UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5 May 2004

Present: Principal, Professors Sewel and Houlihan, Dr J Roberts, Professors Logan, Rodger, Hubbuck, Thomson, Baker, MacInnes, Gane, Jordan, Howe, Player, Webster, Saunders, Haites, Mitchell, Kunin and Secombes, Dr B Fennell, Ms C Macaslan, Dr P Kinnear, Dr N Dower, Dr W Long, Dr A Clarke, Professors Burgess, Archbold and Blaikie, Mr W Brotherstone, Ms L Clark, Professor Duff, Dr S Lawrie, Dr J Liversidge, Dr D Hay, Dr D Heddle, Dr M Holmes, Dr X Lambin, Dr D MacPhee, Dr M Masson, Professor Mordue, Dr L Philip, Dr H Sinclair, Dr J Skakle, Mr S Styles, Dr M Syrotinski, Dr H Wallace, Dr M White and Mr G Humphries,

Apologies for absence were received from Professors Lyall, Templeton, Sleeman, Forte, Ritchie, Bruce, Sharp, Little, Bryden, Flin, Dawson, Ayres, Beaumont, Imrie and Urwin, Dr P Benson, Professors Heys, Hotson, Lurie, Reid and Shucksmith, Dr J Farmer, Dr J Geddes, Mrs B Hookey, Dr J King, Dr W McCausland, Professor Memon, Mrs M Ross, Dr E van Teijlingen and Ms D White.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

825.   The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2004 were approved, subject to removing the reference in minute 816.5 (ii) to the understanding that SHEFC would fund each of the four starred levels of excellence, as this was incorrect.

STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL

826.1   The Principal expressed his appreciation to colleagues from across the University for their support in the current recruitment process which was proceeding well. He also expressed delight that the AUT, nationally, had agreed to cease industrial action and thanked those concerned for the spirit in which the negotiations at the local level had taken place. The University was now looking forward to working with colleagues to implement the Framework Agreement effectively.

826.2   In concluding his statement the Principal referred to the current consultation document on the amalgamation of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council with the Scottish Further Education Funding Council. While the document, superficially, might appear to be innocuous, there were several proposals that, potentially, could seriously threaten the autonomy and functioning of universities. He therefore urged Senators to read the consultation document and submit their comments so that these could be used to inform the University's response. He then invited the Senior Vice-Principal to identify some of the key issues in the consultation document.

826.3   Professor Sewel emphasised that the proposed Bill was not a technical matter but would be one, if enacted, that would introduce major changes and would give the Scottish Executive greater powers to direct universities in their delivery of higher education, particularly at a strategic level. He reiterated the Principal's hope that all Senators would read the consultation document and submit their views to assist the formulation of the University's response, in addition to individuals responding directly to the consultation document if they so wished.

RAE 2008: CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR THE CONFIGURATION OF UNITS OF ASSESSMENT AND THE METHOD OF RECRUITING PANELS

827.   Professor Logan introduced the consultation document on the proposed configuration of units of assessment and the method of recruiting panels for the 2008 RAE, a copy of which had been circulated with the Senate papers (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). He highlighted the fact that nominations for potential panel members would not be accepted from HEIs or individuals and that the Funding Councils would make a formal call for nominations from a lengthy list of nominating bodies, which included accrediting bodies and subject associations as well as Universities Scotland and Universities UK. He also drew attention to the timescales for appointing members to the 15 main panels and the 66 sub-panels, each of the latter being responsible for reviewing a unit of assessment, with between four and five sub-panels reporting to a main panel. During discussion, it was acknowledged that the main panels were unlikely to question the academic judgements of the sub-panels, as it would be highly unlikely that main panel members had the specialist knowledge to make a

judgement on an individual piece of work in a particular unit of assessment: rather, the main panels would be responsible primarily for the high level quality control of the RAE process.

FINAL REPORT FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON ADVISING AND REGISTRATION

828.1 The University Secretary, as Convener of the Working Group on Advising and Registration, introduced the final report from the working group which had been circulated with the Agenda papers (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

828.2 Mr Cannon reported that the Working Group had been convened as part of the ongoing process of review of the current systems for Advising and Registration as a consequence of discussions with the AAUT during 2002/03. The membership had included the College Directors of Teaching and Learning, the Conveners of the undergraduate Academic Standards Committees, four representatives from the AUT, the Directors of Studies (Advising) for Arts & Social Sciences and Science, and the President of the Students' Association. The Working Group had met four times since January. It had acknowledged that many of the past problems relating to the appointment and remuneration of Advisers of Studies had centred around the issues of value, esteem and recognition of advising in the promotions exercise; and, consequently, the Working Group had agreed that the University should give further consideration to these issues and report to the JNCC in the next academic year.

828.3 The rationale for the Working Group's recommendations had been incorporated into a report which had been available on the University's website and drawn to the attention of all staff on two occasions in recent weeks, inviting comments on the proposals. A total of 32, predominantly positive, responses had been received from staff and the final recommendations placed before Senate had been revised in light of feedback from staff. All five recommendations had been unanimously supported by the Working Group.

828.4 During discussion, Mr Cannon emphasised that the thrust of the proposals was to streamline the existing system and reduce some of the administrative burdens on Advisers. It was also noted that the Working Group had agreed that greater use of technology should be explored in regard to Advising and Registration and that some Heads of School had already expressed an interest in participating in limited pilots of electronic registration in 2004/05. It was also important to note that, in order to address current issues surrounding student retention, the role of an Adviser of Studies may, in the future, change to include more pastoral elements. Any future developments involving the wider use of electronic systems for Advising and Registration would therefore need to be sensitive to such issues.

828.5 Recommendation 4 concerned the proposal that, during the next academic year, the feasibility and desirability of MA students retaining one Adviser of Studies throughout their time as an undergraduate should be explored. It was noted that, as part of this proposal, students would be reassigned a new Adviser from the relevant discipline if they changed their degree intention, either at the time of the change if it included a change of School, or at the beginning of the next academic year, or at the request of the student or Adviser, as appropriate.

828.6 In closing the discussion, the Secretary extended his thanks to Dr Mackintosh and Dr Bernard for their significant contributions to developing the proposals and supporting the Working Group in its deliberations.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT
(23 March 2004)

1.   Draft Resolution No   of 2004
[Procedure for removal of Co-opted Members of the University Court]

829.1 The Senate noted that, at its October and December meetings of 2000 the Court, with a view to ensuring compliance with SHEFC Good Practice Benchmarks, gave consideration to the introduction of a code of conduct. Related to that, consideration was given to a mechanism for the removal of co-opted members of the Court in circumstances of gross misconduct.

829.2 Subsequently, in 2001, Ordinance No 134 was approved by the Privy Council empowering the Court to remove co-opted members from its membership. The Ordinance also gave the Court the power to determine by Resolution the procedure to be used in such a circumstance.

829.3 The Senate noted that the Court, for its part, had approved a Draft Resolution which puts in place the procedure to be followed in accordance with Ordinance 134, and decided to forward it to the Senatus Academicus, the Business Committee of the General Council and to make it generally available for comment within the University (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

829.4 The Senate, for its part, approved the Draft Resolution.

2. Resolution No 233 of 2004
[Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees]

830. The Senate noted that the Court had received the draft Resolution [Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees], having been approved by the Senatus Academicus, the General Council and being made generally available in terms of Section 6 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1966. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the Resolution.

3. Draft Resolution No   of 2004
[Amendment to Resolution No 195 of 1996: Regulation of Teaching and Learning]

831. The Senate noted that the Court, for its part, had approved the draft Resolution No   of 2004 [Amendment to Resolution No 195 of 1996: Regulation of University Teaching and Learning] as recommended by the Senate and had decided to forward it to the Business Committee of the General Council and to make it generally available in terms of Section 6 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966.

4. Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

(833 The Senate noted that the Court had approved recommendations from the Senate in regard to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, including a Protocol for the Handling of Section 1 Requests.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING
(26 March 2004)

1. Compliance of Honours Degrees with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

833.1 The Senate considered four principles concerning the provision of resits for Honours students that the UCTL had proposed as providing a framework for a review of the *Grade Spectrum* for honours classification and compliance of the University's Honours degrees with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

833.2 During discussion, it was reaffirmed that a mark of 9 on the University's Common Assessment Scale (CAS) was the threshold standard for passing an individual course and demonstrated that a student had achieved the minimum learning outcomes for award of specific credit for a particular course. It was agreed, however, that while approving the four principles, the UCTL should be asked to consider, in consultation with Heads of School, whether additional mechanisms for compensating students for failure in one course by, for example, a high CAS mark in another course, could be justified.

2. Proposal to enable students to obtain CAS marks and/or feedback for assessed coursework and end-of-course assessments via the Student Portal

834.1 The Senate considered three recommendations to enable students to obtain CAS marks and/or feedback for assessed coursework and end-of-course assessments via the Student Portal (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

834.2 The Senate approved Recommendations 2 and 3; and approved Recommendation 1 (which referred to the overall CAS mark for an end-of-course assessment being released to students via the Student Portal, in addition to the overall course CAS mark), subject to this matter being referred back to the UCTL with the recommendation that release of an overall CAS mark for end-of-course assessments should not be a requirement but should be permitted where Schools so wished to do so for a particular course.

3. Institutional C & IT Strategy

835. The Senate noted that the UCTL had considered the draft Institutional C & IT Strategy. The Strategy had been developed over the past 12 months and emphasised the clear institutional investment in the area of C & IT. The report had been prepared after significant consultation. The UCTL had made a number of comments on the Strategy and, subject to their incorporation, had approved the C & IT Strategy and agreed that it should be referred to the Information Management Committee and the University Management Group for consideration of the resource implications.

4. Interim Report from the Working Group on Advising & Registration

836. The Senate noted that the UCTL had received an interim report from the Working Group on Advising & Registration. The UCTL had made a number of comments on the proposals and agreed to refer these back to the Working Group on Advising & Registration (Minute 828 refers).

5. Class Representative System

837. The Senate noted that the UCTL had received a report from the Students' Association on the class representative system. While in most cases the class representative system was working effectively, the Students' Association were keen to work with the University to review and enhance this system. The review was especially timely due to a key feature of the new quality regime in Scotland being to enhance the student experience and encourage greater student involvement. The UCTL had made a number of comments in regard to the report which it was agreed would be incorporated. It was further agreed that the revised report should be included for discussion at the next meeting of Heads of School.

6. Survey on the Use of the LTSN

838. The Senate noted that the UCTL had received a report from the Educational & Staff Development Unit on their survey of the use of the LTSN. Since the use of the services provided by the LTSN was variable within Schools, there was a view that, as this was a major resource, there should be much greater use made of this service. It was therefore agreed that the College Directors of Teaching & Learning should encourage Schools to respond to the request from the Educational & Staff Development Unit for information on their use of LTSN.

7. Enhancement-led Institutional Review - Plan for preparation of the Reflective Analysis

839. The Senate noted that the UCTL had approved the detailed schedule for the production of the Reflective Analysis document which was required as submission to the QAA for the Enhancement-led Institutional Review. The dates for the Review Visit had now been confirmed: the Part 1 visit would take place on 16 and 17 March 2005, and the Part 2 visit would take place during the week beginning 25 April 2005.

8. Working Group on Progress Files and Personal Development Planning (PDP)

840. The Senate noted that the UCTL had approved the remit, composition and reporting schedule for the Working Group on Progress Files and Personal Development Planning (PDP).

9. QAA Code of Practice on Admissions and Recruitment

841. The Senate noted that the UCTL had considered and approved a document setting out the University's compliance with the QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education: Section 10 – Recruitment and Admissions, which had been forwarded by the Student Recruitment & Admissions Committee (SRAC) and the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate).

10. Academic Quality Handbook (3rd Edition)

842. The Senate noted that the third edition of the Academic Quality Handbook would be produced by the start of session 2004/2005. The UCTL had approved the proposal that the new version of the Handbook be solely web-based (rather than also being provided in hard copy) to enable it to be regularly updated, as required: though, in doing so, the UCTL had noted the comment that the availability of a small number of hard-copies might be helpful.

11. Schedule for Internal Teaching Review 2004-2015

843. The Senate noted that the UCTL had approved the schedule for Internal Teaching Review for 2004/2005 to 2014/2015, which had been agreed with Colleges.

12. Public Information about Quality

844. The Senate noted that the UCTL had received, for information, a summary paper in regard to public information about quality together with a briefing paper prepared for members of the Universities Scotland Learning & Teaching Committee and the Teaching Quality Forum in regard to the same issue. The UCTL had expressed its support for the inclusion of the Scottish sector in the quantitative information relating to quality to be published for England and Wales through the HERO Portal.

13. Monitoring Students' Progress - Report from First Half-Session 2003/04

845. The Senate noted that the UCTL had received a report on the outcome of the student monitoring system in the first half-session 2003/2004.

14. Draft QAA Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning

846. The Senate noted that the UCTL Convener, on behalf of the University, had sent a response to the QAA in regard to the draft QAA Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning which had been circulated for comment.

15. Timetabling of Teaching in the Context of Enhancing the Student Learning Experience

847. The Senate noted that a Working Group composed of the College Directors of Teaching & Learning and their Assistant College Registrars together with Dr Dale, Assistant Registrar (Registry Services) had been formed, under the Convenership of Professor Cotter, to undertake a review of the timetabling of teaching in the context of enhancing the student learning experience.

16. Programme Specifications

848. The Senate noted that the UCTL's proposals in regard to the introduction of a revised format of Programme Specifications had been discussed at the meeting of Universities Scotland Teaching Quality Forum (TQF) on 20 February 2004. The proposal to move from the existing format of Programme Specifications to a shorter web-based format with links to existing documentation (e.g. University Calendar, Catalogue of Courses, Course/Programme Handbooks) was broadly supported by members of the TQF. It was agreed that this revised format would enable these documents to be more student-friendly whilst still meeting the requirements for Enhancement-led Institutional Review. In view of this support, the Registry would look to revise the current programme prescriptions in the University Calendar with a view to amending these to serve as Programme Specifications. This review may not be fully in place until 2005/06 due to the constraints of the timetable for the production of the University Calendar.

17. Postgraduate Catalogue of Courses

849. The Senate noted that the UCTL had considered the possible establishment of a Postgraduate Catalogue of Courses. The UCTL had endorsed the views of Heads of School that, as all course-specific information was currently provided on School websites and most Taught Postgraduate Programmes utilised courses offered by the parent School, there was no need for such a document. However, in developing web-based programme specifications (see above), web links for postgraduate course information would be made between programme specifications in the University Calendar and School websites.

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES

1. Draft Resolution No 2004 [Supplementary Regulations for the Award of Combined Degrees with Education]

850.   On the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning and the two undergraduate Academic Standards Committees, the Senate approved, and agreed to forward to the University Court, the draft Resolution 'Supplementary Regulations for the Award of Combined Degrees with Education'. These Regulations had been proposed to enable the introduction of Combined Degrees with Education to enhance the recruitment of students to programmes in teaching. The Senate also approved, on the recommendation of the Academic Standards Committee (Science, Engineering and Medicine), amendments to the Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Pure Science (BSc) to permit the introduction of the Degree of BSc in Technology with Education (as detailed in Section 2 of the draft Resolution). The Senate also approved the term dates for this programme which accord with those of the PGCE, approved by Senate in October 2003 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

2. Accreditation Agreement with the UHI Millennium Institute

851.   The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate), and agreed to forward to the University Court, an Accreditation Agreement between the University and the UHI Millennium Institute in regard to the delivery of research degree programmes, the Accreditation Panel's Report having been made available to Senators on the University's website (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

3. Validation Agreement with the Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies

852.   The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate), and agreed to forward to the University Court, a Validation Agreement between the University and the Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies in regard to the delivery of research degree and postgraduate taught programmes, the Validation Panel's Report having been made available to Senators on the University's website (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

4. New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes

853.   The Senate noted that the Academic Standards Committees, on the recommendation of the relevant Colleges, had approved changes to the list of courses and programmes available as under:

(A)   INDIVIDUAL DEGREE AND DIPLOMA COURSES (UNDERGRADUATE)

Biological Sciences

Withdrawal of the courses BI1506, SS2503, SS3305, ZO4522 and ZO4806

Celtic

Introduction of new level 4 course 'The Continental Celts: History and Institutions B'

Chemistry

Withdrawal of the courses CM4018, CM4510, CM4019 and CM4511.

Curriculum Studies

Withdrawal of the courses CR3090, CR3091, CR3092, CR3093 and CR3094

Economics

Introduction of new level 4 courses 'Methods and Practices of Economics', 'History of Economic Thought', 'Microeconomics', and 'Macroeconomics'.

Withdrawal of the courses EC3019, EC3504, EC3514 and EC3520

Education

Introduction of new level 3 courses 'Teaching Technological Education in Secondary Schools A', 'Learning and Teaching in Secondary Schools A', 'School Experience 1A' and 'School Experience 1B'

Introduction of new level 4 courses 'Pre-School School Experience', 'Learning and Teaching in Primary Schools', 'Teaching Technological Education in Secondary Schools B' and 'Learning and Teaching in Secondary Schools B'.

Educational Studies

Withdrawal of the courses ED3051 and ED3502

Engineering

Introduction of new level 3 course 'Mechanics and Materials for BSc Technology with Education'

English

Introduction of new level 3 course 'Language and Language Use in the Twentieth Century'

Introduction of new level 4 course 'Phonological Variation and Change'

Geography and Environment

Withdrawal of courses GG4021 and GG4523.

Key Learning

Introduction of new level 2 courses 'Paul's Letter to the Galatians' and 'Approaching Islam'

Lifelong Learning Studies

Withdrawal of the course LL3056

Management Studies

Introduction of new level 4 course 'Managerial Research and Analysis'

Withdrawal of the course MS3528

Mathematical Sciences

Introduction of new level 4 course 'Non-Parametric Tests and Other Topics'.

Withdrawal of courses 'MX3013, MX3014, MX3514, MX3524, MX3527, MX4025, MX 4032, MX4530, MX4532, ST2003 and ST2504.

Philosophy

Introduction of new level 1 courses 'Moral and Political Philosophy' and 'Truth, Knowledge and Reality'

(B)   UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE AND DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Degree of Bachelor of Music

Introduction of new honours programmes 'Bachelor of Music' and 'Bachelor of Music (Scotland)'

Degree of Bachelor of Science

Introduction of new designated programme 'Technology with Education'

Postgraduate Certificate in Education

Change of title from Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Primary) to 'The Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary)' and from Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Secondary) to 'The Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary)'

REPORT FROM THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

854. The Senate approved, for its part, a recommendation from the Joint Committee on Equal Opportunities from its meeting of 24 March 2004 that the Committee on Disabilities be reconstituted as a Sub-Committee of the Joint Committee on Equal Opportunities with immediate effect.

TERM DATES

855. The Senate approved a request from the Head of the School of Education that the start of the Winter Term for the Postgraduate Certification in Education (Secondary) programme be one day earlier than previously agreed, i.e. 25 August 2004, to allow students to attend all components of the induction programme on 26 and 27 August.

RECTORIAL ELECTION: 18 NOVEMBER 2004

856. The Senate approved the following arrangements for the Rectorial Election to be held on Thursday 18 November 2004:

(i) That the arrangements for voting on-campus be as follows:

Queen Mother Library	10.00 – 5.00
Central Refectory (subject to availability)	10.00 – 5.00
Medical School	12.00 – 2.00
Hillhead Halls of Residence	8.00 – 9.00 and 5.00 – 7.00
Taylor Building	10.00 – 5.00
Hilton	12.00 – 2.00

(ii) That postal voting be permitted for students, where requested (including distance learning students and those Associate Students on validated programmes).

(iii) That Professors Logan and Duff and Dr Fennell be appointed as Scrutineers for the counting of votes; that the expenditure limit on campaign expenses for the election be £250; and that, should the Principal be unavailable, the Senior Vice-Principal be appointed as acting Returning Officer and to declare the result of the election.

DATES OF SENATE MEETINGS

857. The Senate approved a recommendation that it should meet at 2.00 p.m. on the following dates in the academic year 2004-2005:-

Wednesday 6 October 2004
Wednesday 17 November 2004
Wednesday 26 January 2005
Wednesday 2 March 2005
Wednesday 4 May 2005
Wednesday 15 June 2005
Wednesday 13 July 2005 (if required)

GRADUATIONS *IN ABSENTIA*

858. The Senate noted that a list of those qualified to receive degrees, diplomas and certificates who had applied to have them conferred *in absentia* was available in the Senate Office of the Registry (see Appendix to Minutes of June 2004).

859. The Senate agreed to confer the degrees on, and awarded the diplomas and other qualifications to, the persons stated.