

Academic Council Minute

Meeting Details

Minute of the meeting held on 30 November 2023 (2.00pm – 3.00pm).

Present: Professor S Olivier (Chair), Dr D Allen, Dr M Amish, L Binnie, J Bircham, O Bolajoko, Dr S Buckler, C Campbell, J Clifford, Dr D Cockburn, M Coull, L Curtis, Professor S Dawkes, W Deegan, Professor P Exley, Professor E Gammie, Dr N Gibson, Dr P Johnston, S Macpherson, Dr C McCullagh, G McGee, L Mifsud, P Moran, A Murray, Professor S Pedersen, Dr J Royle, Dr M Snaith, V Strachan, Dr M Victoria, and G Wishart.

Apologies: Dr C Air, Professor A Chan, H Christie, Professor N Fyfe, Dr J Isaacs, Dr N Johnson, T Pirie, Professor L Kilbride, Dr C Thompson, Professor S Vertigans and Professor S Walsh.

In Attendance: F Antoniazzi, F McLean Whyte (Secretary) and J Strachan.

Item	Business	Action
	<p>WELCOME</p> <p>The following new members were welcomed to their first meeting of Academic Council:</p> <p>Dr Dan Allen, Dean of Gray's School of Art; Professor Sarah Pederson, Dean of Graduate School; Oluwatoyin Bolajoko, RGU Union Sabbatical Officer – President (Education and Welfare); Dr Mohamed Amish, School of Engineering; Josh Bircham, School of Creative and Cultural Business; Dr Sarah Buckler, School of Applied Social Studies; Dr Neil Gibson, School of Applied Social Studies; Gerry McGee, The Law School; Dr Mark Snaith, School of Computing; and Gillian Wishart, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment.</p>	
1.	<p>MINUTE</p> <p>The Committee approved the <i>Minute of the meeting held on 13 June 2023</i>, and noted a <i>Matters Arising Report</i>.</p>	

1.1 Recruitment and Admissions to Higher Education Policy [AC/23/3/1.2]

Action The revisions to the *Recruitment and Admissions to Higher Education Policy* were still in progress and would be submitted to the next meeting of Academic Council.

Dr D
Cockburn,
E Forster &
D Simpson

1.2 Future of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Project [AC/23/3/4.3.2]

The paper submitted to the Academic Development Committee on 26 April 2023, concerning the interim evaluation of the Future of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Project, was distributed with the Matters Arising Report.

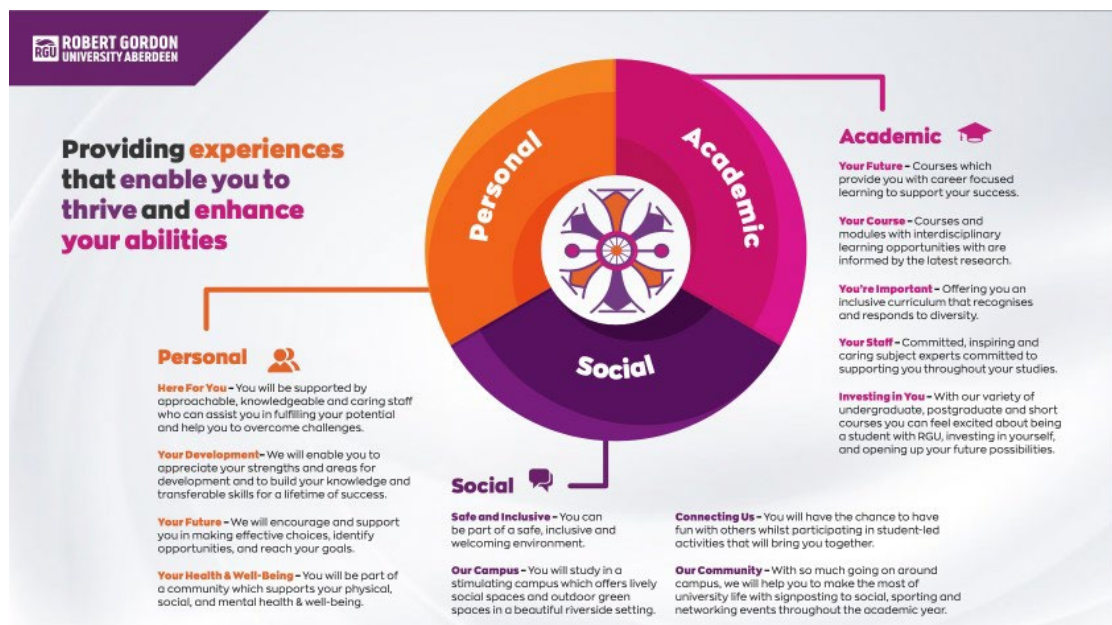
2. STRATEGIC DISCUSSION [STANDING ITEM]

Julie Strachan, Head of Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) informed Council on the progress with the development of the *Student Experience Sub-Strategy*. The project, led by the Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience, and informed by a steering group consisted of students, academic staff, representatives from Student Life and DELTA, and external stakeholders, used the University's Strategy as its starting point:

To provide students with an excellent experience that will enable them to raise their aspirations and thrive in their professional careers as global citizens, we will:

- Create a vibrant and inclusive environment that provides an equitable and future-focused student experience
- Design a broad, relevant and engaging curriculum with an international perspective that enhances personal development and employability
- Provide excellent academic and personal support; including opportunities to participate in 'beyond the classroom' activities
- Widen access and grow enrolments on our courses while further developing the range of work-based and upskilling courses.

Having developed a value proposition and reflecting on the University Motto, “*Omni Nunc Arte Magistra*”, or “Be all you can be/make the most of your abilities”, three key pillars had been identified: academic, personal and social. The value proposition was mapped to the three pillars, and this had formed the basis of a consultation exercise with students, Associate Deans for Academic Development and Student Experience and Schools. Feedback received, combined with further reflection on the University’s heritage, in the form of the University’s mace and its iconography, informed the current iteration, which was the subject of the current consultation process:



In discussion, the following was raised:

- The clarity of the design of the graphical presentation was welcomed.
- The aim, once the Sub-Strategy was finalised, was to have fully interactive graphics delivered on the University’s website, and there was potential to adopt this approach to link all aspects of the Strategy.
- In addition to an email to all students in spring 2023, the Union had assisted with the recruitment of students for the consultation focus groups.
- The University’s key strategic enablers of equality, diversity and inclusion, and sustainability were not currently evident in the pillars. It was also suggested

that the student experience was dependent on the staff experience, and this might also be usefully reflected.

- Although the term 'social' had been a deliberate choice, to reflect students' social experiences, it was questioned if this might reflect another of the University's enablers in the form of 'community'. The choice would also have to be mindful of the different experiences of on-campus versus online students.
- It was suggested a fourth pillar might be created to reflect "Professional", as employability had contributed significantly to the University's reputation.
- Consideration would be given to providing the Sub-Strategy in alternative formats, and using a range of 'voices'.
- Gray's School of Art had previously developed its own pillars that had been embedded across its provision and it was not yet clear how the Sub-Strategy would be fully embedded across all of the University's provision.
- It was not evident how the success of the Sub-Strategy might be measured.

Action Council was advised that two staff focus groups had been organised for 6 and 15 December 2023, and engagement was encouraged by as many staff as possible.

AC
Members

3. **ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS**

3.1 **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee**

3.1.1 **Meeting of 12 October 2023**

Council considered a report of the meeting held on 12 October 2023.

3.1.1.1 *Quality Events*

Action Academic Council **approved** the *Quality Event Outcomes* report for onward submission to the Board of Governors.

Board
Report
[14.12.23]

3.1.1.2 *Items for Noting*

The following additional items were noted:

- *Remit of the Committee*: the Committee's remit would be reviewed to clarify which key performance indicators would be considered by the Committee and by the Academic Development Committee to remove duplication.
- *Equality and Diversity Sub Committee*: two new Committee members were appointed to the Sub-Committee from Session 2023/24.
- *Enhancement of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Action Plan*: the Committee considered and agreed updates to the *Enhancement of Teaching Learning and Assessment Action Plan 2022/23*, noting considerable progress had been made in completion of the actions identified for 2022/23 and ongoing enhancements would be embedded into the plan for 2023/2024.
- *National Student Survey (NSS)*: the Committee received an update on Student Feedback 2023 and noted the following key outcomes from National Student Survey (NSS) 2023:
 - the University's results for all *Theme Measures* were above the Scottish positivity measure;
 - 90.4% responded positively with regard to *Learning Resources*, with Library and IT resources supporting learning well;
 - results for *Teaching on my course, Academic Support, and Learning Opportunities Themes* were overwhelmingly positive;
 - *Assessment and Feedback* was 8.68% above the Scottish result, reflecting its focus within the Future of Teaching, Learning and Assessment project, and was testament to the hard work and dedication of staff;
 - the University had been ranked second in Scotland and ninth in the UK for its positivity measure by Times Higher Education (THE).

A more detailed analysis would be considered by the Committee at its next meeting on 23 November 2023.

- *Student Partnership*: the Committee received an update on the progress and development of Student Partnership models and proposed Student School Officer projects for Session 2023-24, as presented in the *Student Representation and Partnership Activity* report. The Committee recommended an earlier start to the recruitment of Student School Officers to around March each year to enable undergraduate and postgraduate students to be targeted whilst they remained on-campus, enabling a second recruitment round to take place in September.
- *Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR)*: the University would be undergoing its Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR), the replacement for Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR), on 21 February 2024. The Committee received an update on preparations, which were being led by a QESR Steering Group convened by the Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience. Documentation was due for submission by 31 December 2023. The Committee also agreed an update on developments with the ongoing Teaching Quality Review would be submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 27 February 2024.

3.1.2 Meeting of 23 November 2023

Consideration was given to a report of the meeting held on 23 November 2023.

3.1.2.1 Remit of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Action Academic Council **approved** the following change to the Committee's remit, amended to distinguish it from the remit of the Academic Development Committee, as follows (new text underlined):

- (iv) To maintain oversight of specific institution-level performance indicators that relate to learning and teaching and the student experience, student success (continuation and grade profile), satisfaction and employability;

F McLean
Whyte

3.1.2.2 *Institutional Referencing Styles*

Action Academic Council **approved** the proposal from the Library to refresh the current institutional styles used for referencing, for implementation from Session 2024/25, to the book version of the 'Cite them Right' variant of Harvard and Vancouver referencing styles. The associated implementation plan and recommendations relating to courses with modules from different Schools were **approved**. In addition:

J Louden &
A Mackie

- The University to adopt a position that in the absence of any professional, accreditation or other requirements that the preferred institutional style is Harvard. This should allow for standardisation of practice in courses that are delivered across schools.
- The issue of referencing styles to be discussed when courses were being developed and where modules were delivered by more than one School to ensure that requirements were established from the outset and students were clear on the style they were expected to use.
- Schools to retain autonomy to require a particular referencing style if there was a professional body or accreditation requirement.
- Where Schools currently allowed students to use a referencing style of their choice, particularly at postgraduate or doctoral level, this level of discretion to be retained.

3.1.2.3 *Course Re-Approval Deadlines*

Action Academic Council **approved** the following new deadline dates for Course Re-Approval and Validations:

Governance
and
Academic
Quality

- course changes to be approved by the School Academic Boards at least **six months prior** to the enrolment of the next cohort;
- validations to be scheduled a **minimum of 16 weeks** before the next cohort commenced.

3.1.2.4 *Quality Events*

Action Academic Council **approved** the *Quality Event Outcomes* report for onward submission to the Board of Governors.

Board
Report
[14.12.23]

3.1.2.5 *Annual Appraisal Process for Session 2022/23*

Academic Council noted the Committee's consideration of the Annual Appraisal Process for Session 2022/23 and that the Committee was satisfied the quality assurance processes had been completed satisfactorily within the Schools, including:

- all required School Academic Board Appraisal Reports had been received;
- the receipt of all required *External Examiner Annual Reports*, with the exception of 13 reports, and the Committee was satisfied appropriate action being taken to address these;
- the preparation and approval of responses to *External Examiner Annual Reports*.

Action Furthermore, the Committee was satisfied the *Annual Appraisal Process* had provided a sound evidence base for Academic Council and the Board of Governors to have confidence in, and be satisfied with, the quality assurance processes in respect of annual monitoring.

Board
Report
[14.12.23]

Action The *Annual Report on the Annual Appraisal Process: Session 2022/23* would be submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 27 February 2024, and presented thereafter to Academic Council and the Board of Governors.

Board
Report
[14.12.23]

3.1.2.6 *Items for Noting*

The following additional items were noted:

- *Enhancement of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Action Plan*: the Committee's discussions of the updated *Enhancement of Teaching Learning and Assessment Action Plan*.

- *Academic Regulations Sub-Committee*: the Committee considered a report from the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee held on 6 November 2023 and noted in particular the following discussions:
 - the proposal to review the *Fit to Sit Policy* to make it more fit for purpose and to align its practice across the HE Sector;
 - the request to review the Universities academic appeal procedures [*Regulation A3 -Section 1: Academic Appeals (Award and Progression) Procedure*] in light of a significant increase in the number of academic appeals in Session 2022/23;
 - the possibility for a review of reassessment practice across the University and in particular the timing of resit opportunities;
 - the *Annual Report + Support Report* for Session 2022/23, and that the University was now publishing the [Report + Support figures](#)
- *Student Experience Sub Committee*: the Committee had considered a report from the Student Experience Sub-Committee on the 4 October 2023 which included updates from the Personal Tutor System Working Group, the Mental Health Working Group and a proposal from the Library regarding the institutional referencing styles.

In terms of retention, Academic Council was advised there did not seem to be a notable increase in academic failures, but there was a concerning rise in the demand for the services provided by the Inclusion Centre and the Counselling and Wellbeing Service. The widespread use of the Attendr app to monitor attendance was also providing valuable data and was permitting early intervention.

3.2 External Examiner Appointments

In respect of nominations received from the School Academic Boards, Council:

- **approved** three appointments and one re-allocation of duties; and
- **ratified** 17 appointments, one extension of duties, five re-allocations of duties and one termination of appointment.

4. RESEARCH

4.1 Research Degrees Committee

Consideration was given to a report of the Research Degrees Committee meetings held on 29 June and 17 October 2023.

4.1 *Conferral of Awards*

Action Academic Council **approved** the awards to the undernoted students, and **agreed** the students and their supervisory teams be congratulated:

Graduate
School

- (i) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mrs Julie Jones, School of Health Sciences with effect from 9 August 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Feasibility and acceptability of a multi-components intervention (PDConnect) to support physical activity in people living with Parkinson's: a mixed methods study".
- (ii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Osman Hamid, School of Engineering, with effect from 22 August 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Integrated Geomechanical Analysis Workflow Models for Reservoir Management".
- (iii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mrs Jenny Ewig, School of Creative and Cultural Business, with effect from 25 August 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Developing an Understanding of the Relationships Between Organisational Learning and Performance Measurement Systems: The Case of Frankfurt Airport".
- (iv) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Ikechukwu Uchehara, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, with effect from 28 August 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Developing a sustainability rating framework and indicator decision sub-logic for highway design and construction sector in Nigeria".

- (v) The degree of PhD by Public Output be conferred on Mrs Mary McCallum, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice, with effect from 7 September 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "An exploration of interventions for Supported Self-Management and behaviour change delivered as routine clinical care for people living with Long-Term Health Conditions".
- (vi) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Emmanuel Eke, School of Engineering, with effect from 8 September 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Decision-Support for Decommissioning Offshore Platforms".
- (vii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Ms Alison Brincat, School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, with effect from 11 September 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "An Exploration of the Patients' Lived Experience with Antineoplastic Medicines for Colorectal Cancer in Malta".
- (viii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Amarnath Nayak, School of Engineering, with effect from 11 September 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Complexity in measuring the Higher Education Institute Scope 3 emissions".
- (ix) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mrs Diana Souza Moura, School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, with effect from 13 September 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Microplastics as a vector for micropollutants in aquatic environments".
- (x) The degree of PhD be conferred on Ms Joy Agbeti, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, with effect from 18 September 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Sustainable Conservation of Sakumo Wetlands for Social and Environmental Benefits".
- (xi) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Scott Wares, School of Computing, with effect from 22 September 2023, in recognition of a programme of

- work entitled: "Towards Handling Temporal Dependence in Concept Drift Streams".
- (xii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Ms Gillian Fowler, School of Creative and Cultural Business, with effect from 26 September 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "A critical evaluation of the impact coaching and mentoring has on the walking spinal community's behavioural change and motivations to being physically active".
- (xiii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Ms Faseela Abdullakutty, School of Computing, with effect from 29 September 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Unmasking the Imposters: Towards improving the generalisation of deep learning methods for face presentation attack detection".
- (xiv) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Ebiwari Otutu, Aberdeen Business School, with effect from 29 September 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "An explanation for differential career progression for women in Nigerian banking industry".
- (xv) The degree of Doctorate of Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychology be conferred on Ms Nikki Eriksen, School of Applied Social Studies, with effect from 10 October 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Parental and Grandparental Stories of Parent work in Child Psychotherapy, with Families Affected by Mental Health Difficulties. A Psychoanalytically Informed Narrative Inquiry".
- (xvi) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Muhammad Surajo Ibrahim, School of Creative and Cultural Business, with effect from 16 October 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "The Information Behaviour of Nigerian Digital Entrepreneurs – Idea Generation in Start-Up Businesses".
- (xvii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Francis Johnson, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, with effect from 16 October

- 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: “Assessment of multi-stakeholders collaborative efforts during and after oil pipelines disaster in Nigeria”.
- (xviii) The degree of Doctorate of Physiotherapy be conferred on Ms Rachel Arnott, School of Health Sciences, with effect from 24 October 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: “Exploring stakeholders’ perceptions of peer support for adults with chronic pain: a mixed methods study”.
 - (xix) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Bamikole Aduloju, The Law School, with effect from 30 October 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: “Party Autonomy and Judicial Participation in Commercial Arbitration: Recalibrating the Role of Nigerian Courts”.
 - (xx) The degree of PhD by Public Output be conferred on Mr Gordon Rushworth, School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, with effect from 30 October 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: “Innovations in education and training to enable development of pharmacists as clinicians”.
 - (xxi) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mrs Taina Lintilä, School of Computing, with effect from 8 November 2023, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: “Using the Learning by Developing Action Model – Case Study in Project-Based Computer Science Studies in Higher Education Institutions”.

4.2 *Research Degree Annual Appraisal: Session 2022/23*

Academic Council considered the *Research Degrees Annual Appraisal for Session 2022/23*. This would be presented to the Board of Governors in March 2024 alongside the *Annual Report on the Annual Appraisal Process: Session 2022/23*.

4.3 *Items for Noting*

The following additional items were noted:

- *Annual Report on Mandatory Teaching and Demonstrating Training for PGR students who undertook ad-hoc teaching/demonstrating activity in Session 2022/23*: the Committee had endorsed the report as a very useful audit trail for Session 2022/23 to address recommendations arising from the ELIR event in April 2021.
- *Student Voice Course Feedback 2023*: the Committee noted the recent results which had demonstrated a very positive outcome for the University, with it performing above 80% across all question categories, including the Graduate School's PgCert Researcher Development course.
- *Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2023*: the University was ranked 53rd out of 100 participating institutions. Within the nine key sections of the questionnaire, the University secured top 10 places within seven, including Research Skills, Research Culture and Professional Development.
- *RGU Insight Report of PGR Completion Rates and other KPIs*: the Committee noted that part-time completion rates had improved between Sessions 2019/20 to 2021/22. There was an increasing issue emerging for full-time students, due in part to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on campus attendance/access to laboratories. Actions were already planned within the Graduate School to enhance completion rates, which would strengthen studentship bids for Research Councils, as well as boost the University's submission to the Research Excellence Framework.
- *University Professional Doctorate Development*: preparations for a validation event in March 2024 were progressing, with the aim of enrolling the first students in October 2024.
- *Interdisciplinary PhDs 2023*: The Committee reflected upon the very successful launch of the above University-funded studentship scheme which attracted an additional 21 research students in October 2023 across a number of

disciplines. Whilst the planned growth in student numbers was welcomed, this was accompanied by the challenge of supervisor capacity.

Action Academic Council **approved** a proposal that a research student's principal supervisor be invited to hood their respective student at the University's Graduation Ceremonies.

Prof S
Pedersen /
Graduate
School

Action Council was also informed that nine Chancellor's Fellows had recently commenced in post and were already having a demonstrable impact. A meeting of the Chancellor's Fellows with the Chancellor would be organised in the very near future.

Prof S
Olivier &
V Strachan

5. STRATEGIC PLANNING

5.1 Academic Development Committee

Academic Council considered a report of the meetings held on 9 June 2023, 20 September 2023 and 20 November 2023.

5.1.1 *Remit of Academic Development Committee*

Academic Council **approved** the following amendment to the Committee's remit, to remove duplication between it and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (new text underlined, deleted text struck through):

F McLean
Whyte

- (ii) maintains oversight of key performance indicators that relate to University performance in terms of student recruitment, tuition fee revenue and access rates ~~to course performance, which have a particular external relevance.~~

5.1.2 *Items for Noting*

The following additional were noted:

- *Interdisciplinary Provision:* five new course interdisciplinary proposals were considered at the extraordinary meeting in June 2023, with continued monitoring of progress at the September and November meetings. Four of the courses were scheduled for Session 2024/25 intake and one was

scheduled for Session 2025/26 intake. Validation events had either successfully taken place or were scheduled pre-Christmas. Admissions and Student Recruitment teams were actively working to promote the new courses and the Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) had delivered workshops for the Schools involved. Discussions were ongoing in regards to where the courses would be hosted with a focus on ensuring a good student experience.

- *Student Recruitment*: Session 2023/24 enrolments and planning for Session 2024/25 student recruitment was being monitored by the Committee. Whilst Semester 1 enrolments had challenges in SFC-funded places and international on-campus recruitment, which might impact on future recruitment cycles, there still had been growth in other areas such as the home/EU/rUK online market. Semester 2 figures for January 2024 showed encouraging indicators around the level of acceptances for international postgraduate taught on-campus places in particular. A focus for Session 2024/25 recruitment was on diversification of international markets for on-campus recruitment to maintain numbers whilst reducing dependency on Nigeria, including related in-country activity. In addition, other market segments were also being reviewed, for example, a targeted recruitment plan was being developed to support recruitment to online courses.
- *Globalisation Group*: the newly established Globalisation Group would focus on the internationalisation of the portfolio, examine transnational education (TNE) over the coming year and create a Globalisation or Internationalisation Strategy. The group was in the process of developing a TNE tracker to ensure oversight of all developments that were ongoing, and which would be circulated to the Committee once it had been finalised. The Globalisation Group would report on academic-related matters to the Academic Development Committee, and would provide institutional globalisation updates to the Executive. The draft Globalisation or Internationalisation

Strategy would be presented for consideration at the Committee's February 2024 meeting.

- *New Course Proposals*: six new course proposals were approved at the meetings or by Convener's Action.
- *Course Changes*: 16 course change proposals were approved at the meetings or by Convener's Action.

6. VALEDICTORY

On behalf of Academic Council, the Chair thanked both Libby Curtis, Dean of Gray's School of Art, and Filippo Antoniazzi, Director of Student Life, for their extensive and valued contributions to both Council and the University, and wished them both well for the future.

L Curtis &
F Antoniazzi

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Academic Council would next meet on Tuesday 12 March 2024 at 2.00pm in H230, Ishbel Gordon Building.

AC
Members

8. ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Organisational Regulation O3 relating to the remit and composition of Academic Council and the *Academic Council Membership List: 2023/24*, updated following the recent nominations/elections for School representatives, were both noted.

9. CHAIR'S REPORT

Council noted the report from the Principal.

10. ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS

10.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

The five appendices to the two reports from the Committee (items 3.1.1 and 3.2 above) were noted.

10.2 Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council

Council noted the *Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council: 2022/23 – Institution-Led Review of Quality*, endorsed by the Board of Governors on 5 October 2023.

11. RESEARCH

11.1 Research Committee

The report of the Research Committee meeting held on 31 October 2023 was noted and, in particular, the following items:

- *Convener's Report*: the Committee received updates on the following areas: *Strategic Research Investment Funding; catalyst funding; research integrity and ethics; appointment of two new Interdisciplinary Research Theme Champions, the Research Integrity Officer and the Research Impact and Engagement Manager; ongoing discussions with the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI); the University's application for the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) Engage Watermark Award; development of the Impact Strategy; and progress with the Pedagogical Research Forum.*
- *Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2028*: the Committee's discussion of preparations for the REF 2028, following the presentation on *REF 2028: Guidance and Planning* made to the University Management Group on 18 October 2023. It was evident REF 2028 would be very different from previous exercises, with a more inclusive approach that would enable a broader range

of research outputs, activities and impacts to be submitted. A greater emphasis was also being placed on a more positive research culture.

The assessment profile for REF 2028 was also very different from REF 2021:

REF 2021	REF 2028
Outputs (60%)	Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding (50%)
Impact (25%)	Engagement and Impact (25%)
Environment (15%)	People, Culture and Environment (25%)

Three working groups would be taking forward preparations:

- Research Culture (Lead – Jane Williams);
- Impact and Engagement (Lead – Claire Conway); and
- Knowledge Contribution (Lead – Jennifer Loudon).

These in turn would report monthly to the REF Operations Group. The REF Steering Group, led by the Vice-Principal for Research and Community Engagement, would commence meeting quarterly in early 2024 and would report directly to the Research Committee, for onward reporting to Academic Council and the Board of Governors.

- *Annual Peer Review of Research (APRR) 2023 and 2024:* The Committee was informed of the feedback received from the Associate Deans for Research (ADRs) on the Annual Peer Review of Research (APRR) 2022/23 process, together with planned actions and responses. Overall, the process had been very positive and informative, with some valuable lessons learned that would be reflected on in the APRR 2024 process.
- *Graduate School and PGR Students:* The Committee received a update from the new Dean of the Graduate School on current developments and activities involving the Graduate School and doctoral students.
- *Routine Update Reports:* the Committee also noted updates from:
 - the Interdisciplinary Research Theme Champions;

- *Engagement and Impact Working Group*;
- the National Subsea Centre; and
- the Research Integrity and Ethics Sub-Committee.

11.2 Research Degrees Committee

Two appendices to the Research Degrees Committee Report (item 4.1.1 above) were noted.

12. STRATEGIC PLANNING

12.1 Business Plan

Academic Council noted the following from the Vice-Principal for Strategy and Planning:

- *Business Plan 2022/23 End of Year Report*, approved by the Board of Governors on 5 October 2023;
- *Business Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28*, considered by the Board of Governors on 5 October 2023;
- *Business Plan 2023/24 – 2027/28: Quarter 1 Report*, considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 21 November 2023.

12.2 Outcome Agreement

The *Outcome Agreement Self-Assessment Report 2022/23* and *Outcome Agreement 2023/24*, from the Vice-Principal for Strategy and Planning, were noted.

12.3 Academic Development Committee

Council noted the three appendices to the Academic Development Committee Report (item 5.1.1 above).

13. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS – CHAIR’S ACTION

A paper detailing approval of exceptions to the *Academic Regulations* was noted.

14. ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

A summary of academic appointments from 1 November 2022 to 30 November 2023 was noted.

15. HONORARY DEGREES AND APPOINTMENTS

A paper confirming Honorary Degrees and Appointments since June 2023 would be circulated after the meeting.

F McLean
Whyte

Professor S Olivier, C