

## O4: STANDING COMMITTEES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

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### REGULATION

#### 1. AUTHORITY FOR REGULATION

This Regulation is made in pursuance of Article 13 of *The Robert Gordon University (Scotland) Order of Council 2006*.

## 2. STANDING COMMITTEES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

The following shall be Standing Committees of Academic Council:

Academic Development Committee  
Honorary Degrees Committee  
Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee  
Research Committee  
Research Degrees Committee  
Student Appeals Committee

## 3. POWERS

A Standing Committee shall have the following powers in addition to any other powers conferred upon it by Academic Council:

- (i) to consider any matter which comes within its remit and any other matter referred to it by Academic Council, and to make recommendations and to report to Council thereon;
- (ii) to co-opt persons, as appropriate, to the Standing Committee, provided that:
  - (a) co-opted persons do not exceed one third of the number of appointed members as defined in its composition, and
  - (b) the name of any co-opted person is reported to Academic Council;
- (iii) to invite any persons whose knowledge and experience will be of value to attend meetings of the Standing Committee;
- (iv) to consult other Standing Committees and persons on matters of mutual interest; and
- (v) to establish user groups or working groups, as appropriate, which would normally be created to undertake specific, time-limited tasks.

## 4. COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Academic Council shall prescribe the composition of each Standing Committee and appoint members where relevant/appropriate. The Principal, as Chair, may attend, as a full member, any meeting of any Standing Committee of Academic Council.
- 4.2 A co-opted person attending a Standing Committee is not a full member of that Standing Committee unless Academic Council has specified that person is a full member.
- 4.3 No member of staff (with the exception of the Principal, Deputy Principal and Chief Academic Officer, and Vice-Principals) shall be a member of more than two of the Standing Committees of Academic Council.

- 4.4 Membership of Standing Committees shall be phased in such a manner as to promote continuity of membership.

## 5. PERIODS OF OFFICE

- 5.1 The first period of office of a member of a Standing Committee, other than a member *ex officio*, shall normally be three years and the period shall end on the last day of August.
- 5.2 A member of a Standing Committee, other than a member *ex officio*, shall be eligible for re-appointment provided that a person shall not be a member for more than two consecutive periods. The first period of office, if less than three years through the filling of a casual vacancy, shall not be reckoned in determining the eligibility of a member for re-appointment.
- 5.3 Notwithstanding the provisions of [paragraph 5.2](#) of this Regulation, Academic Council shall have power exceptionally to extend the number of consecutive periods of three years for which a person may serve as a member of a Standing Committee.

## 6. CASUAL VACANCIES

- 6.1 A Standing Committee shall, as soon as possible, make arrangements to fill a casual vacancy on a Standing Committee in accordance with the composition of that Standing Committee as prescribed by Academic Council.
- 6.2 A person appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall hold office for the unexpired period of office of their predecessor and shall be eligible for re-appointment in accordance with [paragraphs 5.2](#) and [5.3](#) of this Regulation.

## 7. CONVENER AND VICE-CONVENER

- 7.1 The Convener of a Standing Committee shall be appointed in accordance with its composition.
- 7.2 Each Standing Committee shall appoint a Vice-Convener from among its members.

## 8. VOTING

- 8.1 Only a full member of a Standing Committee shall be entitled to vote at a meeting of that Committee.
- 8.2 A co-opted person attending a meeting of a Standing Committee shall not be entitled to vote at a meeting of that Standing Committee, unless Academic Council has specified that that person is a full member.
- 8.3 A person attending a meeting of a Standing Committee by invitation shall not be entitled to vote at that meeting.
- 8.4 The Convener of a Standing Committee shall have a deliberative vote and a casting vote.

## 9. QUORUM

The quorum for a Standing Committee, and its Sub-Committees and other groups, shall be not less than one-third of the number of full members of that Standing Committee, Sub-Committee or group unless otherwise stated.

## 10. SUB-COMMITTEES

Standing Committees will from time to time establish Sub-Committees in order to assist them in undertaking their remits. The current Sub-Committees are outlined in [Annex 4.1](#) to this Regulation. Sub-Committees, their memberships and Conveners will be reviewed not less than every three years.

## 11. REVIEW

The purpose and constitution of all Standing Committees shall be reviewed from time to time by Academic Council.

## SCHEDULE 4.1: ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### Remit

To advise on the future shape and structure of the academic portfolio in response to ongoing market analysis and performance analysis, and approve course developments and collaborative ventures based on criteria and financial parameters agreed by Academic Council and the Executive. In pursuance of this role it:

- (i) undertakes an annual course portfolio review in order to monitor performance and identify courses/areas where future viability is a potential risk.
- (ii) maintains oversight of key performance indicators that relate to course performance, which have a particular external relevance.
- (iii) assesses the potential impact of external changes (including Funding Council guidance) on the course portfolio in order to inform future portfolio developments.
- (iv) initiates, where appropriate, specific portfolio developments.
- (v) considers and approves annual planning numbers and monitors achievement.
- (vi) supports implementation of the University's internationalisation strategy in terms of analysis of student recruitment and development of institutional relationships.
- (vii) monitors institution-wide and School partnerships.
- (viii) considers and approves rationales (including financial information) for all formal academic collaborations involving delivery of academic awards/credit.
- (ix) monitors, annually, the activities undertaken for each Memorandum of Understanding.
- (x) considers all new award bearing proposals including those for corporate clients.
- (xi) considers and approves changes to existing courses involving changes:
  - comprising more than 25% of the course's overall SCQF credit;
  - to course titles;
  - to convert existing courses to additional and alternative modes of study, with particular reference to costing issues relating to the development of such courses.
- (xii) considers and, as appropriate, approves proposals to cease delivery of courses.
- (xiii) considers any other issues as delegated by Academic Council.

## Composition

### *Ex Officio*

Deputy Principal and Chief Academic Officer (Convener)  
Assistant Chief Academic Officer  
Dean of Student Recruitment  
Director of Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access  
Director of Finance  
Director of Planning and Policy Development  
Director of Business Development  
Heads of School  
Vice-Principal (Commercial and Regional Engagement)  
Vice-Principal (Learning and Quality), North East Scotland College (NESCoI)  
Vice-Principal (Research)  
Vice-Principal (University Advancement)

### *In attendance*

Director of Academic Administration (as appropriate)

## SCHEDULE 4.2: HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

### Remit

To consider nominations for the award of Honorary Degrees.

(See also [Academic Regulation A8: Honorary Awards](#)).

### Composition

#### *Ex Officio*

Principal (Convener)  
Deputy Principal and Chief Academic Officer  
Vice-Principal (Research)  
Vice-Principal (Commercial and Regional Engagement)  
Vice-Principal (Corporate Operations)  
Vice-Principal (University Advancement)

#### *Ordinary Members*

Two representatives nominated by Academic Council and drawn from its membership

#### *In attendance*

The Academic Registrar shall act as Secretary to the Committee

## SCHEDULE 4.3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

### Remit

- (i) To consider policy matters relating to teaching, learning and assessment and to formulate appropriate procedures relating to these processes.
- (ii) To develop and appraise the effectiveness of the University's quality assurance processes, and appropriate mechanisms for maintaining the academic standards of the University.
- (iii) To maintain a strategic oversight of the development and implementation of the University's enhancement of the student learning experience.
- (iv) To maintain oversight of specific institution-level performance indicators that relate to learning and teaching and the student experience.
- (v) To report and make recommendations to Academic Council as appropriate.

### Composition

#### *Ex Officio*

Deputy Principal and Chief Academic Officer (Convener)  
Assistant Chief Academic Officer  
Academic Registrar  
Director of Academic Administration  
Director of Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access  
Director of Information Technology  
Director of Library Services  
Director of Student Life  
A Student Union President

#### *Ordinary Members*

One academic representative from each School

#### *In attendance*

Academic Quality Officers



## SCHEDULE 4.4: RESEARCH COMMITTEE

### Remit

To advise the university on the appropriate strategic direction, priorities and activities in order to be internationally, nationally and regionally recognised for excellence in translational research, enterprise and innovation in key thematic areas and to demonstrate tangible success in applying that research for the benefit of the wider community and to the university's course portfolio. In pursuance of this role the Committee will:

- (i) support the Vice-Principal (Research) in developing coherent strategies to deliver the university's strategic priorities to maintain, sustain and enhance the research activities of the university, its research profile, and ensure an effective and cohesive research culture throughout the university;
- (ii) regularly monitor overall performance in research activities against key performance indicators as determined by the university from time to time, and within the context of the *Research Excellence Framework*, including the identification and monitoring of risks associated with research;
- (iii) regularly review Schools' research plans and monitor performance against targets;
- (iv) oversee the development of, and compliance with, the university's research governance and research ethics policies and associated procedures, and advise on good practice as appropriate;
- (v) ensure the University has a clear strategy to support the career development of researchers, and monitor the impact of the strategy, with particular reference to the UK-wide *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, the *Athena SWAN* programme, requirements for research data management, and the UK-wide *Vitae* programme;
- (vi) monitor and advise the university on the implications of changes in the external environment including, *inter alia*, international, national and government priorities and initiatives;
- (vi) advise and report on a regular basis to Academic Council on issues related to research.

### Composition

#### *Ex Officio*

Vice-Principal (Research) (Convener)  
 Research Strategy Manager  
 Head of Graduate School

#### *Ordinary Members*

Up to twelve senior researchers with a demonstrable track record of research success

## SCHEDULE 4.5: RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE

### Remit

- (i) To support the Vice-Principal (Research) and Head of the Graduate School in developing and enhancing the University's Graduate School and provision of research degree programmes.
- (ii) To oversee the development of, and compliance with, the University's regulations and policies for research degrees.
- (iii) To approve the registration and transfer of research students onto, and within, programmes of research leading to higher degrees.
- (iv) To make recommendations to Academic Council for the awards of MRes, MSc by Research, MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorates.
- (v) To monitor research student performance indicators and experience, including consideration of the annual Research Degree Appraisal Process.
- (vi) To support the training and career development of postgraduate researchers with particular reference to the UK-wide *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, the *Athena SWAN* programme, requirements for research data management, and the UK-wide *Vitae* programme

### Composition

#### *Ex Officio*

Head of Graduate School (Convener)  
Vice-Principal (Research)  
Deputy Academic Registrar  
Research Degree Coordinators from each School

## SCHEDULE 4.6: STUDENT APPEALS COMMITTEE

### Remit

To consider, on behalf of Academic Council, any appeals by students against decisions of Assessment Boards or, in the case of students registered for research degrees, against decisions of examiners or the Research Degrees Committee, or appeals in respect of misconduct, and to take the action that it considers to be appropriate and in accordance with *Academic Regulation A3: Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints* and *Academic Regulation A6: Research Degrees* as appropriate.

In pursuance of this role it:

- (i) considers any matter included within the stated purpose of the Committee together with any other matters referred to it by Academic Council and to make decisions on such matters;
- (ii) invites individuals, from within or outwith the University, whose knowledge and/or experience will be of value, to attend meetings of the Committee;
- (iii) authorises the Convener to act on behalf of the Committee;
- (iv) makes recommendations to Academic Council on any matters affecting the academic or administrative procedures of the University, that result from the Committee's consideration of a particular appeal(s).

### Composition

The Student Appeals Committee shall have a quorum of four, and shall consist of three senior academic members of staff\* from outwith the School(s) involved in the appeal (one of whom to be the Convener, selected by the Committee's Secretary), and a Student Union President.

The Student Appeals Committee shall reach decisions only by consensus.

The Secretary to the Committee shall be the Deputy Academic Registrar, (*or nominee*); the Secretary shall not be a member of the Committee.

\* For consideration of non-academic misconduct appeals, senior representatives from support services may be used

## ANNEX 4.1: SUB-COMMITTEES

### 1. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

#### 1.1 Academic Regulations Sub-Committee

##### Remit

- (i) To consider revisions to the Academic Regulations and make recommendations to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.
- (ii) To promote good practice and consistency in the application of the Academic Regulations.

##### Composition

###### *Ex Officio*

Assistant Chief Academic Officer (Convener)  
Deputy Academic Registrar  
Director of Academic Administration  
Student Union Administrator  
University Solicitor

###### *Ordinary Members*

Up to six academic representatives, with no more than one from each School

###### *In addition*

The Convener(s) of the *Student Appeals Committee* shall attend as appropriate.

#### 1.2 Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee

##### Remit

- (i) To contribute to the development and monitoring of institution-level quality enhancement activities, pertaining to the student experience, aligned to the University's Strategic Plan *A Clear Future*.
- (ii) To have oversight of the enhancement of policy and practice in relation to facilities and support as they relate to the student experience.
- (iii) To report and make recommendations to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee as appropriate.

## Composition

### *Ex Officio*

Director of Student Life (Convener)  
 Academic Registrar  
 Director of Academic Administration  
 Director of Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access  
 Director of Estates and Property Services  
 Director of Information Technology  
 Director of Library Services  
 Student Union General Manager  
 A Student Union President

*Ex officio* members may appoint nominees

### *Ordinary Members*

Six Student School Officers  
 Six academic representatives, with no more than one from each School

## 1.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee

### Remit

- (i) To contribute to the development and monitoring of institution-level quality enhancement activities, pertaining to teaching, learning and assessment, aligned to the University's Strategic Plan *A Clear Future*.
- (ii) To promote best practice within the University in respect of teaching, learning and assessment.
- (iii) To monitor and advise on the implications of national initiatives/legislation.
- (iv) To report and make recommendations to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee as appropriate.

### Composition

#### *Ex Officio*

Director of Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access (Convener)  
 A Student Union President  
 Academic Support Lead, DELTA  
 Step Change Lead, DELTA

#### *Ordinary Members*

Three Student School Officers  
 One academic representative from each School  
 One external representative

*In attendance (as appropriate)*

Representative from the Library Service

Representative from the Department for Governance and Academic Quality

## **2. RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

### **2.1 Research Integrity and Ethics Sub-Committee**

#### **Remit**

To develop and monitor the implementation of a quality management system for the University in respect of research governance and, so far as it is reasonably possible, the maintenance and enhancement of ethical standards in the conduct of research (including consultancy and professional practice) undertaken by employees and students of the University. In pursuance of this, it will:

- (i) define the standards to which all research (including consultancy and professional practice) conducted in the University will adhere;
- (ii) develop and monitor procedures to ensure:
  - best ethical practice is followed;
  - the facilitation of knowledge, understanding and effective dialogue of ethical issues amongst employees and students;
  - adherence to relevant legislation relating to, inter alia, the use of animals in scientific procedures;
  - and that all actual and potential participants, the University, employees and students are protected against conduct deemed to be unethical;
- (iii) monitor and audit compliance with the University's research policies and procedures;
- (iv) maintain effective dialogue, through regular reporting, with the School Ethics Review Panels (or their equivalent);
- (v) maintain a watching brief of national initiatives, concordats, codes of practice and legislative requirements in respect of research governance, research integrity and research ethics, and advise the Research Committee as appropriate;
- (vi) routinely receive reports from the Animal Ethics Panel;
- (vii) report to the University's Research Committee concerning its work and any specific issues it wishes to draw to the Committee's attention.

## Composition

### *Ex Officio*

Vice-Principal (Research) (Convener)  
 Research Strategy Manager (Vice-Convener)

### *Ordinary Members*

Up to six academic representatives selected from Schools to ensure coverage of cognate areas  
 One lay person  
 Statistician

## Quorum

Two-thirds of the members must be in attendance for the Research Integrity and Ethics Sub-Committee to be quorate.

## Operating Procedures

The Sub-Committee will:

- (i) conduct routine business electronically, but will meet in full session once each academic session for a formal review of that session's business and at any other times as required and determined by the Convener;
- (ii) require its members to declare any personal interest prior to considering its business and to be appropriately qualified for membership of the Sub-Committee;
- (ii) require proposals for research to be considered as follows:

*Approved* – the proposal is granted ethical approval without amendment;

*Conditionally Approved subject to amendment* – the proposal is granted ethical approval subject to relatively minor amendments and authority is delegated to the Convener to confirm that the response received from the principal researcher conforms with the Sub-Committee's requirements;

*Deferred* – consideration of the proposal is deferred to a future meeting pending receipt of substantial amendments, clarification or further information;

*Rejected* – the proposal is refused ethical approval as it is not capable of appropriate amendment.