University Committee for Quality and Standards

TERMS OF REFERENCE
APPROVED BY THE SENATE ON 17 MAY 2017

1. Establishment

a) The University Committee for Quality and Standards is established as a Committee of the Senate¹.

b) The Court has delegated to the Senate all of its powers in relation to academic work and standards so that, subject to the terms of the Charter and the Statutes and to the powers reserved to the Court, the Senate is the principal body responsible for the academic work and standards of the University and in relation to:
   
   • programmes of study;
   • teaching and research;
   • the granting of awards; and
   • the regulation and stewardship of the education and discipline of the Students.

c) The Senate reports to the Court on the discharging of these responsibilities.

d) Statute 5.4(b) permits the Senate to delegate any of its powers to any Committee which contains at least three of its members (at least one of whom should be an ex officio member of the Senate).

e) Ordinance C4 permits the Senate to establish standing committees and to prescribe the terms of reference, including the remit and composition.

f) An operating principle of this Committee is that when a decision is required in relation to the exercising of delegated powers of the Senate, those persons present who are not Senators shall be invited to abstain from voting.

2. Reporting

The Committee reports to the Senate on matters of strategy, policy and regulation related to its remit.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the University Committee for Quality and Standards is to be responsible, on behalf of the Senate, for all aspects of academic quality assurance: progressing or engaging with institutional policy development; monitoring and review; oversight of the Quality Assurance Framework.

¹ from 1 August 2017 (Senate Minute M17/046)
4. Remit

Note: The Senate agreed (17 May 2017) that the proposed delegated responsibilities of UCQS and UCRI that currently are discharged by the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) and the Postgraduate Studies Committee (PSC) continue to be discharged by the PSC and USC as an interim measure until such time as the Senate can be satisfied that those responsibilities can safely be discharged in the new committee structure.

The specific delegated responsibilities with respect to taught programmes, which are to be retained for the time being by the USC and the PSC, relate to:

a) establishing, modifying or withdrawing of taught courses, programmes and disciplines;
b) approving, amending or revoking the appointment of internal and external examiners;
c) considering and approving the granting of changes to periods of study for undergraduate and taught postgraduate degree Students.

The Senate\(^2\) delegates authority to the University Committee for Quality and Standards, with regard to taught programmes of study to:

1. develop, recommend, monitor the implementation of, and report on Ordinances and Regulations; and to make, monitor, modify, and revoke policies and procedures related to:
   - the University’s Quality Assurance Framework;
   - academic and other entry requirements and the recognition of prior learning;
   - conditions of registration, periods of registration, and changes of registration;
   - assessments, examinations, feedback, and progression;
   - the appointment of internal and external examiners;
   - the granting of awards resulting from taught programmes of study;
   - the deprivation and revocation of awards resulting from programmes of study;

2. consider and make recommendations with respect to:
   - the academic conditions associated with the establishing, modifying, or withdrawing of taught courses, programmes, and disciplines;
   - the academic conditions associated with the establishing, management, or termination of external academic partnerships for the delivery of taught programmes of study;
   - the University’s programme of annual and periodic academic quality assurance reviews;
   - the findings of annual and periodic quality assurance reviews and action plans arising from these;
   - the University’s participation in external quality assurance and enhancement activities, consulting as appropriate with the University Committee for Learning and Teaching;
   - the findings of external quality assurance activities and action plans arising from these, consulting as appropriate with the University Committee for Learning and Teaching;
   - reports from External Examiners, ensuring that action is taken to address issues raised.
3. approve, amend, or revoke the appointment of internal and external examiners;
4. consult with other committees and persons on matters of mutual interest;
5. to provide advice on such matters related to the Committee’s purpose as may be referred to the Committee from time to time by the Senate;
6. receive regular reports from all Schools, including the minutes of the relevant School-level committees.
7. create and receive reports from such sub-committees and short-life working groups as are necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the Committee.

\(^2\) Through the Senate Statement of Primary Responsibilities and Delegations
5. Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex-officio members</th>
<th>Members (as at 1 June 2017)</th>
<th>Appointed until</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chair</strong></td>
<td>Prof Fiona Waldron</td>
<td>31/07/20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vice-Chair</strong></td>
<td>To be nominated</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Principal and Vice-Chancellor</strong> (or the Vice-Principal, or other nominee)</td>
<td>Prof Mushtak Al Atabi</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)</strong></td>
<td>Prof John W Sawkins</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Director of Academic Quality from each School</strong>³</td>
<td>Ms Gemma Gwynne-Stevenson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edinburgh Business School (EBS):</td>
<td>Prof Susan Dewar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society (EGIS):</td>
<td>Dr Jim Cameron</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Engineering &amp; Physical Sciences (EPS):</td>
<td>Prof Bryan Rynne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematical and Computer Sciences (MACS):</td>
<td>Dr John Sanders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Sciences (SoSS):</td>
<td>Mrs Fiona Pankhurst</td>
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<td>Textiles and Design (TEX):</td>
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<td><strong>Student Representative nominated by the Student Union</strong></td>
<td>Mr Diarmuid Cowan</td>
<td>31/05/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>The elected officer of the Student Union with responsibilities relating to Academic Quality and Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Members Appointed by the Senate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Dean of the University (as nominated by the Senate)</strong></td>
<td>Dr A Haniff (Pan-University)</td>
<td>31/12/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Three members of the Senate appointed by the Senate</strong> (normally drawn from the Senators elected from Schools, and nominated with a view to helping the Committee reflect the geographical spread of the University)</td>
<td>Dr Olisanwendu Ogwuda</td>
<td>31/07/20</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prof Greg Michaelson</td>
<td>31/07/20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr Yvonne McLaren-Hankin</td>
<td>31/07/20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>External Member</strong></td>
<td>Dr Debbie Willison (University of Strathclyde)</td>
<td>31/06/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>(appointed from within the Scottish Higher Education system with experience in quality assurance matters)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Members Appointed by the Academic Councils</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Council (Dubai)</td>
<td>Dr Mohamed Salama</td>
<td>31/07/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Council (Malaysia)</td>
<td>tbc</td>
<td>tbc</td>
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³ Director of Academic Quality, equivalent role, or representative
In attendance
The following are normally in attendance at meetings:

- Academic Registrar
- Head of Academic Quality
- The Clerk to the Committee (currently the Quality Assurance Manager)

The following are eligible to attend meetings:

- Secretary of the University
- Two Deans of the University (i.e. the Deans who are not listed above as the member nominated by the Senate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Paul Travill</td>
<td></td>
<td>31/12/20</td>
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<td>Dr Maggie King</td>
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<td>31/12/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Helen A Crosby</td>
<td></td>
<td>31/12/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Ann Marie Dalton-Pillay</td>
<td></td>
<td>31/12/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Fadi Ghaith (Science and Engineering)</td>
<td></td>
<td>31/12/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Scott Arthur (Humanities and Social Sciences)</td>
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<td>31/12/20</td>
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6. Chair and Vice-Chair

a) The Chair of the Committee, as nominated by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor and agreed by the Senate, is Prof Fiona Waldron.

b) The Vice-Chair of the Committee, as nominated by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor and agreed by the Senate, is (name to be put forward in due course) and shall act as Chair in the absence of the Chair.

c) In the absence of both the Chair and the Vice-Chair from any given meeting, those members present shall appoint one of their number as Chair for that particular meeting.

7. Equality and Diversity in Membership

The Committee exercises its responsibility, as far as possible, to promote diversity of representation within its membership and the membership of any working group or committee established by the Committee. The Committee will also act, in carrying out the business of the Committee, to promote equality of opportunity for all.

8. Quorum and Voting

a) The quorum necessary to transact business is five members, at least two of whom must be members of Senate, and at least three of whom must be School staff (Senate appointed or School nominated). In accordance with Statute Five, paragraph 4(b), the quorum of any Committee of the Senate exercising delegated powers shall include at least two members of the Senate.

b) Members who are participating in a meeting by means of audio-visual conferencing or other means enabling them to speak with and be heard by all members present at the meeting simultaneously shall be deemed to be present at the meeting and to count towards the quorum.

c) Normal practice is that wherever possible decisions shall be reached through consensus.

d) All members of the Committee are entitled to vote in any vote of the Committee except:

   c1) when the Committee is required to vote on the exercising of delegated powers of the Senate, those persons present who are not Senators shall be invited to abstain from voting.

   c2) when the committee is required to vote on a matter that is solely under the purview of the University Executive, then only those persons who are members because of their executive positions shall be eligible to vote.

e) The Chair shall rule on instances where a vote is required, and whether any matter under consideration pertains to the exercising of delegated powers of the Senate, or whether a matter is solely under the purview of the University Executive.

f) A person invited to be ‘in attendance’ at one or more meetings of the Committee is not entitled to vote.

g) The Chair has a deliberative vote and a casting vote.

4 A change to the Statute shall be proposed in due course to govern this situation
9. Attendance at meetings
a) The Committee may co-opt members as appropriate for a specified period of time, and report such co-options to the Senate at the earliest opportunity.
b) In addition to the members, and those normally ‘in attendance’, other colleagues may at the discretion of the Chair be invited to attend meetings on an ad-hoc basis for particular agenda items, and to contribute to discussions at the discretion of the Chair.
c) The Committee maintains a record of attendance at each of its meetings and reports this information in accordance with the Attendance Policy.

10. Forward Planning
a) The Committee maintains a list of Standing Agenda Items and an annual schedule of activities.
b) The Committee sets dates for its ordinary meetings two years in advance.
c) As part of its annual year-end self-assessment, the Committee reviews its performance in fulfilling its Remit, and considers possible modifications to its Terms of Reference. This also gives opportunity to review the Composition (including the gender balance of its membership, and the opportunity to receive contributions from the University’s different campuses), and to submit recommendations as appropriate to the Senate.

11. Principles of Operation
In fulfilling its terms of reference, the Committee shall follow the principles as agreed by the Senate to enhance academic governance seeking:
   a) closer alignment between the decision-making structure and the University’s strategic objectives, to ensure that the decision making structures are fit for the delivery of the strategy;
   b) a more efficient approach to the decision making process, leading to clearer lines of reporting and accountability, a reduction in time taken to reach business-critical decisions, and high quality outcomes;
   c) main committees should focus on matters of strategy and policy, with operational matters being dealt with by the relevant colleagues in consultation with ad hoc working groups as required;
   d) minimisation of business considered by numerous different groups and with appropriate accountability for decisions taken;
   e) an assumption that decisions will be reached by consensus wherever possible;
   f) an assumption that each Committee will address business internationally;
   g) appropriate delineation between governance and management;
   h) the papers coming forward to committees should contain clear, evidence-based proposals for consideration;
   i) greater use should be made of IT facilities to reduce the amount of paper being circulated, with members of committees and others being able to access committee papers on a local intranet with appropriate access authorisation; and
   j) effective communication of decisions to all relevant parties throughout the University.

12. Sub-committees and Short-life working groups of the Committee
The Committee is empowered to create such sub-committees and short-life working groups as are necessary to fulfil its responsibilities.  It is anticipated that this Committee will have one sub-committee:
   • The Studies Committee (Terms of Reference to be confirmed in due course.  See conditions under Remit above that apply as at 1 August 2017).
### 13. Frequency of meetings

- a) The Committee normally has five ordinary meetings each Academic Year in advance of Senate meetings.
- b) The Chair of the Committee may choose to hold periodic strategy days consistent with the strategic function of the Committee.
- c) Additional meetings (including meetings held in conjunction with other bodies) may be required – with the approval by the Chair – for more detailed consideration of particular items.
- d) Changes to arrangements, such as cancellation, rescheduling or additional meetings will be notified to members by the Clerk as soon as possible, and normally within not less than five working days of the scheduled meeting date.

### 14. Lifespan and Effectiveness of the Committee

This is an established Committee of the Senate and its lifespan is ongoing. An annual year-end self-assessment is conducted, with a formal review of effectiveness every five years.

### 15. Actions that may be taken by the Committee

The Committee may:

- Approve
- Note
- Receive
- Consider
- Endorse
- Recommend
- Reject
- Ratify

### 16. Minutes

- a) Minutes of each meeting are distributed to members within two weeks of the meeting. The Chair approves the content of minutes before release.
- b) The minutes are presented to the Senate, with any matters for consideration and/or approval highlighted in a cover paper.
- c) The Committee’s agenda and minutes are published on the University Intranet.
- d) Agendas, minutes and papers are held electronically by the Clerk to the Committee.
- e) The Committee has traditional/formal minutes in accordance with internal University guidance on: style; and requirements regarding Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.
- f) The agendas, papers and minutes for all meetings should be copied to the Head of Heritage and Information Governance for archiving purposes.

### 17. Resources

Clerk - Ms Helen A Crosby, Quality Assurance Manager, Academic Registry
Admin support - Allocated from within the Academic Registry
Meetings - Normally five meetings per session