

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Minute of the Meeting held on 12 June 2019

Present: Professor K Shennan (Convener), Dr T Baker, Mr C Duncan, Professor A Jenkinson, Mr O Kucerak, Professor E Pavlovskaja, and Professor R Wells, with Dr R Bernard, Ms T Innes, Ms N Kinchin-Williams, Ms P Spence and Ms E Hay (Clerk) in attendance

Apologies: Professor P McGeorge, Dr B Scharlau and Dr G Mackintosh

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 APRIL 2019

(copy filed as UCTL/120619/001)

- 1.1 Professor Shennan, on behalf of Professor McGeorge, opened the meeting and welcomed members of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL). The Committee approved the minute of the meeting held on 22 April 2019 as an accurate representation of discussions held, subject to a minor typographical revision.

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

- 2.1 The Committee identified no specific issues arising relating to Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 The Committee noted that the actions arising from the meeting held on 22 April 2019 had been taken forward, as reflected in the minute by way of Clerk's Note.
- 3.2 The attention of Committee members was drawn to the request made by the School of Education, that they be permitted to deliver teaching on a Wednesday afternoon. It was exceptionally agreed that this should be permitted, for this cohort of students only
- 3.3 The Committee noted the outstanding issue of Personal Tutors for Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students, discussed at the last meeting of the PGT Committee. Members of the UCTL acknowledged that approximately 1500 students would require allocation and that a clear remit for taking the matter forward was required. It was noted that the issue of Personal Tutors for PGT students was included in the recommendations as made by the Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) panel. The Committee agreed that the UCTL would be required to make a recommendation to Senate in this regard and that a remit should also be prepared. It was agreed that a policy paper would follow from the PGT committee for discussion by the UCTL.
- 3.5 Members of the Committee sought and received confirmation that the Sri Lanka Project was going ahead.

ENHANCEMENT THEME UPDATE

(copy filed as UCTL/120619/003)

- 4.1 Members of the Committee received an update on the Institutional activities undertaken in response to the QAA (Scotland) Enhancement Theme, Evidence for Enhancement: Improving

the Student Experience. Members of the Committee acknowledged that in 2019/20, the final year of the theme, the University would continue with projects including:

- The step change in VLE use alongside the move to an enhanced Blackboard Ultra Course View;
- The implementation phase of the SCEF project;
- The 2019/20 LTEP programme, facilitating dissemination of evidence generated and gathered over the course of the previous two years.

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (QAC) ANNUAL REPORT TO THE UCTL 2017/18

(copy filed as UCTL/120619/002)

- 5.1 Members of the Committee received the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) Annual Report for 2017/18. Members of the Committee noted the late submission of the report and acknowledged that going forward it would be submitted annually, in the autumn. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the key issues acknowledged in the report, including ongoing changes to assessment and degree classification, External Examiners Reports (EERs) and annual monitoring.
- 5.2 The Committee noted the issues raised by way of annual monitoring across the University including the issue of staffing. The Committee were pleased to acknowledge that this issue was not raised with the same prevalence as it had been during 2016/17 but that issues did remain in Schools. The Committee acknowledged the impact of these issues on teaching events such as field courses and practicals etc. Members noted that this remained an issue being monitored by the QAC.
- 5.3 The attention of the Committee was drawn to the examples of Identified good practice within the report. The Committee acknowledged that annual visits to Schools, undertaken by the QAC in 2017/18, had gone well and allowed for valuable, full and frank discussion.

UPDATE ON THE ENHANCED TRANSCRIPT

(copy filed as UCTL/120619/004)

- 6.1 Members of the Committee considered the paper on the Enhanced Transcript and the request that Santander Mobility Awards be recorded as an 'accredited activity' on the Enhanced Transcript from 2019-20. Members of the Committee agreed the appropriateness of this course of action.

CHANGES TO THE POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON ACADEMIC FLEXIBILITY

(copy filed as UCTL/120619/005)

- 7.1 The Committee received the paper regarding proposed changes to the Policy and Procedures on Academic Flexibility (High Performance Sports) and the form associated with it. The Committee acknowledged that the policy had been approved in October 2017 and were asked to discuss the following key issues:
- **Whether the absence levels permitted by the policy, remained appropriate.** Members of the Committee were reminded that an academic group considered applications, provided oversight and helped to inform decisions. The Committee discussed whether a reference to a level of permitted absence such as a third or a quarter was necessary. The Committee proposed the consideration of applications on an individual, yet

consistent, basis. Members of the Committee agreed that the Learning Outcomes (LOs) of courses must be met and, as such, it may be appropriate to add the absence will 'not normally exceed...'

- **Responsibility for off campus examinations.** The Committee noted that discussions in this regard should begin at School level, in appropriate consultation with the Exams team. Access to materials etc. clarify what we mean by 'missing' when lectures are online.
- **Flexibility around when and how work is submitted.** The Committee agreed the importance of a managed plan to ensure LOs are achieved, discussed and agreed between Student and School. The Committee agreed that it must be evident the applicant is engaged in their studies.

REVIEW OF 2018/19 AND FORWARD PLANNING FOR 2019/20

8.1 Members of the Committee engaged in initial discussions on issues to be further discussed during 2019/20. The following topics were raised for further discussion:

- Joint degrees
- Internal externality at Exam Boards
- Standardised penalties for the late submission of work
- Follow up to Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR)
- Timetabling and further discussions around Wednesday teaching, teaching hours etc.
- Review of Disability provision

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1 The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 18 September 2019 at 2pm, in the Court Room, University Office.

DATES OF TERM

10.1 Members of the Committee noted that the Dates of Term would follow for consideration and approval, by way of circulation.

MINUTES AND UPDATE REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

11.1 Members of the Committee noted the minutes of the Sub-Committees as follows:

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| (i) | Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) | (UCTL/120619/007a) |
| (ii) | Postgraduate Taught Committee (PGTC) | (UCTL/120619/007b) |
| (iii) | Undergraduate Committee (UGC) | (UCTL/120619/007c, to follow) |