

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Minute of the Meeting held on 21 January 2015

Present: Professor P McGeorge (Convener), Ms E Beaver, Dr B Connolly, Dr S Davies, Mr C Duncan, Mr P Fantom, Dr C Kee, Professor A Lumsden, Dr G Mackintosh, Dr J Masthoff, Mr D Philips, Dr K Shennan, Ms P Spence, Ms K Christie, Dr R Bernard (Clerk), Ms E Hay (Minute Secretary)

Apologies: Ms J Fernandes, Mr R Henthorn, Professor R Wells

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2014

(copy filed as (UCTL/210115/001)

- 1.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on the 22 October 2014, subject to a typographical revision. The Committee agreed that the minutes were representative of discussions held.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- 2.1 The Committee identified no specific issues arising relating to Health and Safety. Members of the Committee did, however, note the issue of trips off campus as an area for investigation, an issue arising from a recent College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) business continuity exercise.

Action: Clerk

ANNUAL COURSE REVIEW

(i) 2013/14 Discipline Summary Reports

- 3.1 Professor Shennan, Convener of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) updated the Committee on the progress of the Annual Course Review (ACR) process for 2013/14. Professor Shennan acknowledged the varying approaches taken to submission and the need to highlight the importance of the process across the University. The Committee noted that Professor Shennan had spoken at other University Committees, including the Undergraduate Committee, with the intention of ensuring awareness and to improve the quality of responses received.

(ii) Proposed Changes to the Review Process following discussion by Heads of School on 7 January 2015

(copy filed as UCTL/210115/002)

- 3.2 Members of the Committee noted proposed revisions to the existing ACR process, following discussions held at the most recent Heads of School meeting. Members of the Committee noted proposed changes to include:
- The use of the process as a means to encourage more detailed reflection
 - The requirement of the inclusion on SCEF return data should be nearer the end of the form, to reduce its prevalence.
- 3.3 Members of the Committee acknowledged the intention that the ACR forms be published, by way of MyAberdeen, with the potential for links from the Catalogue of Courses. Members of the Committee noted that while helpful to students electing to undertake a course, or for the

sharing of good practice, steps would need to be taken to ensure the documents were appropriately annotated prior to publication, such as the inclusion of caveats alongside SCEF return data to ensure appropriate contextualisation.

- 3.4 Professor Shennan update the Committee of the requirement of the University to undertake Annual Programme Review (APR). The Committee acknowledged the revised 'Discipline Summary Form' to incorporate Programme Review, and the proposal that further information such as External Examiners reports, be pulled together on completion.
- 3.5 Members of the Committee agreed that a reference to 'Cognate Areas' should be included as a footnote to 'Discipline' for the purposes of Postgraduate Taught programmes. Members of the Committee further agreed amendments to allow for the appropriate contextualisation of SECF return data.
- 3.6 The Committee agreed that the revised process should be piloted for the return of course data for academic year 2014/15.

Action: Professor Shennan, Convener of the Quality Assurance Committee

PROGRESSION INTO HONOURS

- 4.1 Following discussion at the last meetings of both UCTL and Senate, members of the Committee noted the introduction of a new regulation, removing the requirement for any CAS/CGS hurdles to an Honours programme. The Committee were in agreement with the proposal and further agreed that it should be forwarded to Senate for consideration.

Action: Clerk

PRE-REQUISITE GRADE HURDLES

- 5.1 Following the consideration of agenda item 4, members of the Committee approved the proposal that course pre-requisites that stipulate CAS/CGS hurdles above a pass should no longer be permitted.

Action: Clerk

DRAFT ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW ONE YEAR FOLLOW-UP REPORT

(copy filed as UCTL/210115/003)

- 6.1 The Committee noted the draft Enhancement-Led Review (ELIR) one year follow up report. The Committee noted the following edits and/or clarifications:
- **SENAS Changes** – the Committee noted agreement with the wording of this section, noting the requirement of appropriate IT resource to allow for implementation.
 - **Section 3.3** - The Committee noted the possibility of including reference to the Digital Strategy work being undertaken.
 - **Section 3.1** – The Committee were asked to consider if this section was reflective enough in its approach. Members agreed that it was.
 - **Section 3.6** – The Committee agreed to remove the reference to student participation in project boards.

Members of the Committee agreed to return any further suggestions or proposed edits to Katja Christie, Deputy Academic Registrar.

Action: Katja Christie/Members of the Committee

REVIEW OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION PAPER

(copy filed as UCTL/210115/004)

- 7.1 Members of the Committee noted the requirement of the University to respond to the Consultation paper, acknowledged that a draft is currently being undertaken. Members of the Committee were asked to feed any comments and/or suggestion to Katja Christie for inclusion. The Committee further noted the Universities Scotland Quality Enhancement Framework Consultation Response.

Action: Members of the Committee

SENAS REVISIONS

(copy filed as UCTL/210115/005)

- 8.1 Members of the Committee noted the paper on proposed revisions to the existing SENAS process. The Convener informed the Committee of the failings in the existing system, namely the lack of flexibility and duplication of effort required. Members of the Committee were reminded of the system's three main functions:

- To prepare the Course Catalogue
- To review the Quality of Programmes and Courses
- To prepare the Teaching Timetable

- 8.2 Members of the Committee acknowledged that the changes, such as minor amendments or withdrawals, which do not require amendments to the teaching timetable, could be considered at any time and staff should not be discouraged from submitting these outwith the standard SENAS approval cycle.

- 8.3 Members of the Committee agreed the formation of a smaller group to further progress proposed changes and the consideration of the requirements of Curriculum Management as part of the OneSource Project.

Action: Clerk

MINUTES AND UPDATE REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

(copy filed as UCTL/210115/006)

- 9.1 The Committee were issued copies of the minutes of the meetings of each of the sub-committees. No further issues were raised.

DATES OF THE NEXT MEETING

- 10.1 The Committee noted that the next meeting of the UCTL will be held on Wednesday 13 May 2015 in the Court Room, University Office.

AOCB

- 11.1 The Committee noted the proposal brought by Professor Connolly, Head of the Graduate School for the College of Life Sciences and Medicine regarding resits for Postgraduate Taught Students. The Committee acknowledged that the proposal, to allow oral examinations as a way of resit, had previously been rejected by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).

- 11.2 The Committee noted the concerns of the QAC as conveyed by Professor Shennan regarding the lack of experience of many of the students concerned to assessments oral in nature and

the timing of resits. The Committee acknowledged amendments made to the original process by Professor Connolly and agreed that the revised proposal, allowing for appropriate advice and timing in the handling of these cases, be trialled. Professor Connolly was asked to report back to the Committee at the first meeting of the 2015/16 Academic Year.

Action: Clerk/Professor Connolly

CHANGES TO REGULATIONS

12.1.1 Omnibus Resolution *(copy filed as UCTL/210115/007a)*

The Committee approved, for its part, the draft Resolution 'Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees'. The Resolution enacts the changes in degree regulations recommended by the Quality Assurance Committee since March 2014 which have not been the subject of separate resolutions. The Committee further agreed to delegate authority to the Convener to approve any amendments required subsequent to this meeting.

12.1.2 Draft Resolution: Supplementary Regulations for the Degrees of Master of Arts (MA) *(copy filed as UCTL/210115/007b)*

The Committee approved the Draft Resolution: Supplementary Regulations for the Degrees of Master of Arts (MA). The Resolution provided a consolidated version of existing regulation aimed at simplifying the regulations to improve usability.

GRADUATION DATES

(copy filed as UCTL/210115/008)

- 12.2 The Committee approved the dates and allocations of students for the June 2014 Graduation ceremonies

COMPOSITION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

- 12.3 The Committee approved the following amendments to the composition of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for the remainder of academic year 2014/15.

The addition of Drs William Harrison and Malcolm Hole, representatives of the College of Physical Sciences

The removal of Professor George Coghill, representative of the College of Physical Sciences

LATEST DATE FOR THE RETURN OF EXAMINATION RESULTS 2014/15

(copy filed as UCTL/210115/009)

- 12.4 The Committee approved the latest dates for the return of results for 2014/15.

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING ANNUAL REPORT TO SENATE

(copy filed as UCTL/210115/010)

- 12.5 The Committee approved the Annual Report on academic year 2013-14 for submission to Senate.

STUDY ABROAD

- 13.1 Following discussions at the meeting of Heads of School on 15 October 2014, Heads of School consulted within schools in order to determine wider views on the feasibility of study abroad being undertaken during the Honours years of programmes and how, in such cases, classification should be undertaken. At their meeting on 7 January 2015 Heads of School were in agreement that students should be permitted to undertake study abroad during the third year of their programme. Heads of School further agreed that the duration of study (one or two half-sessions), location of study and how the study would be considered in terms of degree classification, should be determined and communicated to students at the school level.

PROGRAMME ADVISORY BOARDS (PABS): ANNUAL REVIEW 2013-14

(copy filed as UCTL/210115/011)

- 13.2 The Committee noted the paper on Programme Advisory Boards (PABs).

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT REVISED VERSION OF *INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE UK*

(copy filed as UCTL/210115/012)

- 13.3 The Committee noted the current consultation being undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency on a revised version of *International students studying in the UK - Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers*