

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN**  
**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Minute of the Meeting held on 18 September 2019

*Present:* Peter McGeorge (Chair), Tim Baker, Alison Jenkinson, Dariya Koleva and Ondrej Kucerak, with Rachael Bernard, Tracey Innes, Natalie Kinchin-Williams, and Morag MacRae and Emma Hay (Clerk) in attendance

*Apologies:* Colin Duncan, Ekaterina Pavlovskaja, Steve Tucker, Richard Wells and Patricia Spence

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2019**

*(copy filed as UCTL/180919/001)*

- 1.1 The Chair 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 12 June 2019 as an accurate representation of discussions held.

**MATTERS ARISING**

- 2.1 The Committee noted that the actions arising from the meeting held on 12 June 2019 had been taken forward, as reflected in the minute by way of Clerk's Note.

**HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING**

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

**NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS) RESULTS 2019**

*(copy filed as UCTL/180919/002)*

- 4.1 Members of the Committee received the paper on the National Student Survey (NSS) Results for 2019. The Chair gave a presentation to the Committee on the results, a copy of which is filed with the principal copy of the minute. Following the presentation, a discussion ensued, the main tenets of which were as follows:

- Members of the Committee acknowledged the importance of the sharing of good practice across the University.
- Overall, the Committee noted the data set as good and on which the University could improve. The Committee noted the key steps in handling the results as being: for Schools to consider their results, for open fora to be held and for a presentation on the results to be provided to the Senate as part of the Undergraduate Student Experience report. The importance of meetings with Schools and discussions with the Students' Association was also noted.
- Members of the Committee expressed the importance of building on the good results achieved by areas of the University and in of getting dialogue going both within and between Schools.
- The Committee considered the matching of disciplines and/or Schools to share good practice. Members of the Committee recognised the variation between and within Schools, however, also acknowledged the common experiences shared by the University as a whole.

- The Committee proposed the possibility of researching approaches taken by other institutions and the fact that University staff undertaking roles as External Examiners, could assist in doing this.
- The Committee acknowledged the importance of holding discussions with students, with a view to better understanding what they are looking for. The Committee noted that Schools have access to the text comments provided, which could allow for these conversations to take place.
- Members of the Committee spoke of the importance of educating students of all levels, not just those in their final year, and managing their expectations. The importance of engaging students at all levels was noted as important in focusing on the improvement of the student experience and not NSS results in isolation.
- The Committee suggested that guidance be produced for students on issues such as assessment and feedback, perhaps by way of the learning toolkit.
- Members of the Committee noted that interpretation of the questions can be difficult and that there is a need for staff to explore this further with students.
- The Committee agreed that wider discussion of these issues at the Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Committees would be helpful.

#### **UPDATE ON THE ENHANCED TRANSCRIPT**

*(copy filed as UCTL/180919/003)*

- 5.1 Members of the Committee considered the paper on the Enhanced Transcript and the request that the 'AberGreen Project and partnership projects between AUSA AberGreen and Shared Planet Aberdeen' be recorded as a 'recognised activity' on the Enhanced Transcript from 2019-20. Members of the Committee agreed the appropriateness of this course of action and for there to be an increase in the number of opportunities for students to demonstrate the extracurricular activities they are undertaking.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 6.1 The Committee noted that the 2019/20 meetings of the Committee would be held as follows:
- Tuesday 12 November 2019 at 2pm
  - Wednesday 15 January 2020 at 2pm
  - Wednesday 26 February 2020 at 2pm
  - Wednesday 15 April 2020 at 2pm

#### **DATES OF TERM**

*(copy filed as UCTL/180919/004)*

- 7.1 Members of the Committee noted the Dates of Term for 2020-21, approved by way of circulation over the summer.

#### **POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH (PGR) REVIEW FORMS**

*(copy filed as UCTL/180919/005)*

- 8.1 Members of the Committee received the paper proposing changes to Postgraduate Research (PGR) review forms: The Six-Monthly Review and Initial Skills Audit. Members of the Committee noted the wide consultation undertaken in the production of the revised forms and that feedback received regarding current versions had prompted change. Members of

the Committee were informed that the revised forms brought about key changes, including the provision of a mechanism for students to highlight pastoral issues, and the identification of training needs and therefore the provision of appropriate training

- 8.2 Members of the Committee raised some concerns that the forms were lengthy and may cause some anxiety to students. The Committee were reassured that the forms would be discussed at induction and that it would be clearly stated to students that not every section would need to be completed. The Committee were further reassured that the revised forms sought to gather the same information but in more coherent manner.
- 8.3 Members of the Committee stated that they would welcome reference to the Careers Service within the forms and to Postgraduate Research (PGR) students more widely, to ensure they are aware that they can make use of the service.
- 8.4 Overall, the Committee were content to approve the changes, noting that the forms would generate useful data for individuals and their supervisors but also University wide.

#### **AOCB**

- 9.1 The Chair drew the meeting to a close, noting that this would be his last as Vice-Principal (Education). He recorded his thanks to all members of the Committee, present and past for their hard work and contribution.