UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

UPDATE ON MONITORING, ABSENCE AND ENGAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides University Education Committee with an update on the Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Task and Finish Group (TFG) in the light of the meeting of Senate on 21 September 2022.

University Education Committee are invited to note this paper and to comment on the initial proposals made for the future.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY / FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

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3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Task and Finish Group (the TFG) was established in 2021. Updates were provided to Student Support Committee/Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC) on 8 December 2021, 3 February 2022, 21 March 2022, 7 April 2022 and 23 August 2022 and Quality Assurance Committee on 4 May 2022. Updates were provided to University Education Committee (UEC) on 6 December 2021, 17 February 2022, 17 March 2022, 13 April 2022 (with further opportunities for comment thereafter by email) 10 May 2022, 25 August 2022 and 14 September 2022.

3.2 A report of the TFG in the form of a detailed set of slides, including Principles, proposed for delivery in the short, medium and longer term and initial proposals for implementation were considered by Senate for a first academic view on 21 September 2022 as SEN22:04. That paper build on the paper considered by UEC in September as UEC/250822/007 in the light of feedback received.

4. UPDATE AND SUGGESTIONS FUTURE STEPS

4.1 Some positive comment was received, particularly regarding proposals for changing the name of the system from C6/C7 in student facing content, the making of requests of short and medium term IT change to enhance the operation of the existing system and continuing to stress the supportive nature of the system. There was support for future work in relation to PGR students and it was noted that this work is ongoing, although it is outside the scope of this TFG. Significant concern was expressed however at the additional IT and human resource and workload which would, as indicated in the report and its initial implementation thoughts, be
needed to deliver the new longer term system which was suggested. Points were also made regarding the relationship between the pastoral and the disciplinary and risks which can arise from having a live dashboard setting out a student’s journey.

4.2 The Dean for Student Support, who led the TFG, leaves post in January. It is suggested that the new Dean for Student Support explores the following with the TFG, with a view to a revised proposal being put before SSEC, UEC and Senate after the Winter Break. Given that the TFG is a UEC body, the thoughts of UEC are most welcome.

4.2.1 Work continues to enhance the present Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Systems, through requests made to Digital Strategy Committee (DSC) to enhance IT systems for the benefit of all staff and students. This will be considered at DSC’s October 2022 meeting.

4.2.2 The newly established Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Community of Practice to continue to share good practice in decision making and delivery of the system which identifies when students are in difficulty and then seeks to support their re-engagement when possible. This will also provide an opportunity to enhance consistency in outcome as decisions continue to be made in Schools.

4.2.3 Work continues to update web resources and student and staff communication in relation to Monitoring, Absence and Engagement to ensure that this operates effectively and supportively for staff and students. This will include ongoing dialogue regarding delivery of the visa system; intersection with students with provisions; and updating the Absence Policy and the Monitoring guidance, to make clear approaches which should be taken to frontline appeals and the flexibility which is available in exercising discretion if a student has now reengaged with their studies/appears in a position to wish to do so.

4.2.4 The present TFG report are to remain as an output and a base for future work alongside other projects and feedback regarding more proactive and frequent forms of intervention, to support students pastorally and academically in being part of a community in which they can thrive.

5. Further Information

Further information is available from Abbe Brown, Dean for Student Support (abbe.brown@abdn.ac.uk). September 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open