1. **PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

The purpose of the paper is to provide an update on the planning for teaching, learning and assessment for the second half-session for academic year 2021/22. It also provides an overview of information on late arrivals, late registration, and associated early monitoring of student engagement requirements.

2. **PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY / FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED**

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<th>Previously considered/approved by</th>
<th>Board/Committee</th>
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3. **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The UEC is asked to note and discuss the update.

School Education Leads on UEC are asked to:
- disseminate and discuss the update with their Schools through their School Education Committees and more widely across their Schools as appropriate, ensuring that all colleagues have the information required to complete their ongoing preparations for second half-session.
- ensure that colleagues are aware of the need to ensure early monitoring of student engagement.

4. **DELIVERY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT FOR SECOND HALF-SESSION**

4.1 The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of the previously agreed approach to the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment for the second half-session for academic year 2021/22. An update on discussions arising from the Omicron variant is provided.

4.2 The approach to the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment for academic year 2021/22 was agreed at Senate (12 May 2021) and UEC (25 May updated). Agreement was then reached on the approach to be taken for the second half-session (2HS) in light of the evolving external circumstances and staff and student feedback (06 October 2021). Finally, an updated agreed approach was agreed at UEC on 10 November 2021 (UEC/101121/006a). The approach includes:

4.2.1.1 Students are expected to attend campus (unless there are exceptional circumstances – see 4.3).

4.2.1.2 Online synchronous sessions as an alternative to on campus sessions will not be automatically included for each course unless a School specifically requests.

4.2.1.3 Delivery of large group sessions remains online together with any other online activities already planned by Schools.
4.2.1.4 Workload implications for any required increased delivery on campus for any individual session(s) will be addressed by Heads of School.

4.2.1.5 Alternative assessment will continue except where there are accreditation reasons for the use of in person examinations.

4.2.1.6 Communications to students have provided information on the adjusted approach.

As part of this overall approach, a process has been developed and implemented to manage student requests to study fully online for exceptional reasons. Where requests are approved, Schools are informed and alternative online delivery will be arranged for those students.

Preparations were taken forward as agreed, with the timetabling process completed prior to the Winter Break.

In November 2021, the Covid-19 Omicron variant impacted society and created some uncertainties around what the start of 2HS (and beyond) might require if government guidance/advice changed due to the impact of Omicron.

As per the staff and student communications sent on 07 January 2022, the plans that we have in place for 2HS continue to progress without the need for change. The email communication to colleagues provides wider information on the external context and impact for the University.

Discussions have taken place between the Vice-Principal (Education) and the School Education Leads over December and January about the need to ensure that Schools are able to manage student and staff absence. For both and in relation to Covid-19 this may, for example, be due to the need to self-isolate. Whilst for some this may mean reporting absence from learning or teaching, for others they may feel well and be able to engage in learning or teaching. Schools will have in place arrangements and related communications to manage such circumstances.

5. LATE ARRIVALS AND LATE REGISTRATIONS

5.1 There were a number of issues with late arrivals and late registrations in September 2021. A review of processes and communications was undertaken given the impact that these issues created at the time.

5.2 As a consequence, processes and communications have been further developed in order to avoid a repetition of the issues. The information in 5.3-5.4 has been provided to Schools through the School Education Leads and School Administration Managers and is provided here for information.

5.3 For late arrivals:

5.3.1 A tailored communication was sent to all January offer holders before the winter break making them aware of the late registration deadline and the importance of starting online if they are not able to arrive for the start of the half-session.

5.3.2 A web form has been created to collect details from students who anticipate a late arrival and School offices have access to that information so that they can make the necessary arrangements to provide these students with online study.

5.4 For late registration:

5.4.1 During the period of late registration, Registry will monitor student registrations and will prompt those students who have not completed registration to do so.
5.4.2 where students arrive after the late registration deadline, the following process will be used and has been discussed and agreed with the School Education Leads:
   i) Registry will contact Schools to ascertain background information via identified contacts for a view on whether the student should be permitted to register late.
   ii) The Immigration team will provide input where the student holds a visa.
   iii) The information will be provided to the Vice-Principal (Education) for a decision.

5.4.3 This centralised approval process does not seek to remove School views but aims to ensure cross-institutional consistency in decision-making. It will also allow for oversight of the scale of late students, and reasons for late registration that will inform future practice.

5.5 Early monitoring of student engagement:
   5.5.1 Feedback from first half-session highlighted examples of where students had registered at the start of term but had not been engaged in their studies remotely prior to their late arrival in Aberdeen. This caused challenges for Schools in then having to support these students to catch up with their missed studies.
   5.5.2 It is important, therefore, that Schools monitor all courses from an early stage and do so consistently by imposing C6s allowing non-engagement to be identified early, and enabling the relevant support to be put in place.
   5.5.3 The Registry runs monitoring reports on a daily basis at 4pm from the start of week 2 of teaching and even while late registration is ongoing it is appropriate to monitor those students who are registered but not engaging.
   5.5.4 Consistency is important as where a student receive multiple monitoring reports it can signal a real concern; and where these reports lead to multiple refusal of class certificates this is used as a trigger for visa reporting.
   5.5.5 School Education Leads have therefore been asked to encourage colleagues to ensure early monitoring of engagement.

6. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

   Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education, ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk

14 January 2022

*Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open*