

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

**Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2000**

Present: Principal, Professors IR Macdonald, AR Forrester, Sloane, Logan, Houlihan, Sewel, Cameron, Johnston, Fergusson, Britton, Sharp, Gane, Jordan, Graham, Rodger, Pope, FB Watson, Ingold, Ingram, GJB Watson, Adams, Mather, Blaikie, Salmon and Torrance, Dr MT Dalgarno, Dr JRW Hunter, Dr GP McQuillan, Dr L Foley, Mr G Pryor, Dr D Heddle, Dr G Hesketh, Dr MA Hutchison, Dr CT Imrie, Dr PR Kinnear, Mr AWM McLean, Dr J Ohlmeyer, Mrs ML Ross, Dr J Sheehan, Dr SP Townsend, Dr ER van Teijlingen, Dr HM Wallace and Mr A Cole-Hamilton

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Catto, Dr JG Roberts, Professors Walker, Miller, Templeton, Thomson, Sleeman, Seaton, Urwin, Russell, Baker, Helms, Hendry, Jolliffe, Meek, Ritchie, Racey, Rees, Little, Killham, Lomax, Gilbert, Alexander, Booth, Flin, Archbold and Swanson, Dr DR Abramovich, Dr LH Chappell, Dr H Galley, Dr AM Kiger, Dr S Lawrie, Dr TA Mahmood and Dr A Venneri

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

288. The minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2000 were approved.

**STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL**

**Resignation of Professor Fergusson**

289. The Principal reported that Professor Fergusson was attending his last meeting of the Senate prior to his appointment to the Chair of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh. He expressed his thanks to Professor Fergusson for his immense contribution to the University. The Senate recorded its congratulations and best wishes to Professor Fergusson on his new appointment.

**Marischal College**

290. The Principal referred to a recent article in the Press & Journal concerning the proposed lease of Marischal College. While much was true in the article, an agreement had not yet been signed and discussions were continuing.

**Northern College Merger**

291. The Principal reported that various issues had been raised by SHEFC representatives at a meeting on 12 May 2000 with representatives from the Universities of Aberdeen and Dundee and from Northern College. A very fruitful meeting of the three Principals had been held on 13 June. It was anticipated that a response to the queries posed by the Funding Council would be submitted by the end of the summer.

### **Funding Council Grant**

- 292.1 The Principal indicated that the SHEFC grant for 2000/01 represented a decrease in real terms of £780,000. While all faculties and central services were developing strategies to cope with reduced budgets, it was known that other HEIs, including research-intensive universities, were in a similar financial position.
- 292.2 Notwithstanding the reduced grant, the University's Strategic Plan would reflect three broad objectives: that the University should be the major provider of research and teaching services in the North of Scotland; that it should remain a research-driven University; and that it should be a provider of applied research, training and expertise, both regionally and internationally. Two major challenges existed: to attract more investment from the private sector and to generate more revenue, to allow the University to build on its strengths; and to review the University's strategies for attracting students in light of a changing and more competitive recruitment market.

### **DRAFT INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2000-2004**

- 293.1 Professor Macdonald introduced the draft Strategic Plan for 2000-2004, which had been informed by the Faculty Plans. He praised the hard work and support of colleagues in the Strategic Planning Office who had been involved in drafting the Plan. Since SHEFC intended institutional strategic plans to be used by several audiences, they had indicated the general format to be used.
- 293.2 Professor Macdonald reported that the section of the Plan which related to strategic vision and institutional objectives was in a new format compared with previous submissions. This section was structured around the six strategic aims which the Senate and University Court had already approved for the University. Following an introduction to each of these aims, the Plan indicated specific objectives and, importantly, actions: the latter addressed a possible weakness of previous plans in that they would allow the University Court to monitor the achievement of the objectives set out in the Plan.
- 293.3 Professor Macdonald confirmed that the Strategic Plan addressed the issues concerning student recruitment and funding to which the Principal had referred in his statement. He informed Senate of minor changes which had been proposed prior to the meeting and which would be incorporated into the Plan before being submitted to the University Court.
- 293.4 In responding to questions, Professor Macdonald indicated the following:-
- (i) that the targets stated in the Plan had been reviewed over recent months by the Strategic Planning Office, in consultation with relevant colleagues, to determine whether they were realistic and appropriate: they had then been approved by the senior management;
  - (ii) that the University must continue to attract students with high entry qualifications while at the same time competing successfully in the recruitment market if it were to maintain its overall student population. He believed the proposals in regard to widening access to be a positive strategy to maintain student numbers. As part of this strategy, some students would require particular types of support. The Deans were already developing plans to ensure that all students had access to appropriate learning opportunities;

- (iii) that while the Plan re-affirmed the University's support of its staff becoming members of the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILT), he did not consider it appropriate that the Plan should give details of the extent of this support. He confirmed that the current position, whereby the University would pay the administrative charge for staff who wished to join the ILT, had been agreed by various Committees and had been informed by the position being adopted by other universities. He agreed that the senior management should be asked to review the position concerning subscriptions in light of comments from Senators.

293.5 In approving the Plan, for its part, the Senate agreed that Professor Macdonald should make minor changes to the draft in light of discussion and that the Plan should then be forwarded to the University Court.

### **INFORMATION STRATEGY**

294.1 Professor Macdonald introduced proposals for an Information Strategy for the management of information, which had been finalised by a Steering Group after a wide-ranging consultation process involving academic staff nominated by the Faculties.

294.2 The Principal invited general comments, whose principal points of record were as follows:-

- (i) that the Information Strategy did not comment on the relative success of the University's decision to amalgamate library and computer services into the Directorate of Information Systems and Services because the questioning of that decision had not been raised during the consultation exercise. Notwithstanding Senate's acceptance of the Information Strategy, this decision could be revisited at any time if the Senate so wished;
- (ii) that proposals for greater utilisation of the student ID card system, for example to monitor access into buildings, had been prepared and would be taken forward when the necessary funding was made available: this was unlikely to be in the foreseeable future.

294.3 The Senate, for its part, approved the Information Strategy, subject to minor amendments being made as reported by Professor Macdonald, and agreed that it be forwarded to the University Court.

### **ADMISSIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS POLICY**

295.1 The Principal invited Professor Macdonald to introduce his paper concerning an Admissions and Qualifications Policy.

295.2 The Senate noted that the Policy had been designed to address two important issues: responding to the Government's wider access proposals; and being able to compete successfully in a changing undergraduate recruitment market. The latter, in particular, was a priority: although the University had been relatively successful compared to other universities in attracting applicants for 2000 entry, this position was not reflected in the conversion of applicants to admissions. While particular strategies were being adopted to address this concern for 2000 entry, the recommendations as proposed in the Admissions and Qualifications Policy were designed primarily to improve future conversion rates and the retention of students. The proposals provided an opportunity to utilise the existing non-Honours degree structure while retaining the current entry standards for Honours degrees. The Deans were already considering various

strategies, which would include a review of the titles and structure of degree programmes in some cases.

295.3 The Principal invited general comments, whose principal points of record were as follows:-

- (i) that it would be for Faculties and Departments to consider how best to ensure that appropriate learning opportunities and support were provided for students admitted to a non-Honours degree, to allow them to obtain such an award; and, indeed, to allow them to progress to an Honours degree if they so wished and if they satisfied the criteria for admission to Honours;
- (ii) that there was evidence to suggest that the relative decline in “Science” applications each year for the past few years would not continue: indeed, it was hoped that applications would increase, particularly in response to the proposals contained within the Policy. It was also hoped that the steady increase in applications to the MA degree that had been apparent over the last three years would continue in light of the proposals;
- (iii) that the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL) be asked to consider incorporating, in its annual report to the Senate, a summary of the outcome of any cross-faculty groups which had been established, by the UCTL or by other committees, to discuss general issues relating to teaching and learning.

295.4 The Senate, for its part, approved the Admissions and Qualifications Policy and agreed that it be forwarded to the University Court.

### **REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT**

(16 May 2000)

#### **Review of Committees**

296. The Senate, for its part, agreed the proposals for restructuring certain committees, subject to the following being brought to the attention of the University Court:-

- (i) that in regard to the proposed Student Affairs Committee, the proposal that the “Sub-Committee on Student Disabilities” should report to the Student Affairs Committee should be revised to indicate the correct title of that committee i.e. the “Sub-Committee on Disabilities”;
- (ii) that it was the Senate’s view that the Convener of the Sub-Committee on Disabilities should either be a member of the Student Affairs Committee *ex officio* or should be in attendance;
- (iii) that the Senate was concerned that the composition and/or remit of the Chapel Committee, as proposed to the Senate, might be revised, without consulting the Senate, as a consequence of feedback from other areas of the University being submitted direct to the University Court.

### **REPORT FROM THE JOINT POLICY AND RESOURCE COMMITTEE**

(6 June 2000)

297. The Senate noted that the Joint Policy and Resource Committee, for its part, had approved the Admissions and Qualifications Policy (Minute 295 refers) and the proposal that the Committee be merged with the Finance and Estates Committee, subject to recommending that the number of lay

Court members on the proposed Joint Planning, Finance & Estates Committee should be four (Minute 296 refers).

**REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON  
TEACHING AND LEARNING  
(26 May 2000)**

**1: Communication and Information Technology Training**

298. The Senate approved the recommendation that all students graduating from the University should have attained a minimum level of C&IT skills. Departments, in designing courses and programmes, would consider opportunities for the attainment and assessment of such skills, as agreed by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, where appropriate.

**2: Requirements for the Award of an Honours Degree**

299. The Senate approved the following recommendations:-
- i) that students who achieved a pass in at least 75% of their total elements of Honours assessment normally should be considered for the award of an Honours Degree in accordance with the University's procedures "Honours Degree Classification in All Degree Programmes (*Grade Spectrum*)";
  - ii) that, notwithstanding (i) above, where a single Honours degree programme was accredited by a Professional or Statutory Body (PSB), a department might apply to the relevant Undergraduate Programme Committee (UPC) for permission to require that students must pass a specified course or courses, where these were required for professional accreditation purposes, in order to be eligible for the award of an Honours degree on successful completion of that programme. Approval of such an application would be on the proviso that the department applied simultaneously to the UPC to offer a non-accredited Honours programme that would allow students who failed a course that was a requirement of an accredited programme nevertheless to be awarded a different Honours degree (albeit one that would not be recognised by the PSB) if they otherwise fulfilled the *Grade Spectrum* requirements for award of an Honours degree.

**3: Guidance Note for Students who either Fail, or who Fail to Attend or Complete, an Element of Prescribed Degree Assessment**

300. The Senate approved a *Guidance Note for Students who either Fail, or who Fail to Attend or Complete, an Element of Prescribed Degree Assessment* [Appendix I: copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes].

**4: Honours Programmes by Part-Time Study**

- 301.1 The Senate approved the following recommendations:-
- i) that part-time registration on an Honours programme normally should be permitted, unless the relevant Undergraduate Programme Committee (UPC) had approved an application, on an individual programme basis, that part-time study should not be permitted for a particular programme. It should be for an individual UPC to judge the merits of an application not to offer part-time Honours programmes on academic grounds;

- ii) that where an Undergraduate Programme Committee gave permission for a particular Honours programme not to be offered on a part-time basis, the parent department(s) should be required to indicate this prohibition in their level 1 and Honours handbooks i.e. that a named Honours programme could only be studied on a full-time basis; and that the degree programme prescription annexed to the relevant supplementary regulations should be amended to denote this restriction;
- iii) that the General Regulations be revised to emphasise that, in the context of an Honours programme, periods of part-time registration must normally be continuous, and must not exceed twice the period of time required of a full-time student to complete the Honours programme (or the portion(s) of it in respect of which the student was registered part-time). Examples would be two years for a 1 year Honours programme and four years (or two years part-time and one year full-time) for a 2 year Honours programme [Minute 317 below refers].

301.2 The Senate noted that the following were academic grounds on which an Undergraduate Programme Committee might approve an application not to permit students to undertake an Honours programme on a part-time basis:-

- (a) where a 12-credit course required full-time study in a particular half-session;
- (b) where two 6-credit core courses in a Joint Honours programme were only available in the same half-session;
- (c) where offering a part-time Honours programme would require significant changes in the organisation of course delivery (i) which would have a detrimental effect on delivery to full-time students or (ii) where the relevant Faculty Planning Committee was unable to approve an application for restructuring to provide a separate organisational structure specifically for part-time delivery;
- (d) where a course (e.g. a project course requiring experimental work) required extended periods of focused activity that would be incompatible with part-time study and where successful completion of such a course was dependent on it being carried out in the context of knowledge acquired concurrently in other elements of the Honours programme, all of which could not be available at the same time to a part-time student.

### **5: Report of the Working Party on Quality and Standards**

302.1 The Senate noted that the Committee had established a Working Party on Quality and Standards, primarily in response to the suggestion in the Academic Quality Audit Report that the Committee should consider initiating a University-wide debate on explicit standards, and because it was clear that the University's Internal Teaching Review procedures would need to be revised in light of the Code of Practice for the Assurance of Quality and Standards in UK Higher Education that was being developed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. The Committee had approved the following recommendations:-

1. That revised Internal Teaching Review procedures be implemented from 2000/01. While external Subject Review would relate to undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, the Internal Teaching Review procedures would continue to relate also to research degree training. They would incorporate proposals for the review of QAA Subject Groups that were not specific to a single Department.

2. That Internal Teaching Review Panels would be convened by the Convener of the relevant undergraduate Academic Standards Committee (or his/her representative) and, in addition, would comprise (a) two senior members of academic staff from a cadre of trained staff and (b) a senior, external, subject expert appointed by the relevant Dean.
3. That Procedures for the Design, Approval, Validation and Review of Programmes and Courses be introduced in 2000/01.
4. That all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes be reviewed formally every six years. Programme Review guidance notes, incorporating a Programme Review Report form, would be produced.
5. That the new programme and new course proposal forms be revised, to address the precepts and guidance indicated in the relevant QAA Codes of Practice and to relate more readily to subject benchmark information.
6. That a programme specification and a curriculum map should accompany each programme proposal: sample templates would be made available to Departments either to use for each of their programmes or as a guide to producing their own specifications/maps. [The UCTL noted that, as a consequence of Recommendations 5 and 6, Course and Programme Handbooks would need to be revised, in due course, to clearly indicate the different types of learning outcomes and how these would be delivered and assessed].
7. That there should be a clear distinction between Level 3 and Level 4 (and undergraduate and postgraduate Level 5) courses, both in terms of intended learning outcomes and assessment.
8. That since all programmes would be included in external Subject Review, Departments should be asked to complete a programme proposal form for each variant of their Honours programmes (*viz* Single Honours; Joint Honours; Major Combined Honours; Minor Combined Honours), their Designated programmes, their postgraduate taught programmes, and, where appropriate, their undergraduate (including continuing education) certificate and diploma programmes, **by 31 October 2001** at the latest. [It was assumed that (a) the pre-honours components of first degree programmes might be similar, and possibly identical, and (b) a Department's component of all Joint, Major Combined and Minor Combined Honours programmes in which it was involved would, in many cases, be identical for each programme type, irrespective of the other subject(s) studied.]
9. That, notwithstanding the timescale in Recommendation 8, programme proposals should be prepared by 1 September 2000 (Divinity) and 31 October 2000 (Geology) in regard to the two subjects to be reviewed by the QAA in 2000-2001, and by 31 December 2000 for those subjects to be reviewed in 2001/02 (Economics, Geography and Philosophy).
10. That, once details of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) were finalised, consideration be given to bringing the University's credit-rating system into alignment with the SCQF i.e. with each undergraduate level of study being equivalent to 120 credit points and the requirements of postgraduate taught certificate, diploma and master's programmes being based on 60, 120 and 180 credit points, respectively, with the credit-rating of courses being revised accordingly. [The UCTL noted that, in most cases, this could be achieved by multiplying the current AU credit points by a factor of 5. However, there would be a substantial impact on both Departmental and University

documentation (including the Catalogue of Courses, University Calendar and Prospectuses). Revised degree Regulations also would need to be enacted].

11. That, in view of Recommendations 8 and 9 above, the Undergraduate Programme Committees, as appropriate, should give consideration to holding more than their standing, annual, meeting in 2000/01 and 2001/02 to allow them to re-validate those programmes under their purview.
- 302.2 In noting the above, the Senate agreed that the University Committee on Teaching and Learning be asked to ensure that, in developing future policy, every effort be made to limit the burden placed on Departments and that the impact of future proposals on Departments should be stated explicitly.

### **6: Relief Teaching**

303. The Senate noted that the Committee had approved the following recommendations:-
1. That Heads of Department should be responsible for identifying relief teachers whom they wished to engage temporarily to undertake the teaching duties of other staff. They should also verify that relief teachers had the experience and ability needed to ensure that the standards and quality of teaching normally required by the Department would be maintained.
  2. That Heads of Department should send to their Deans applications for the appointment of relief teachers, together with confirmation of the length of the appointment, and seek authorisation for such appointments. Heads of Department should also copy the information, including the CVs of relief teachers, to the Convener of the relevant Academic Standards Committee for information.
  3. That, if a relief teacher was being engaged to undertake the teaching duties of a Course Co-ordinator, the relief teacher should not be identified as the Course Co-ordinator. In such cases, Heads of Department should identify a member of their full-time academic staff to serve as Course Co-ordinator.
  4. That, during the period of appointment of a relief teacher, a member of the Departmental academic staff (normally the Course Co-ordinator) normally should act as his/her mentor. At the start of the temporary appointment, the mentor should give the relief teacher full and clear guidance in writing regarding his/her responsibilities. Normally, also, the mentor or another, senior, member of the academic staff should observe a sample number of the relief teacher's teaching sessions and give him/her appropriate written and oral feedback.

### **7: Medical Certificates – Certification by a Medical Practitioner**

304. The Senate noted that the Committee had approved arrangements for medical certification by a medical practitioner, for implementation with effect from the start of the 2000/01 academic year, on the understanding that they might need revising following any future national changes implemented by the Scottish General Practitioners' Committee.

## **REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

### **New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes**

305. The Senate noted that the Academic Standards Committees, on the recommendation of the relevant Faculties, had approved changes to the list of programmes and courses available, as indicated in Appendix II [copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes].

## **REPORT FROM THE WELFARE AND ACADEMIC SERVICES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (29 May 2000)**

### **1: Disability Statement**

306. The Senate approved, for its part, the document *Information for Students with Disabilities and Medical Conditions (Disability Statement)*.

### **2: Student Affairs Committee**

307. The Senate noted that the following issues had been expressed by members of the Welfare & Academic Services Consultative Committee during its consideration of the proposal to merge the Committee with the Student Organisations Committee to form a Student Affairs Committee:-

- that the student support sector was insufficiently represented on the proposed Student Affairs Committee;
- that consideration be given to a Student Support Forum being formalised, as a standing sub-committee of the Student Affairs Committee;
- that consideration be given to two members of the Student Support Forum being "in attendance" at the Student Affairs Committee;
- that consideration be given to the Student Affairs Committee membership including the SRC Welfare & Equalities Convener and the SRC Education & Training Convener;
- that consideration be given to the Student Affairs Committee papers being sent to the Presidents of the Debater and of the Aberdeen Student Charities Campaign, either of whom could be invited to attend meetings as appropriate;
- that a lack of Counselling Service representation on the Student Affairs Committee might result in professional difficulties in terms of recognition with the British Association for Counselling;
- that consideration be given to the Student Affairs Committee meeting six times per year.

## **REPORT FROM THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (20 May 2000)**

308. The Senate approved, for its part, *Conditions for Using Information Technology Facilities*.

## **REPORT FROM THE MUSEUMS, COLLECTIONS AND GALLERIES COMMITTEE**

309. The Senate approved, for its part, revised *Museum Regulations*.



### ELECTION OF SENATE ASSESSORS TO THE UNIVERSITY COURT

310. The Senate noted that Dr D Heddle and Professor TC Salmon had been elected as Assessors to the University Court for the period 8 June 2000 to 30 September 2001 and 1 October 2000 to 30 September 2004, respectively.

### ELECTION OF A SENATE ASSESSOR TO THE JOINT POLICY AND RESOURCE COMMITTEE

- 311.1 The Senate approved the following arrangements for the election of a Senate member to the Joint Policy and Resource Committee *vice* Professor Penman from among the Senate Assessors to the Court who were not already members of the Committee. The person elected would serve for the duration of their assessor-ship to the University Court.

Friday 16 June 2000                      Circulation of voting papers to all members of Senate

Wednesday 28 June 2000          Voting papers to be returned to the Secretary by 5.00 p.m.

- 311.2 The Senate approved the proposal that, if the University Court decided to merge the Joint Policy and Resource Committee and the Finance and Estates Committee (Minute 296 above refers), the Senate Assessor on the Court elected under (i) above and Professor LG Graham, who was currently a Senate Assessor on the Joint Policy and Resource Committee, should serve as the two Senate Assessors on the proposed Joint Planning, Finance and Estates Committee.

### ELECTION OF READERS AND LECTURERS TO THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS

- 312.1 The Senate noted that the following had been elected as members of the Senatus Academicus for the period 1 October 2000 to 30 September 2004 in the constituencies stated:

<i>Arts &amp; Divinity:</i>	Mr W Terry C Brotherstone Dr Howard Hotson Dr Jeannette King
<i>Medicine &amp; Medical Sciences (Full-time):</i>	Dr David J Lurie
<i>Medicine &amp; Medical Sciences (Part-time):</i>	Mr Leslie E Moffat
<i>Science &amp; Engineering:</i>	Dr Duncan Heddle Dr Paul R Kinnear Dr Donald Macphee Dr Mary R Masson Dr A Jenny Mordue
<i>Social Sciences &amp; Law:</i>	Dr Angus W Laing Dr W David McCausland Ms Donna W McKenzie Skene Dr Lorna J Philip Mr Scott C Styles

312.2 The Senate approved the following arrangements for an election to be held in October 2000 to fill 19 vacant seats on Senate (6 for the period to 30 September 2002 and 13 for the period to 30 September 2004):-

Friday 29 September 2000	Nomination forms issued to all electors by the Secretary
Wednesday 11 October 2000 by 5.00 p.m.	Latest date for return of nomination forms to the Secretary
Friday 13 October 2000	Voting papers issued to all electors by the Secretary
Wednesday 25 October 2000 by 5.00 p.m.	Latest date for return of voting papers to the Secretary

### APPOINTMENT TO STANDING COMMITTEES

313. The Senate approved the appointment of members to Senate Standing Committees, Senate Representatives on Joint Committees of the Senate with the Court, and Senate Representatives on Committees of the Court, for the academic year 2000-2001, as under:-

#### A: Committees of the Senate

##### 1. Blackwell Trustees

The next award of the Blackwell Prize, to be made in the academic year 2000-01, would be for a book in the field of Natural Sciences, including Medicine published in the years 1992-99. In terms of the Deed of Foundation, the proposed Trustees of the Prize were as follows:

Dr J G Roberts (*Convener*), the Principal and the Heads of the Departments of Chemistry, Divinity with Religious Studies, Engineering, Mathematical Sciences, Philosophy and Zoology.

##### 2. Honorary Degrees Committee

Principal, Senior Vice-Principal, Professors Graham, F Watson, Petrie, Thomson, Gane, Lee, Hukins and one other (to be announced) with the Deans in attendance.

##### 3. Student Disciplinary Committee Panel

###### Staff Members

Professors Britton, Cameron, Roberts, Duff, Flin, Forte, Gane, Killham, Racey and Russell, Dr M Cotter and Dr WF Long.

###### Student Members

The President of the Students' Association, the SA's Education and Training Convener, and five of the other student members of Senate.

## **B: Joint Committees (Senate Representatives)**

### **1. Chapel Committee**

(see also item D below)

Dr J G Roberts (*Convener*), Professors Johnstone, Beaumont and Torrance, Dr A Main and Dr E J Powell.

### **2. Committee on Biological Services Units**

The Deans of the Faculties of Medicine & Medical Sciences and of Science & Engineering, Professors Lomax, Matthews and Russell.

### **3. Continuing Education Policy Committee**

Professor Macdonald, Dr J Darling and Dr G P McQuillan.

### **4. Joint Policy and Resource Committee**

(see also item D below)

The Deans of the Faculties, plus two further members elected from amongst the Senate Assessors on the University Court (Professor Graham and one other to be elected).

### **5. Military Education Committee**

Professors Salmon, Swanson and Torrance, Dr K R Page, Mr J H Wyllie and Dr G Herd.

### **6. Museums, Collections and Galleries Committee**

Dr J G Roberts (*Convener*), Dr D Mannings, the Manager, Historic Collections, Mr G Pryor, Dr M Gorman, Dr J S Reid, Dr N H Trewin and Dr C C Wilcock.

### **7. Research Committee**

Professors Britton, Devine, Gane, Gow, Ingold, Ingram, Killham and Ralston.

In attendance: The Deans of the Faculties.

### **8. Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee**

The Deans of the Faculties, two Selectors for undergraduate degrees, elected from the Panel of Selectors (Dr S P Townsend and Mr A W Gray), the Convener of the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate), the Director of the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service, one other representative of the student recruitment function and the President of the Students' Association.

In attendance: The Academic Registrar, the Director of External Relations and the Manager of the Centre for Continuing Education.

### **9. Personnel Policy and Staff Development & Appraisal Committee**

(see also item D below)

Professors Houlihan, Logan and Sloane and Dr J G Roberts.

## **10. University Committee on Teaching & Learning**

The Conveners of the Academic Standards Committees and of the Undergraduate Programme Committees, the Deans of the Faculties, the President of the Students' Association and one other student member.

## **11. Welfare and Academic Services Consultative Committee**

(see also item D below)

The Conveners of the Academic Standards Committees and of the Undergraduate Programme Committees, Dr N Dower and Dr JB Craig.

### **C: Committees of the Court with Senate Members**

#### **1. Finance and Estates Committee**

(see also item D below)

Professors MacGregor and Prosser.

#### **2. Staff Disciplinary Tribunal Panel**

Professors Evans-Jones, Fraser, Harrison, MacGregor, Russell, Pennington and Thomson and Dr G P McQuillan.

#### **3. Staff Grading and Promotions Committee**

The Deans of the Faculties.

#### **4. Staff Grievance Committee Panel**

Professors Duff, Mordue, Rodger, Ritchie and Saunders, and Mrs M Ross.

### **D: Review of Committees**

Notwithstanding the above, the Senate approved the following proposed memberships if the proposals for the review of committees were approved by the University Court and Senate (Minute 296 refers):-

#### **1. Chapel Committee**

Professor Johnstone.

#### **2. Joint Planning, Finance and Estates Committee**

(to replace the Joint Policy and Resource Committee and the Finance and Estates Committee)

Principal, Senior Vice-Principal, four Deans plus two further members elected from amongst the Senate Assessors on the University Court (Professor Graham and one other to be elected).

#### **3. Student Affairs Committee**

(to replace the Welfare and Academic Services Consultative Committee and the Student Organisations Committee)

Principal or alternate, Vice-Principal with responsibility for Student Welfare, the Conveners of the three Academic Standards Committees.

#### 4. Staffing and Development Committee

(to replace the Personnel Policy and Staff Development & Appraisal Committee and the Staff Grading and Promotions Committee)

The Deans of the Faculties.

#### MEMBERSHIP OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES AND UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME COMMITTEES

314. The Senate approved the nominations by the relevant Deans of the following to serve on Academic Standards Committees and Undergraduate Programme Committees, until the dates indicated below:-

Academic Standards Committee (Arts & Social Sciences, Divinity and Law)

Dr RAV Cox: re-appointed until 30/09/02  
Dr R McMaster: appointed until 30/09/02

Undergraduate Programme Committee (Arts & Social Sciences)

Dr P Tomassi: appointed until 30/09/03

Undergraduate Programme Committee (Divinity)

Dr S Kunin: appointed as Convener until 30/09/03

Undergraduate Programme Committee (Law)

Mr W Walton: re-appointed until 30/09/01

Undergraduate Programme Committee (Engineering)

Professor H Chandler: appointed as Convener until 30/09/03  
Dr PW Bellarby: re-appointed, as Director of Studies (Advising), until 30/09/02  
Dr WF Deans: appointed until 30/09/03

Undergraduate Programme Committee (Medicine)

Professor JD Hutchison: appointed until 30/09/03  
Professor S Della Sala: re-appointed until 30/09/02

#### STUDENT MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE

- 315.1 The Senate approved a recommendation that, pending promotion of a new Ordinance, the President, Education & Training Convener, Area of Study Conveners and Postgraduate Convener of the Students' Association be deemed to be the President, Junior Vice-President (Education), Boards of Studies Conveners and Postgraduate representative of the Students' Representative Council for the purpose of membership of the Senate.

315.2 The Senate further approved a recommendation that the Vice-President (Representation) of the Students' Association be permitted to attend meetings of the Senate as a non-voting member *vice* the Senior Vice-President of the SRC.

**DRAFT RESOLUTION: CHANGES IN GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR FIRST DEGREES AND TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE AWARDS**

- 316.1 The Senate approved, for its part, a draft Resolution embodying changes recommended by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning and the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate).
- 316.2 The changes proposed related to part-time study on Honours programmes, award of Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas, and the introduction of a requirement that candidates for taught postgraduate awards must undertake all assessments on the first occasion on which such assessment was available, during or on completion of the course concerned.
- 316.3 The draft Resolution had been promoted so that the changes may come into force at the start of the Academic Year 2000-2001.

**GRADUATION CEREMONIES: NOVEMBER 2000**

317. The Senate noted that degrees would be conferred at the Graduation Ceremonies in November 2000 as follows:-

Friday 24 November at 3.00 p.m.:           Degrees in Science and Divinity

Saturday 25 November at 11.00 a.m.:   Degrees in Arts & Social Sciences, Engineering, Law and Medicine

**GRADUATIONS *IN ABSENTIA***

- 318.1 The Senate received a list of those qualified to receive degrees and diplomas who had applied to have them conferred *in absentia* [Appendix III: copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes].
- 318.2 The Senate conferred the degrees on, and awarded the diplomas and other qualifications to, the persons stated.
- 318.3 The Senate further agreed that the list of those upon whom degrees had been conferred, or to whom diplomas or certificates had been awarded *in absentia* since 1 August 1999 should, in accordance with its previous decision, be annexed formally to the Minutes of the current meeting.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

## Guidance Note for Students who either Fail, or who Fail to Attend or Complete, an Element of Prescribed Degree Assessment<sup>1</sup>

To be read in conjunction with the Guidance Note on Academic Appeals and the procedures for Honours Classification in All Degree Programmes (the *Grade Spectrum*) [Sections 5 and 7 of the Academic Quality Guide refer, which can be accessed at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/central/students.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/central/students.hti)].

### A GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. It is the responsibility of all students to understand the potential impact of failure in, or failure to attend or complete, an element of prescribed degree assessment and to discuss this with relevant academic staff if they wish (see below). This relates both to written examinations held at the end of an undergraduate or postgraduate taught course or programme and to in-course elements of assessment (e.g. essays) which count towards either the result for a course or the overall result for a programme.
2. Heads of Department, Advisers of Studies and other academic staff who are approached by students who fail, or who fail to attend or complete, elements of prescribed degree assessment should draw students' attention to this guidance note.
3. Students who fail to attend, or who are unable to complete, an element of prescribed degree assessment on account of illness or other good cause should send the Head of the relevant Department written details of their circumstances (which, in the case of illness, **MUST** include a certificate from a medical practitioner) within seven days of the date the assessment was due to be sat or submitted. Details provided within seven days normally will result in students being awarded MC (medical certificate) for that element of assessment. Failure to provide such written details will result in a student being awarded a result of No Paper (NP) (which is essentially CAS 0) for that element. This is without prejudice to the right of examiners, where students have commenced but have been unable to complete all elements of assessment for a course, to award a CAS mark for the course based on the elements of assessment which have been completed (discounting any missed elements covered by MCs and counting, as CAS 0, any element for which a NP has been recorded), where they feel it appropriate to do so.
4. Students who fail to attend or complete an element of prescribed degree assessment **without "good cause"** will automatically be awarded a result of No Paper (NP) (which is essentially a mark of CAS 0) for any such element. For the purposes of this guidance note, "good cause" is defined as any reason outwith a student's control e.g. compassionate or unavoidable circumstances and does not include, for example, misreading of the examination timetable in regard to the date, time or venue of an examination.

### B THE PARTICULAR CASE OF ELEMENTS NOT PASSED AT HONOURS OR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE LEVEL

5. The University's procedures for "Honours Classification in All Degree Programmes" (the *Grade Spectrum*) indicate that, normally, students must, *inter alia*, pass (i.e. be awarded CAS marks equal to or greater than 9) in **all** elements of assessment if they are to be awarded a First or Upper Second Class Honours degree. Thus, students awarded a CAS mark of less than 9 (including NP i.e. No Paper) for any element of prescribed Honours assessment normally could not obtain a higher award than a Lower Second Class Honours degree.
6. The *Grade Spectrum* gives the examiners discretion to depart from the class indicated by the *Grade Spectrum* **but there can be no undertaking that the examiners will choose to use discretion to do so.**

<sup>1</sup> Element of Prescribed Degree Assessment is defined as any component of assessment which contributes a specified percentage of the overall assessment prescribed for a course or programme. Examples of elements include an item of in-course assessment; a question in an end-of-course or programme written examination; or the overall outcome of a written examination. It is the responsibility of Departments, at the outset of each course or programme, to inform students of those elements of prescribed degree assessment to be used in the determination of the result of a course and programme, and of their weighting.

7. Where students have been unable to attend or complete an element of Honours assessment at the prescribed time **on account of illness or other good cause**, and have complied with the requirements of paragraph 3 above, General Regulation 20 for First Degrees<sup>2</sup> shall apply.
8. The general implications of failure to attend or complete an element of assessment **without good cause** are given in paragraph 4 above. Paragraph 5 indicates the additional impact of a failed element of Honours assessment in regard to degree classification. In both cases, Honours students normally would be unable to obtain a classification above a Lower Second Class Honours degree unless the examiners used discretion (paragraph 6 above refers). The examiners will only be able to consider applying discretion to depart, in an upward direction, from the class indicated by the Grade Spectrum if, in their academic judgement, a student's overall performance, excluding the element(s) failed or not completed, is at a sufficiently higher standard than that normally required for the higher classification: the application of such discretion will be dependent on the number and extent of failed elements, and any weighting to be applied to a particular element in regard to the Grade Spectrum. Heads of Department, Advisers of Studies and academic staff can only give general advice to students in this position who approach them for guidance, as indicated below.
9. Notwithstanding paragraph 8 above, where the University Calendar prescription for an Honours programme explicitly states that a pass in a specified course or courses is a compulsory requirement for award of a degree associated with that programme as a condition of accreditation by a Professional or Statutory Body, students who fail to appear for assessment in, or who fail, such a course can not normally qualify for award of the (accredited) Honours degree concerned. In such cases, students would be eligible for the award of an alternative (non-accredited) Honours degree, as indicated in the relevant Calendar entry, if they otherwise fulfilled the requirements for the award of the alternative degree.
10. Where a student has either failed, or has been unable to complete, for any reason, an element of Honours assessment for a First Degree at the first occasion on which the assessment was available to students during or following completion of the course concerned, they have the right to be assessed in the element(s) concerned at a later date, provided that they hold a valid Class Certificate(s) for the course(s) in question and have paid the re-examination fee, where appropriate. While the result of such an assessment will **NOT** contribute to Honours classification (unless permission to do so has been granted by the Senate on the recommendation of the relevant Undergraduate Programme Committee in accordance with General Regulation 20(b)(i)), it will, if completed successfully, be recorded on a student's transcript and could be used, for example, to indicate to a professional or statutory body that a student had completed successfully a particular course in order to satisfy accreditation requirements.
11. There is little point in students routinely re-taking either failed or missed elements of Honours assessment as the Regulations only permit a student's first attempt to count towards determining Honours degree classification. However, the following are some instances where a student may be advised to sit such assessments: to satisfy accreditation requirements; to gain a pre-requisite for a later course; to gain sufficient credits to meet the progress requirements as prescribed by the Regulations for a particular degree. In these cases, the result of a second opportunity of assessment will not normally be considered by the examiners in determining Honours degree classification. Students should consult their Adviser of Studies or the Head of the relevant Department to ascertain whether there would be any benefit in resitting such assessments.
12. The General Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards indicate that students who do not complete satisfactorily a prescribed element of assessment for any Level 5 course may be re-assessed in that element only in exceptional circumstances and on the unanimous recommendation of the examiners. They will nevertheless be deemed to have satisfied the credit requirements for the award if, on the basis of their overall performance, they are subsequently awarded the qualification concerned.

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<sup>2</sup> General Regulation 20 for First Degrees and Diplomas states that, "In the case of candidates who have been unable to complete an element of Honours degree assessment at the time prescribed by Regulation 9.3 on account of illness or other good cause, (a) the examiners may recommend that Honours be awarded as if the relevant element of assessment had been completed, provided they are satisfied that a sufficient part of the total assessment for the Honours programme has been completed for them to pass judgement on the candidate's performance." See the University Calendar for details of Regulations 20(b) and (c) which will apply if the examiners are unable to make a recommendation under sub-paragraph (a).

TW/LG  
19.5.00  
c:/miscel/guidance

## **REPORT FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

### **New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes**

The Senate is invited to note that the Committees, on the recommendations of the relevant Faculties, have approved further changes to the list of courses and programmes available as under (the list does not include courses which have been re-numbered solely because of a change in credit value, or teaching or assessment arrangements).

#### Accountancy

Withdrawal of the course AC2014/2514.

#### Biology

Introduction of new Level 4 course 'Topics in Conservation Biology'.

Withdrawal of the course BI4502.

#### Celtic

Introduction of new Level 5 course 'Fion, Fiannaiocht and Fenians'.

#### Continuing Education

Withdrawal of the courses CN10A5/CN15A5, CN10B8, CN10C2/15C2, CN10D3/15D3, CN15B4, CN15B5 and CN15B6.

#### Cultural History

Introduction of new Level 2 courses 'Memory and Culture: Imagining the Human Environment', 'Culture, History and Anthropology', 'The Ethnology of Tradition' (replacing CU2002, CU2503 and EI2001, respectively).

Introduction of new Level 3 course 'Continuity and Change: Culture and Society in Europe, 1500-1800' (replacing CU3004).

Introduction of new Level 4 courses 'Cultures of Victorian Science and Technology', 'Intoxication in cultural and historical perspective' (replacing CU4004 and CU4514, respectively).

#### Divinity with Religious Studies

Introduction of new MTh Programme 'Ministry and Mission'.

#### Forestry

Introduction of new Level 5 course 'Forestry Project Planning'.

### Geography

Withdrawal of the course GG3517.

### History

Introduction of a new Level 3 course 'Scotland & Empires, c. 1600-1800'.

### Management Studies

Introduction of new Level 1 courses 'Managing People and Organisations', 'Managing the Enterprise' (replacing MS1003 and MS1502, respectively).

Introduction of new Level 2 courses 'Managing Customers and Markets', 'Managing Operations', 'Managing Decisions' (replacing MS2002/3018, MS2505 and MS2506, respectively).

Introduction of new Level 5 courses 'Managing Organisational Change', 'Creating Network Organisations', 'Developing and Leading Effective Teams', 'Working in Partnership'.

### Physics

Introduction of new Level 2 course 'Modern Physics and Astronomy' (replacing PX2506).

Withdrawal of the course PX2507.

### Politics & International Relations

Introduction of new Level 2 course 'Political Ideologies' (replacing PI2001).

Introduction of new Level 4 course 'Parliamentary Internships'.

DMJ/LG

7.6.00