaps consideration needs to be given for guidance on who students should be signposted to speak with, such as the Personal Tutor (PT) for academic-related support. JT said it was great when a Tutor calls the Accommodation Team to raise a concern; this can be really valuable to enable engagement with students and to ensure they are suitably supported. Duncan Stuart (DS) agreed that mapping could be useful but also highlighted that we currently do a lot of work to support the student community; it is inevitable that we are going to miss people who may not engage with communication and support but we keep trying. It is a worthwhile exercise if it helps our colleagues and the community to better understand the support available and makes it easier to signpost people to the correct source of support. DS highlighted that we may want to ask students (as we have not asked them for a while) whether they know how to find out about the services and how to access support in the moment of need, even if they do not know about all the support services offered. AB highlighted that she has recently become aware that students may know how to locate information about services but staff may not, so information to reaffirm this would likely be helpful.

- 4.10 Ondrej Kucerak (OK) was interested to know if there was any specific learning to take from figures within the Business School, especially around PGT courses. AB confirmed that some of these issues were related to a particular cohort of students who experienced visas issues as a result of lack of engagement. We need to learn from these situations and look at how we can ensure students are aware of the expectations of the University in terms of engagement.
- 4.11 AB will speak with Student Recruitment and the Heads of Student Support and Experience about the feedback provided by members of the SSC and how we move forward with this.

**Action: AB (see item 4.11)**

#### **Code of Practice on Student Discipline (non-academic)**

*(copy filed as SSC/210322/005)*

- 5.1 DS introduced the revised version of the Code of Practice on Student Discipline. The previous version has been used for a number of years, and it is hoped that through this piece of work which Nick Edwards (NE) has led on and has consulted with a number of key stakeholders who are already exposed to how we manage cases under the code of practice, this new version will be taken forward. NE has noted some comments in the paper to help Committee members better understand the thinking behind the changes. Members of the Committee were asked to provide any comments and feedback and to ask questions for further clarification. DS advised that feedback could be provided after the meeting via the Infohub.
- 5.2 Jacqui Tuckwell (JT) advised that she has been involved with the review and that it is a work in progress which will be presented once the document is completed. JT

feels this is a great piece of work which needed consideration; JT is often involved in non-academic discipline matters and this review is very welcome.

- 5.3 Ondrej Kucerak (OK) welcomed the work and provided some comments on the review; in section 7 in relation to the investigation, it is hinted that AUSA can provide support through the process. OK advised that it is important that it is noted in the Code that the Clerk has the responsibility to let the affected party know that they can seek help from AUSA. In section 9.5 which states that during any period of temporary suspension or exclusion, pending the investigation, provisions will be made to ensure that there is no academic impact on the individual. OK wondered how feasible this will be in reality; it is feasible at present with blended learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but once we return to more campus based learning, he does not think that academic staff can produce online content for on-campus sessions which have not been pre-prepared. OK highlighted that he is aware that there have previously been difficulties with providing alternative methods of assessment and how this works with policies in relation to anonymous marking. He asked if this has been considered as part of the review. OK advised that in relation to the membership of the Disciplinary Investigation Group, the only significant change in the investigation group is the student one; the revised Code states that it can be any member of AUSA but this could be any student. OK suggested that this should be restricted to trained AUSA representatives who have the required support to undertake the role. OK noted that the whole document is really great and will be very helpful for panel members to guide them through the process but there are several points which may be unclear to students and could lead to confusion in the current format. OK requested that consideration is given to the development of a flow chart or a simplified version which could be made available to students. OK added that the outcomes of the revised Code are much better than the current outcomes. OK recommended that consideration is given to whether community service could be considered as an outcome of a hearing. OK also added that the panel can remove an individual from the University for a year; he asked if there is any scope for the time limit for students' studies being paused to be reviewed.
- 5.4 AJ supported OK's request for a flow chart. AJ agreed that a huge amount of good work has been undertaken on the review but it has inevitably made the whole process and the paperwork longer and it potentially looks more complicated than the current process, even if in practice, it is not. AJ added that she assumes that the next stage would involve the development of a flow chart. AJ noted that a flow chart would need to include descriptors explaining the terminology used such as 'what is a panel hearing' and 'what is an initial investigation' so that students can look through the process in detail, as well as at a summary level.
- 5.5 GF noted that it would be helpful if some examples of misconduct could include online/virtual examples i.e. misconduct in social media groups.
- 5.6 MB noted that anonymised marking is a good aspiration but sometimes it is not achievable (such as for project work and for alternative assessments). He added

that there are trade-offs between removal of bias whilst still allowing individualised assessments.

- 5.7 JC highlighted that littering on campus is considered a 'high level offence'. JC questioned whether this is proportionate. JC asked the meaning of the offence which states "Deliberately doing, or failing to do, anything which causes the University to be in breach of a statutory obligation." He noted that staff may not understand what this means, so how can students understand this? AB highlighted NE's note in relation to section 2.3 of the review document which explains that "levels" of misconduct in the previous Code have been removed and will, instead, focus on severity when applying outcomes following a process under the Code; giving clarity on the sorts of behaviour, and the underlying themes, that may result in higher penalties (such as the inclusion of violence, the targeting of harassment and taking into consideration the duration and length of behaviours etc.).
- 5.8 AB wondered about whether consideration needs to be given to specifically engaging students who are out on placement. AB added that in 5.1 of the revised Code, consideration could be given to referring to 'a supporter' for students; this could tie in with OK's suggestion about making clear the support available from AUSA. It could also outline the other supporters who could accompany students and detail what the person is there to do and not to do. It could also make clear whether students are entitled to attend with the support of a Lawyer. Linked in with this, it would be helpful to clarify the roles of the panel members. In section 6.5, AB wondered if it would be helpful to advise the Personal Tutor, in addition to the Head of School. Consideration and clarity on these points would be helpful.
- 5.9 OK asked if there needs to be additional guidance for the panel on how to impose penalties as removing the level system may result in inconsistency of achieving outcomes, depending on who makes up the panel and whether different outcomes in very similar cases are fair or unfair (given there are always some differences).
- 5.10 JC asked what the burden of proof is. AB highlighted that the document is clear that the decision of the panel under the Code is distinct from any other investigations, including criminal investigations. This is a point which needs exploring further.
- 5.11 JC suggested that if a student has been sentenced by a court, it would seem unfair to further punish them under the Code. AB advised that this can be considered but it is clear that these situations would be dealt with distinctly.
- 5.12 AJ shared an excerpt from the Academic Discipline Code on the burden of proof which states "2.4 The standard of proof that shall be used in all cases under this Code is the balance of probabilities. This is the same standard used in civil law proceedings. This means that a Head of School, Investigating Officer or anyone else permitted to make a decision under this Code will be satisfied that an event

occurred if they decide, having reviewed the evidence available, that the occurrence of the event was more likely than not”.

- 5.13 JC asked whether we need to consider the requirement for corroboration. JT advised that this hasn't been discussed as far as she is aware. DS advised that corroboration is not required as it is not a court of law; the decision is opinion based, based on the information gathered, following the process. AB highlighted that if anyone feels this needs fed-back we can do this.
- 5.14 Jemma Murdoch (JM) highlighted that there is a clear and robust appeals process. If someone is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation then ultimately they can appeal the decision.
- 5.15 TB asked if there is any specific guidance for support for the reporting student whilst the investigation is ongoing. AB feels this needs to be further highlighted and the role of the reporter needs to be clear. The revised Code does address how the supporter will be kept informed; this isn't something included in the Code at this time. OK added that there might also need to be something related to how we keep someone updated if the case affected them, for example if the Police passed on the case to us before the student could (and hence they are not eligible for updates as they did not report it).
- 5.16 JC asked whether there should be 'sentencing guidelines' to ensure consistency. JT suggested that this is fed forward for review. JT highlighted that there is consistency but no two cases are exactly the same. AJ agreed with this and noted that as new situations emerge, we need to ensure that our rules and regulations are flexible to ensure proportionate decisions are made. AJ added that it is really important that Investigating Officers receive training to ensure that there is consistency in our practice and approach. There needs to be a continuous process of learning, including learning from appeals, which can highlight inconsistencies and errors. DS thinks that there is consistency as usually a similar group of people are involved, who follow the process. DS feels the process does work and the proposed plan will support improvements. DS added that the University does not aim to put students through the process; it exists to protect the student and staff community where individuals have perhaps made mistakes or ill-judged actions. DS noted that the feedback provided has been very helpful and will be provided to NE.
- 5.17 JC asked if there should be full transparency, such as case law, so students can see whether their outcome is relative to other outcomes and what the established punishment is for the offence. AB highlighted that this would not take into consideration all of the variable factors involved in a particular case, not just the offence and the punishment, which may lead to a case receiving a different outcome. AB advised that this can be fed-back for discussion and that this may assist decision makers.

**Action: DS to provide feedback to NE**

**Strategic Risk Register***(copy filed as SSC/210322/006)*

- 6.1 SSC members discussed and reflected on the points and areas highlighted in the Strategic Risk Register, focussing on the Education risks as we are an Education Committee.
- 6.2 JC highlighted that we should have a process to ensure that we review the risks to ensure that everything is covered. JC asked in relation to the risk descriptions, if consideration has been given to cause, effect and impact; this is good practice when mitigating risk.
- 6.3 AB noted that the Register went through the UEC and there is now a new University template to which the information will be migrated in due course.
- 6.4 Russell Moffatt (RM) highlighted that the Register is provided in a set format to ensure consistency across the University. An additional column is being added for noting changes on the movement of the risks. AJ noted that the additional column has come about as a recommendation from another committee. This is focused on high level/major risks. It is an evolving piece of work; the template is structured and includes a traffic light system.
- 6.5 AB will highlight JC's feedback to the Planning team who are responsible for the Register.
- 6.6 AB asked members of the Committee to get in touch if they wish to provide any feedback on the Register.

***Action: AB to feedback to the Planning team***

**School structures relevant to the SSC remit**

- 7.1 Members of the Committee discussed the student support roles and structures within the Schools. AB acknowledged that for good reason there are differences in practices and processes across the Schools; some Schools have their own Student Support Committees and some Schools have Wellbeing Officers. AB thinks it may be helpful to try to map the practices, so that we are all aware of the different roles within the Schools, which exist broadly within the SSC remit and to enable the sharing of good practice.
- 7.2 Lesley Muirhead (LM) asked if we can consider PGR students and who Student Support should contact to discuss support for students; should this be the PGR School and/or colleagues in the relevant Schools. AB noted it is vital to remember PGR students in all such conversations.

- 7.3 AB asked School Committee members to share details of the roles and committees in their Schools which are relevant to the work of the SSC, including for PGR students.

***Action: School Committee members (see item 7.3)***

**UEC reports on SSC Task and Finish Groups**

*(copy filed as SSC/210322/007)*

- 8.1 AB introduced the UEC reports on the work of the SSC TFGs and provided an update on the progress of the work being undertaken by the TFGs.
- 8.2 The emerging recommendations of the Pastoral Review TFG were presented at Senate in February. The TFG then engaged with staff and student focus groups, Heads of School, SAMs and all School Education Leads to ask for feedback on the emerging recommendations. All of the evidence, benchmarking and results of the focus groups have been gathered and considered by the TFG. The group is now reflecting on the changes that they would like to make to the emerging recommendations, to formalise these. The group are meeting later this week to discuss this and write up a report on this. The recommendations will be discussed at an exceptional meeting of the Student Support Committee. This information will then be presented to UEC and Senate for further comment.
- 8.3 The work of the Monitoring, Absence and Engagement TFG is at a slightly earlier phase; high level principles about what should apply to monitoring, absence and engagement have been identified. The essence of the work is about support; it is not about getting anyone into trouble. There are particular reasons on some programmes why students are required to engage, in addition to the fact that the provision of support will help students to re-engage with the University community and assist academically. The TFG has taken the view that engagement is not just about passing assessments; this is not the way the TFG feels that engagement should be monitored. A key recommendation will be that we need to ensure the process is as streamlined as possible for staff and students and to ensure that the process is as clear as it can be. One area which is still being considered is whether the process will be centrally operated or completed at School level. It is likely that the draft principles will be presented to UEC in April for comment. The principles will be shared with SSC members for comment prior to the UEC meeting.
- 8.4 The Monitoring, Absence and Engagement TFG has also been creating a list of areas identified in the process which are unclear, such as the presence of a C6 appeal form in some Schools.
- 8.5 JC noted that there is significant inconsistency between Schools in the way that C6s and C7s are processed and it is causing confusion for the students, especially those with courses across multiple schools. AB advised that these points are being considered to avoid such wide variety of approaches.

### **Update on student mental health agreement- extensions/more School information sharing?**

- 9.1 AB opened up the discussion about the work being undertaken in relation to the student mental health agreement, which has been completed in collaboration with AUSA. As part of this work it has been identified that there should be a more consistent approach towards coursework extensions, especially from a student mental health perspective. We are aware that Schools have distinctive approaches towards extensions, which may be for good reason, but students do not start off expecting a difference between Schools; communication is key. The immediate plan is for Schools to reflect on how well their extension process is made clear to students, including disabled students with the provision of 'agreed extensions to deadlines'. Work can be undertaken with AUSA and the Student Experience Team to ensure that these processes are clear to students. A wider review of several policies, including the extensions policy, will be completed over the summer. This will focus on fairly high level principles being implemented in Schools but this will hopefully also provide an opportunity to remove the variety in process and practice. The aim is for the processes to be made clearer and less stressful for students.
- 9.2 Mary Pryor (MP) mentioned the student-led presentation on mental health, which was really well attended, with around 90 attendees. Extensions was a key issue raised. This seems particularly challenging for students on joint degrees and for students studying across Schools and different disciplines. There is a lot of pressure on staff as well to meet student expectations.
- 9.3 Charlotta Hillderal (CH) advised that the School of Geosciences has just implemented a school wide policy on extensions, and procedures, and feedback has been positive.
- 9.4 AB highlighted that some Schools have a Committee who consider extension requests.
- 9.5 Zeray Yihdego (ZY) noted that the Law School has a policy for managing extension requests. ZY agrees that these requests can put a lot of pressure not only on students but on staff too, including administrative colleagues. ZY feels the policy needs to be revisited; it is working OK at present. The Law School utilise MyAberdeen and the requests are received by relevant staff. Personal Tutors may be notified if there are underlying issues that the School are aware of. The School try to balance the administration of the extension with the pastoral support side of the process. This is also the case when managing the C6 and C7 process. This also requires a significant amount of administrative activity to manage these processes. ZY feels that the School would benefit from revisiting the process to ensure that it is working in the most efficient and effective way.
- 9.6 AB asked SSC members to liaise with School colleagues regarding the practice for granting extensions for all students (including for disabled students with the

provision of 'agreed extensions to deadlines') and the evidence required and to share this information with the Committee via the SSC MS Team or directly to AB or LM. AB noted that it is appreciated that in some Schools there may be different practices across disciplines and levels. AB asked SSC members to consider if it would be useful for the Schools to share details of their process again with students as there can be confusion about this amongst students, as practices do vary, and there can be a high number of requests for extensions in the coming months.

**Action: School Committee Members (see item 9.6)**

#### **AOCB**

10.1 AB highlighted her work in relation to Veterans; as part of this work, queries are received about courses that we deliver in relation to the Armed Forces both in relation to content and connection with the community. AB asked members of the Committee to let her know if there are any thoughts from Schools about courses or engagement with the armed forces.

10.2 OK provided an update on the class representative review. The review is now focussing on 'part 2' of their work. This has included focus groups with students and staff focussing on the issues which have arose and looking at how the structure should work. Feedback is being gathered to measure how achievable the recommendations are. The review group plan to meet again before the end of the academic year. The main themes identified for review are around the training offered and guidelines.

**Action: School Committee Members (see item 10.1)**

#### **Reflection on this meetings' discussion regarding equality, diversity, inclusion, health, safety and wellbeing.**

11.1 No comments were received from SSC members. AB felt that consideration had been made in regard to this in all discussion points.

#### **Reflection on Aberdeen 2040 Updates on Operational Plan**

*(copy filed as SSC/210322/008)*

12.1 AB felt that consideration had been given throughout the discussion to the aims of the Aberdeen 2040 operation plan.

12.2 AB and DS agreed that space will be provided at the next SSC meeting to highlight actions for ASES and NSS. It is hoped that a report from the NSS steering group can be available for the next meeting of the SSC.

12.3 JC reviewed guidance from other Universities about promoting the NSS. DS highlighted that JC's feedback can be shared with the NSS working group.

**Action: Clerk**

**Reflection on SSC Task and Finish Groups**

13.1 No comments were received from members of the Committee.

**Date of Next Meeting**

14.1 An exceptional meeting of the SSC will be held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April at 3.30pm, by Microsoft Teams.