UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Minute of the Meeting held on 7 August 2020

Present: Ruth Taylor (Chair), Tim Baker, John Barrow, Abbe Brown, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Ondrej Kucerak, Kath Shennan and Adelyn Wilson with Regina Jaschke, Gillian Mackintosh, and Emma Hay (Clerk) in attendance


APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2020
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/001)

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to an extraordinary meeting of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL).

1.2 Members of the Committee approved the minute of the meeting held on 22 June 2020 as an accurate representation of discussions held.

MATTERS ARISING
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/002)

2.1 Members of the Committee noted the action log following the meeting of the Committee held on 22 June 2020. All actions were noted as complete or in-progress.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/003)

3.1 Members of the Committee noted the update provided by the Campus Planning Group (CPG). No comments were raised.

UPDATED RISK REGISTER FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/004)

4.1 Members of the Committee received an updated version of an excerpt of the University’s Risk Register, listing risks specific to Learning and Teaching. Members noted the following specific points:

- **Section 4.3:** Members of the Committee noted that placements in Medicine and Dentistry were being proactively managed and that clear procedures and approaches were in place.
- **Section 4.4:** It was noted that No Detriment procedures in 2020/21 would be discussed as part of agenda item 7.
- **Section 4.14:** Members noted that Kath Shennan, Dean for Quality Enhancement and Assurance, was working with Schools to identify accreditation requirements in the context of Blended Learning.
- **Section 4.19:** Members of the Committee were informed that the work of the practical learning group was now completed and that timetabling updates can be added to the Register.
Section 4.23: The Committee noted that work in this regard was slightly further on than the Register demonstrated and that this would be updated to reflect progress in this area.

4.2 Members of the Committee were invited to raise any comments or proposed edits, in terms of the risks listed or the mitigations associated with them. No comments were raised.

**UPDATE ON THE BLENDED LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP**
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/005)

5.1 Members of the Committee received a paper, as circulated to the Senate, providing an update on the Blended Learning Implementation Task and Finish Group (BLITFG). The Committee acknowledged the work being undertaken by the group and its associated workstreams.

**UCTL COMMITTEE REMIT AND COMPOSITION**

6.1 Members of the Committee were provided with an oral update on work to revise Education Committee structures and, consequently, the UCTL. Members of the Committee noted that work was ongoing around School committee structures and employability and entrepreneurship. The Committee were informed that proposals would follow to a future meeting for further discussion and approval.

*Action: Chair/Clerk*

**POLICY REVIEW IN THE CONTEXT OF BLENDED LEARNING**

(i) **Policy Review Update**
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/007)

7.1 Members of the Committee received the introductory paper on policy review, noting that, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the move to a blended approach to learning and teaching, work had been undertaken to review the University’s Education policies and procedures to ensure they remained appropriate for students undertaking their studies both on and off campus. The UCTL discussed the approach being taken to both immediate and longer-term policy review and the proposed forward plan for 2020/21. Members of the Committee approved the recommendations in the paper, regarding the immediate amendment of policies.

Members of the Committee noted updates and changes to specific policy areas as follows:

(ii) **Course and Programme Approval**
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/008)

7.2 Members of the Committee noted the update provided on processes for course and programme approval. Members were informed of the processes the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) would follow for approving courses in 2020/21 and beyond.

(iii) **Annual and Periodic Review**
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/009)

7.3 The Committee received the paper on Annual and Periodic review, noting the update provided on Annual Course Review (ACR), Annual Programme Review (APR) and Internal Teaching Review (ITR) in the context of the impact of Covid-19 and other changes. The UCTL noted work undertaken by two short-term working groups to ensure the processes remained appropriate in the context of a blended approach to learning and working.
7.4 Members of the Committee acknowledged and approved changes to the ACR process, to enable a more School-led approach. It was stated that guidance on ACR completion should be issued to Schools to ensure a consistent approach. With regards APR, it was noted that further guidance on completion would now be provided to Schools, seeking a more holistic School approach to their completion, including consultation with External Examiners.

Action: Kath Shennan

7.5 Following agreement by the UCTL to postpone periodic reviews during the impact of Covid-19, members of the Committee noted that ITRs would commence again in the autumn of 2020.

(iv) Assessment and Feedback  
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/010)

7.6 Members of the Committee received a series of papers on Assessment and Feedback, including amended Codes of Practice on Assessment for students graduating in 2020/21 to reflect the position with regards No Detriment and the removal of the rounding of grades. UCTL approved the draft Codes and agreed that they should be forwarded to the Senate for consideration and final approval. In addition, the Committee approved the revision of the suite of policies on Assessment available within the Academic Quality Handbook (AQH).

7.7 Members of the Committee were informed that Codes of Practice on Assessment for students graduating after 2020/21, whose studies would not have been impacted by Covid-19 would follow for consideration and approval by way of circulation, to allow a complete suite of Codes to be considered and approved by the Senate and made available online.

Action: Kath Shennan

7.8 Members of the Committee were assured that all policy changes, including those in relation in Assessment and Feedback would have a communications plan associated with them, to allow for transparent and clear communication with staff and students on the agreed changes.

Action: Clerk

(v) External Examining  
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/011)

7.9 Members of the Committee received an update on External Examining. Members were informed of the status updates provided to External Examiners during the impact of Covid-19 and noted that communications would shortly be issued, providing an update on 2020/21 processes. It was agreed that members of the QAC would now approve routine nominations for External Examiners. Finally, members of the UCTL noted that discussions were underway as to how External Examiners reports should be made available to student. It was agreed that this issue would return to the UCTL for further discussion.

Action: Kath Shennan

(vi) Student Monitoring  
(copy filed as UCTL/050820/012)

7.10 Members of the Committee received the paper on the Monitoring of Student Engagement. The Committee approved the recommendations within the paper and agreed to forward it to the Senate for final ratification.

Action: Clerk
Appeals and Complaints and Academic Discipline  

7.11 Members of the Committee consider the paper on Academic Appeals, Complaints and Academic Discipline. The Committee was content to approve, and forward to the Senate, the proposals contained within it.

Action: Clerk

Student Absence

7.12 Members of the Committee received the paper on Student Absence, noting that the changes were primarily related to the blended learning or wider health environment. Members of the Committee approved the revised policy, subject to minor typographical revisions.

Action: Clerk

Disability Provision

7.13 Members of the Committee received the proposed updates to policies regarding Disability Provision. The Committee confirmed their approval of these changes, suggesting it might be appropriate to mention captioning within them.

Action: Abbe Brown

DEGREE OUTCOMES 2019/20

8.1 Members of the Committee received the paper on Degree Outcomes in 2019/20. The Committee noted that the paper provided was an initial review of the outcomes awarded. Members of the Committee requested the paper return for consideration with the addition of data including more than two years data for the purposes of comparison.

Action: Kath Shennan

STUDENT SUPPORT UPDATES

9.1 Members of the Committee received the papers providing the Committee with an update on work ongoing with regard to Student Support. Members of the Committee noted policies to support work in this area were in draft.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 7 October 2020 at 10am in Microsoft Teams.

BLENDED LEARNING TASK AND FINISH GROUP (BLITFG)

11.1 Members of the Committee noted the agendas and minutes of the Blended Learning Implementation Task and Finish Group (BLITFG), available on the UCTL webpages here.
11.2 Members of the Committee noted the remit and composition of the Senior Pastoral and Guidance Lead Forum.