UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

Minute of the Meeting held on 10 October 2022

Present: Ruth Taylor (Chair), Akua Agyeman, Euan Bain, Lyn Batchelor, Jason Bohan, Abbe Brown, Colin Christie, Bill Harrison, Ken Jeffrey, Shona Potts, Anne-Michelle Slater, Susan Stokeld, Lindsay Tibbetts, Steve Tucker, with Simon Bains, Julie Bray, Scott Carle, Nick Edwards, Brian Henderson, Tracey Innes, Gillian Mackintosh, Patricia Spence, Louisa Stratton and Emma Tough (Clerk) in attendance

Apologies: John Barrow, Harminder Battu, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Stuart Durkin, Richard Hepworth, Alison Jenkinson, Kirsty Kiezebrink, David McCausland, Graeme Nixon, Rona Patey, Michelle Pinard, Joshua Wright and Fiona Ritchie and Graeme Kirkpatrick

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 AUGUST 2022
(copy filed as UEC/101022/001)

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to the meeting of the University Education Committee (UEC). Members of the Committee considered the minute of the meeting held on 25 August 2022 and approved it as an accurate representation of discussions held.

1.2 Members of the Committee noted that, as a consequence of recent Senate discussions in regard to the UEC and the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), the updated UEC remit and composition would follow to the next meeting of the Committee.

Action: Clerk

MATTERS ARISING
(copy filed as UEC/101022/002)

2.1 Members of the Committee noted the actions arising following the meeting of UEC held on 25 August 2022. Members noted that the majority of actions were complete or included on the agenda of the meeting for further discussion.

2.2 Members of the Committee received an update in respect of action point 3.3, noting that the issue had been raised with the Campus Planning Group (CPG). Members of the Committee acknowledged the changes in the external context with respect to Covid-19 and the subsequent adjustments in timetabling and distancing rules since the commencement of the 2022/23 academic year.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

3.1 Members of the Committee acknowledged the agenda item on Health, Safety and Wellbeing and raised no matters for further discussion.

ABERDEEN 2040 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE
(copy filed as UEC/101022/003)

4.1 Members of the UEC received the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan Update, noting the addition of proposed actions for the 2022/23 academic year. Members noted the intention
of the actions in seeking to ensure a continuation of work which had already commenced in regard to the implementation plan and to ensure the prioritisation of activity across the 2022/23 academic year.

ABERDEEN 2040 EDUCATION STEERING GROUP UPDATE

(copy filed as UEC/101022/004)

5.1 Members of the UEC received an update on the meeting of the Aberdeen 2040 Education Steering Group held on 14 September. Members note the minute of the meeting attached as UEC/101022/004. Members of the Committee were reminded of the purpose of the Steering Group, in looking at the work of the Task and Finish Groups (TFGs) and other ongoing activity in respect of Aberdeen 2040 and Education.

5.2 Members of the Committee were updated on ongoing discussions between Abbe Brown, lead for the Pastoral Support and Monitoring, Absence and Engagement TFGs and Brian Henderson, Director of Digital and Information Services in regard to possible ways forward in regard to the recommendations of each review.

UPDATES FOLLOWING THE MEETING OF THE SENATE HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2022

6.1 Members of the UEC discussed the updates following the meeting of the Senate held on 21 September 2022 in respect of:

(i) Pastoral Support Review

(copy filed as UEC/101022/005)

6.2 Members of the Committee received the paper providing an update on the work of the Pastoral Support Review Task and Finish Group (TFG) following the consideration of the TFG’s final report and associated recommendations at the meeting of the Senate on 14 September 2022.

6.3 Members of the Committee noted that positive comment was received from Senate in regard to aspects of the proposal, particularly regarding the support of PGT students. It was further noted, however, that significant concern had been expressed at the additional workload which would (as indicated in the report), be needed to deliver the recommendations. On this basis, members of the Committee considered the revised proposals put forward by the TFG, for progression under the new Dean for Student Support and Experience (sections 4.2.1-4.2.6 refer).

6.5 Overall, the Committee were content to support the revised proposals contained within the paper. Work to progress IT solutions in regard to this work were also noted. The Committee agreed that the TFG should continue their work in this regard, with future updates to follow to the UEC, as appropriate.

Action: Dean, Student Support and Experience

(ii) Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Review

(copy filed as UEC/101022/006)

6.6 Members of the Committee received a paper providing an update on the work of the Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Review Task and Finish Group (TFG) following the consideration of the TFG’s report and recommendations at the meeting of the Senate on 14 September 2022.
6.7 Members of the Committee noted positive comments received from Senate in regard to aspects of the proposal put forward by the TFG. Significant concern, however, was noted in regard to the additional IT and human resource and workload which would be needed to deliver the new longer-term system put forward. On this basis, the UEC noted revised proposals from the TFG (sections 4.2.1-4.2.4 refer) in regard to interim measures to ensure improvements to each process.

6.8 Overall, the Committee were content to support the revised proposals contained within the paper. Work to progress IT solutions in regard to this work were also noted. The Committee agreed that the TFG should continue their work in this regard, with future updates to follow to the UEC, as appropriate.

Action: Dean, Student Support and Experience

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK ACTION PLAN
(to follow, copy filed as UEC/101022/007)

7.1 Members of the UEC noted that the updated Assessment and Feedback action plan would follow for comment by way of circulation.

Action: Kirsty Kiezebrink/Clerk

RETURN OF FEEDBACK ON ASSESSMENT
(copy filed as UEC/101022/008)

8.1 The Committee received a paper providing an update on the return of feedback on assessment during the second half session of 2021/22. Members of the Committee noted that, in addressing National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes regarding assessment, Schools were asked to continue to monitor the timeliness of return of feedback on assessment during the second half-session. The Committee acknowledged the intention of this monitoring, in enabling the identification of issues at an early stage and allowing any problems to be followed-up and addressed.

8.2 The Committee noted that some Schools had yet to return their responses, despite the deadline of 31 August. The Committee noted the deadline for remaining submissions as 31 October.

Action: School Education Leads/Clerk

8.3 Members of the Committee noted the importance of the exercise and agreed that it should be continued in 2022/23 and beyond, with School Education Committees being asked to continue to monitor and implement relevant actions where needed. The UEC noted that the next update for their consideration should be compiled and returned by SECs following the conclusion of the first half session.

DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM: TIMELINES AND APPROVAL PROCESSES
(copy filed as UEC/101022/009)

9.1 Members of the Committee discussed the paper providing proposals on the implementation of the institutional work on decolonising the curriculum. In particular, members of the Committee were asked to consider the principles and timelines outlined in the paper. Members of the Committee noted that the paper would proceed to the Senate for an academic view, with a further version of the principles and timeline returning to the UEC for approval.
9.2 Members of the Committee noted each of the principles detailed in the paper (sections 4.5-4.12 refer). The Committee expressed their support for these, and the timelines associated with them acknowledging the flexibility that the proposed timeline provides for different Schools and disciplines to take forward the work.

*Action: Clerk*

9.3 A member of the Committee asked a question in regard to reading lists and the library purchase of hard copy books. The Committee were reassured that while eBooks should be sought as an option first, where these don’t exist or are too expensive hard copy books can be considered for purchase.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24

*copy filed as UEC/101022/010*

10.1 Members of the Committee received the paper providing an overview of the proposals for the structure of the Academic Year 2023/24. The committee noted previous consideration of the paper at both UEC and Senate, in providing an academic view of the issues raised in the paper. Members noted the amendment of the proposals to reflect the feedback raised.

10.2 The Committee noted that the paper had been considered by the Student Recruitment Committee (SRC) and would be updated to reflect feedback in this regard. The Committee noted that this would include the edit of the paper to add in some further context in respect of admissions.

*Action: Anne-Michelle Slater*

10.3 Members of the Committee welcomed future conversations in regard to January start students, particularly in recognition of the significant challenges faced in September 2022 in relation to international arrivals, and in regard to result deadlines. Members of the Committee approved the paper and its onward progression to the Senate. The Committee noted that a paper in regard to the 2024/25 academic year and beyond would follow to a future meeting of the Committee.

*Action: Clerk*

POLICY REVIEW UPDATE

*copy filed as UEC/101022/011*

11.1 Members of the Committee discussed the paper on policy review and noted the timings of proposed policy work. The Committee acknowledged the intention of the plan, to provide a realistic plan for policy review work, on which members of the Committee would be engaged, as appropriate. The Committee supported the paper, noting that an updated version would follow, to reflect the distinction between QAC and UEC owned policies and the approval routes in regard to each.

*Action: Clerk*

DATES OF NEXT MEETING

12.1 Members of the Committee noted that the next meeting of the UEC would take place on Monday 16 January 2023 at 1.05pm.
13.1 Members of the Committee approved, on the recommendation of the Student Misconduct Review Task and Finish Group (TFG) and the Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC) the final draft of the revised Code of Practice on Student Discipline (non-Academic).

UPDATE REPORTS FROM THE UEC SUB-COMMITTEES

14.1 Members of the Committee noted updates from the UEC Sub-Committees as follows:
(i) Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC)  (copy filed as UEC/101022/013a)
(ii) Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC)  (copy filed as UEC/101022/013b)

RISK REGISTER  
(copy filed as UEC/101022/014)

14.2 The Committee noted the Risk Register with regards to the specific risks associated with Education.

QAA SCOTLAND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS REVIEW (QESR)  
(copy filed as UEC/101022/015)

14.3 Further to the circulation of a briefing paper on the QAA Scotland Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) and Institutional Liaison Meetings (ILM), members of the Committee noted the attached letter providing confirmation of the University’s date of review and QESR panel.

ADVANCEHE PGCERT ACCREDITATION  
(copy filed as UEC/101022/016)

14.4 The UEC noted the accreditation with AdvanceHE for the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (Learning and Teaching).

COURSE EVALUATION

14.5 The Committee noted that the Course Evaluation webpages (Course Evaluation | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen (abdn.ac.uk)) had been updated in line with discussions with School Directors of Education, particularly in relation to opportunities for providing feedback mid-/throughout the term so that students providing the feedback are able to benefit from that same feedback.

INCLUSION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)  
(copy filed as UEC/101022/017)

14.6 Members of the UEC noted the revised Inclusion Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

MONITORING DEADLINES 2022/23  
(copy filed as UEC/101022/018)

14.7 Members of the UEC noted the attached deadlines for the monitoring of students for academic year 2022/23, approved by way of Chairs action.