A meeting of the Committee was held on Monday 11th March 2013.

Present: Professor D Coates (Convener), Professor R Abboud, Mr WI Ball, Mr S Cross, Dr M Frame, Mr G Hutton, Dr N Laker, Dr L Monk, Dr K Petrie, Dr A Schloerscheidt, Professor R Soames, Dr Fiona Smith, Dr D Walker, Dr K Wilkie.

Apologies: Professor D Bearn, Dr L McLellan, Professor G Mires.

In attendance: Dr M Glover.

1. Minutes

The Committee decided: to approve the minutes of the meeting of 13th November 2012.

2. Matters Arising

Minute (6): TESTA Proposal

The Convener reported that the TESTA implementation proposal had now been approved by the Senior Management Team and that progress will be reported to the Committee in due course (See also Item 6 below).

Minute (12): Plagiarism Detection Software

The Convener reported that the Library & Learning Centre and the e-Learning Sub-Committee have formally recommended the implementation of Turnitin as the University’s centrally supported plagiarism detection software and that implementation and support for the move was contained in the LLC operational plan.

The Committee decided: to support the implementation of Turnitin as the University’s centrally supported plagiarism prevention software.

3. Outcome Agreement Projects
(i) **Articulation Working Group**  
**Lead: Dr Normand**

The Committee noted that the 50 places allocated by SFC had been split between Life Sciences, Computing, DJCAD (15 each) and the remaining 5 to social sciences (Environment and Psychology). The Committee were advised that the students would be based in the FE partner Colleges for at least the first year of the agreement before entering University programmes at Level 2.

The Committee also noted that (i) 40 students would enter from the Tayside post-merger FE College and 10 from the Fife post-merger College and (ii) that the main focus for the working group is to allow coordination of efforts to align curricula, recruitment, admissions and student support arrangements in advance of the first intake.

(ii) **Widening Access Working Group**  
**Lead: Dr Hughes**

The Committee noted that although an additional 150 funded places for MD40 students has been awarded through the current SFC initiative the University’s MD40 target includes baseline numbers (based on existing intake rates) and is actually 500 fte (23% of home UG intake in 2013/14).

The Committee noted the various proposals for recruitment, conversion, support and retention currently under discussion: bursaries, amended tariffs for admission offers, targeted conversion activities (weekend visit days, newsletters, social media), targeted induction and study skills.

The Committee recognised the on-going efforts of staff involved to help the University meet its targets but expressed concern over the resources available within Admissions and Student Recruitment to cope with the demands of mid-cycle shifts in recruitment and conversion targets.

(iii) **Taught Postgraduate Working Group**  
**Lead: Mr Ball**

The Committee noted that SFC had agreed to fund 49 full-time equivalent (FTE) places for Scottish/EU students on the following taught postgraduate Courses at the University in 2013/14:

- **MSc in Management in the Energy Sector**  
  15 FTE

- **MSc in Augmentative and Alternative Communication**  
  7 FTE

- **MSc in Water Hazards and Risks**  
  10 FTE

- **MSc in the Design & Construction of Zero Carbon and Ultra-Low Energy Buildings**  
  10 FTE

- **MSc Geotechnical Engineering**  
  7 FTE
The Committee also noted that SFC allocation decisions were made with deference to Scottish Government economic development and workforce planning priorities, so that a proven track record of industry involvement and student employability considerations were vital components for a successful bid, and many innovative course proposals were overlooked on this occasion.

The Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thanked each of the Working Groups and their respective leaders for responding so well, mid-cycle and at very short notice, to the challenging approach taken by the Funding Council in 2012/13.

4. Periodic Review of the Student Support Environment Appendix A

The Committee received a paper that outlined the on-going review of student support environment. The Committee noted that the review would examine all aspects of non-academic student support and services – both individually and collectively – and would report in June 2013.

The Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Director of Quality Assurance and the DUSA representatives for their leadership of the process and each of the service Directors for their contribution to the project.

5. ELIR Update – Feedback from Workshop 1

The Committee heard an account of the first ELIR workshop held in January. The Committee noted that representatives from the each of the Colleges, including students, had worked on a number of key questions – taking the last ELIR report as a starting point. The workshop focussed on how the institution has changed since 2009, how the institution has responded to the issues raised in the previous review and finally, what are the problems or challenges for the institution going into the next review?

The Committee noted that feedback from the workshop was helpful and productive and would feed in to the Reflective Analysis now being drafted.

The Convener asked the Committee to note that the next workshops would take place on 28th March and encouraged members of the Committee to participate fully in the workshops leading into the drafting of the Reflective Analysis and the Review itself in October/November 2013.
6.  Student Feedback & Assessment Project Update  

The Committee received a project update from the DUSA Vice President (Communications) and Dr Walker (LLC).

The Committee were pleased to note that DUSA had provided a strong lead on the quantitative analysis of NSS results and the student feedback focus groups. The Vice President highlighted that the main findings from the research carried out by DUSA were student concerns over assessment tasks that lacked clarity; inconsistency in marking and in the application of assessment criteria, and that feedback was often too general or too subjective.

Some members of the Committee advised caution when attempting to draw conclusions from evidence based largely on student perceptions, although it was recognised that student perception of feedback (or lack of it) was a significant contributing factor to relatively poor performance in this part of the NSS.

It was also argued that more emphasis on academic practice needs to be made during the implementation phase of the project. The Committee noted that better communication is needed if there is to be improvements in managing student expectations during assessment and ensuring active rather than passive responses from students to feedback received.

The Committee also agreed that work should continue to encourage good assessment practices and clear and consistent accounts of assessment processes – at all stages of course design and delivery.

The Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the project team and noted that the research undertaken has demonstrated a real need for the institution to take full advantage of opportunities to improve the student experience of feedback whenever they arise in the assessment process.

The Committee decided: for its part, to endorse the Project Report and the recommendation for implementation.

7.  Quality Forum Report

The Committee received a report from the meeting on 12th February 2013.

The Committee decided: to note the report.

8.  e-Learning Sub-Committee Report

Appendix D
The Committee received a report from the meeting on 22nd February 2013.

The Committee decided: to note the report.

9. Postgraduate Taught Sub-Committee Report Appendix E

The Committee received a report from the meeting on 25th February 2013.

The Committee decided: to note the report.

10. Research Degree Sub-Committee Report Appendix F

The Committee received a report from the meeting on 25th February 2013.

The Committee decided: to note the report.

11. Report from Library & Learning Centre Appendix G

The Committee received a report from the Library & Learning Centre.

The Committee decided: for its part, to note the report.

12. Other Business

(i) Academic Year Working Group

The Committee noted that the Academic Year Working Group would make a final report to Senate in March with a recommendation to move the Summer Resit Examinations to the end of June or beginning of July to enable all progression issues to be finalised before the start of Semester One each September.

(ii) Technology Enhanced Learning

The Committee also noted that the e-Learning Sub-Committee in approving the move to Turnitin and the implementation of the Media Streaming Project had expressed real concern that the University was not currently able to demonstrate leadership in technology enhanced learning and risked being left further behind unless action was taken to support e-learning initiatives across all disciplines.

13. Date of Next Meeting
10.00 am on Tuesday 14th May 2013 in River Room 3, Tower Building, City Campus.

Professor David Coates  
Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching)  
Convener

Appendix A  Periodic Review of the Student Support Environment  
Appendix B  Student Feedback & Assessment Project  
Appendix C  Quality Forum  
Appendix D  e-Learning Sub-Committee  
Appendix E  Postgraduate Taught Sub-Committee  
Appendix F  Research Degree Sub-Committee  
Appendix G  Library & Learning Centre