UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE **AdvanceHE**

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Professor Ruth Taylor
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24 March 2022

Dear Professor Taylor

Subject: Accreditation Panel Outcome and Feedback

Thank you very much to the team at University of Aberdeen or submitting provision for accreditation. The documentation was considered by the Advance HE Accreditation Panel held on 03 March 2022. The Panel reviewed the following programme:

- **Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education and Learning Year 1 – Descriptor 1**

- **Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching and Learning Years 1 and 2 – Descriptor 2**

I am pleased to inform you that the Panel has agreed that this provision can be **accredited subject to four conditions**. These conditions have been captured in the attached action plan. The action plan also outlines two Panel recommendations for areas that the team may wish to consider as points for future development.

The initial date by which we would like to receive the University's response to the conditions set by the Panel is **Friday 29 April 2022.** In addressing the conditions, we ask the team to signpost to the action taken within the final column of the action plan and to submit revised participant guidance (with revisions highlighted) and/or a new narrative explanation as appropriate (please do not return to the submission template). Please send the revised documentation to our accreditation team at accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk

The Accreditation Panel identified many areas of good practice in relation to the submission and wishes to commend the University of Aberdeen on the following aspects:

- The University of Aberdeen 2040 Strategy sets out a clear commitment to learning and teaching, supported by professional development for all staff that teach and support learning. The strategy is underpinned by clear themes of Inclusivity, Interdisciplinarity, Intercultural exchange and Sustainable Education and which are aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

- The University has invested resources to support the quality enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education through the Centre for Academic Development (CAD). CAD has a key role in initiating and sustaining learning and teaching development for staff, promoting the University's commitment to the quality of teaching and learning and

delivering Advance HE accredited programmes as well as institutional professional development activities that are aligned to the UKPSF. Within the CAD's goals, Fellowship is utilised to both develop practice and recognise achievement.

- CAD delivers an impressive range of high quality training and professional development including induction courses for all new staff involved in learning and teaching, monthly learning and teaching and pedagogical inquiry network events, online discussion fora and The Principal's Teaching Excellence Awards.

- The courses/programme submitted for accreditation directly contribute to University strategic priorities through the focus on approaches to teaching, learning, knowledge, values and use of innovative formative assessments throughout the course. The courses/programme include summative assessment explicitly designed around teaching practice linked to two of the four themes of the University's 2040 strategy.

- The provision submitted provides staff that teach and support learning with the opportunity to achieve an appropriate category of fellowship via a route to suit the context of their professional practice and career stage.

- A thorough evaluation of the data, including participant feedback, underpins the honest and open reflection on the previous accreditation cycle and the changes introduced for the next iteration of accredited provision as a result.

If you would like to discuss the outcome of the Accreditation Panel further, please contact me or Rajesh Dhimar, Fellowship and Awards Adviser (rajesh.dhimar@advance-he.ac.uk) and we will be very happy to support the team to meet the conditions set.

We look forward to receiving the institution's response to the conditions by Friday 29 April 2022 and we send our congratulations to you and your colleagues at University of Aberdeen on this positive outcome.

Yours sincerely

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Accreditation Action Plan – University of Aberdeen

Conditions set by Accreditation Panel				
In addressing each condition outlined below, please submit revised participant guidance (<u>with revisions highlighted</u>) and/or a narrative explanation as advised in the supporting explanation. Please provide clear signposting to the action taken in the last column below.				
No	**Provision**	**Action Set**	**Supporting Explanation**	**Cross reference to response by institution**
1	**Institution**	Clarify how the provision will operate for the international campus in Qatar and explain the resources in place to support participants (accreditation criteria 1c and 1d).	From page 4 of the submission, the new PGCert in Higher Education Teaching & Learning will be offered to staff at the University of Aberdeen and employees at the University Qatar campus. The Panel asks for further explanation about any differences in the way that the programmes will operate and the resource in place to support staff, as follows. 1. The Panel notes the maximum number of participants for each programme is 20 and this will include participants from both Aberdeen and Qatar (p.12, submission). The Panel asks for further detail about the local support in place at the Qatar campus and clarification about the role of the Director of Studies at the Qatar campus (p.10, submission) and how they will be supported to carry out their responsibilities. 2. Clarify how the University will manage and monitor that all those supporting participants on the programmes e.g. reviewers, mentors, supervisors and observers (at University of Aberdeen and Qatar campuses) to engage in initial training and regular UKPSF-related CPD to ensure that the support they provide is based on current knowledge of the UKPSF and requirements for the relevant category of fellowship.	
2	**PGCert in Higher Education Teaching &**	Further explain aspects of the assessment design for the award of	The Panel requests further clarification and revisions to the participant facing guidance as follows: Clarify how through the assessment tasks across the three courses, participants will be able to evidence sufficient practice to meet the	

	Learning Years 1 and 2 (Descriptor 2)	Fellowship (accreditation criteria 2).	requirements of Descriptor 2 by the end. For example, in the Research Project in Higher Education Learning and Teaching Course, participants are required to complete the summative assessments of a 1000-word annotated bibliography and a 4000-word written research report with UKPSF appendix (E4, p8). Clarify if the Research Project as part of course ED50HT is a future facing project or if participants will have evidence of their effective practice as a result of studying the course to be able to draw on in order to contribute to meeting the Descriptor 2 criteria.	
3	**PGCert in Higher Education Teaching & Learning Year 1 (Descriptor 1)** **and** **PGCert in Higher Education Teaching & Learning Years 1 and 2 (Descriptor 2)**	Enhance the participant guidance to further explain the design of the programme in relation to Descriptor 1 and 2 and the fellowship support in place (accreditation criteria 2 and 3).	The Panel asks for the participant - facing guidance for these programmes to be revised to address the following points. 1. The Panel notes that the Observation of Professional Practice (OPP) will be the mechanism to authenticate practice at D1 or D2 and participants will need to find a 'willing observer' and work with them before, during and after being observed (e.g. submission, pp16-17 and E3, p10). Please further explain how the observation process will operate for all participants so that they will be able to successfully engage in this process, the numbers of observers available and how observers will be prepared for the different contexts such as for those based at the Qatar campus. Please explain the UKPSF-related initial training and ongoing development that will be in place for observers and linked to 1.2 above, how this will be managed and monitored. 2. Given the highly supportive nature of the programmes, further explain all the different roles involved in supporting participants on the programme such as 'supervisors', 'mentors', 'observers' and the core team as the Panel was unclear about the differences in support in place, e.g. whether the mentors are the same people as supervisors or if they are different people (linked to 1.2 above). 3. Revise the guidance to remove reference to D3.III, D5.V and D6.VI and revise accordingly to accurately reflect Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF (D2.I-D2.VI) for participants e.g. E1, p8.	

| 4 | PGCert in Higher Education Teaching & Learning Year 1 (Descriptor 1)

and

PGCert in Higher Education Teaching & Learning Years 1 and 2 (Descriptor 2) | Further explain aspects of the fellowship judgement Process (accreditation criteria 4). | The Panel requests the following clarification and revisions to documentation where appropriate:

1. Assessor proformas/review grids for summative tasks contributing towards the award of Associate Fellowship/Fellowship should fully embed Descriptor 1 (D1.I-D1.VI) or Descriptor 2 (D2.I-D2.VI), so that reviewers explicitly apply the D1/D2 criteria in reaching the final judgement. Please revise the summative report forms (E2, p25, E3/E4, p24), i.e. the feedback forms used by reviewers to indicate the Descriptor 1/Descriptor 2 criteria have been met. For Descriptor 2 this may build iteratively through the programme or be applied at the end of the final course, Research Project in Higher Education Learning and Teaching (ED50HT).
2. The Panel notes the list of tutors that contribute to and teach on the Programmes (e.g. E3, p4 and E4, p2). The Panel is unclear whether all those listed hold an appropriate category of Fellowship in line with Advance HE policy. Please confirm including that all those involved in making Associate Fellow/Fellow judgements hold an appropriate category of Fellowship (Section 4.4.2 Accreditation Policy). Please revise guidance for participants with this information.
3. Include the process and support in place should a resubmission be required and explain how this will be assessed for the PGCert in Higher Education Teaching & Learning Year 1 (D1) and PGCert in Higher Education Teaching & Learning Years 1 and 2 (D2). Revise the participant guidance (E1-E4) as appropriate. A diagram with timeline of the assessment process (including resubmission) may also help to aid understanding for participants. | |

Recommendations made by Accreditation Panel
The Accreditation Panel also made two recommendations that the team may wish to consider as a points for future development. No further information is required by the Panel.

	Provision	Recommendation
A	**PGCert in Higher Education Teaching & Learning Year 1 (Descriptor 1)**	The Panel notes the information about the design of the provision leading to the award of Associate Fellowship and that courses Approaches to Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Higher Education ED50HR and Activities, Knowledge and Values ED55H 'meet and go beyond the requirements for Descriptor 1', though requirements are commensurate with the level of learning (Submission, p15). The Panel suggests that participant guidance is enhance to further explain the specific nature of evidence expected at Descriptor 1 and to make clear that Descriptor 1 participants will only evidence the relevant Course Learning Outcomes to meet Descriptor 1 depending on the appropriate nature of their practice and will not be disadvantaged.
B	**All programmes**	The Submission (p16) and Observation of Professional Practice Handbook for Observers and Observees (E5) makes clear that the Observation of Professional Practice (OPP) will be the mechanism to authenticate practice at D1 or D2. The Panel recommends that participant guidance is enhanced to make clear how assessment on the programmes includes a mechanism to authenticate practice and to clearly signpost to the Observation of Professional Practice Handbook for Observers and Observees (E5) in the guidance (E1-E4).

Accreditation - Terms and Conditions

Please note that once awarded, accredited provision must operate as explicitly accredited. Accreditation does not cover provision that is developed for commercial sale. Please refer to the full terms and conditions set out in Appendix 1 of the Advance HE accreditation policy 2021-22 for further information. Institutions who wish to request any changes to accredited provision should discuss plans with Advance HE and seek approval of any changes through the major and minor change process (Section 8 of policy).