

The University of Edinburgh

**Senate Education Committee
Thursday 10 March 2022**

A G E N D A

- 1. Welcome and Apologies**
- 2. Minutes of Electronic Meeting held between 13 and 20 January 2022** SEC 21/22 4 A
- 3. Convener's Communications** Verbal update
- 4. For Discussion**
 - 4.1 Assessment and Feedback – Responding to ELIR and Arrangements for 2022/23 Exam Diets SEC 21/22 4 B
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**Minutes of the Electronic Meeting of Senate Education Committee
13 to 20 January 2022**

1. For Approval

1.1 Minutes of Meeting held on 17 November 2021

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

1.2 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022 – Additional Questions

The additional PTES questions proposed in the paper were approved.

Members noted that the student safety questions had been removed from the 2022 PTES survey to align it with the National Student Survey (NSS, where the questions had been removed because students were frequently responding with COVID safety as opposed to more general safety on campus in mind). It was noted that it may be possible to gather more general information about safety on campus through upcoming Pulse Surveys.

1.3 Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR): Proposal to Introduce a New ‘Additional Recognised Activity’

Whilst Education Committee was supportive of the ‘Moray House Community Champion’ role described in the proposal, concerns were raised about broader issues relating the HEAR:

- Equity for PGR students who do not, at present, receive a HEAR
- Whether the University should be recording School-specific activities on the HEAR, or only University-wide activities. Related to this, members suggested that it may be beneficial for all schools to have ‘Community Champions’.

It was agreed that the matter would be discussed further at the March meeting of the Committee.

<p>ACTION: Secretary to add discussion of broader HEAR issues to March 2022 agenda.</p>

2. For Information and Comment

Members noted the following items:

2.1 2021 UG and PGT / Online Entrants Reports

2.2 Curriculum Transformation Programme Update

2.3 University of Sydney – Academic Integrity Reports

Members considered the reports thought-provoking and to provide helpful suggestions including embedding training on academic good practice in courses and providing early formative feedback on students' writing. Concern was raised that use of Turnitin and similar systems can create a culture of distrust amongst students.

An additional meeting of the Committee to discuss academic integrity in detail was scheduled for 28 April 2022.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services
28 January 2022

Senate Education Committee

10 March 2022

Assessment and Feedback – Responding to ELIR

Description of paper

1. This paper sets out a proposal for a 'holistic and strategic approach to the design and management of assessment and feedback', responding to the recent ELIR recommendation.
2. This paper contributes to the Strategy 2030 outcome: The undergraduate curriculum will support breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it.

Action requested / recommendation

3. Senate Education Committee is asked to comment on and endorse the direction of travel.

Background and context

4. Our recent QAA ELIR report made the following recommendation, urging us to put in place an institution-wide approach to addressing assessment and feedback within this academic year:

'Over an extended period of time, the University has considered a broad evidence-base which has highlighted concerns about assessment and feedback and this remains an area of challenge for the institution. The University is asked to make demonstrable progress, within the next academic year, in prioritising the development of a holistic and strategic approach to the design and management of assessment and feedback'.

5. A Task Group of the Curriculum Transformation Programme was formed, co-led by Tina Harrison and Sabine Rolle, and was tasked with coordinating the University's response to the ELIR recommendation within academic year 2021/22 and to do so with strategic alignment to the Curriculum Transformation Programme.
6. The Task Group is taking a broad based approach and covering the following four key areas: Assessment; Feedback; Marking Schema; the Academic Year. Given the urgency of the ELIR recommendation to develop an approach to assessment and feedback within this academic year, this paper shares initial proposals relating to:
 - a. The overall approach to Assessment and Feedback
 - b. Assessment and Feedback Principles
7. The paper does not address Marking Schema and the Academic Year. Proposals relating to these will be brought to the Curriculum Transformation Board and Senate Education Committee at a later date.

Discussion

8. The proposed approach, and the key principles, are based on extensive research undertaken by the Task Group that has taken into account the following:
 - a. Insight from a range of student feedback sources, including from NSS and PTES, and focus groups conducted by the Task Group;
 - b. Insight from the LEAF evaluation and ELDER process;
 - c. Good practice examples of assessment and feedback from across the University;
 - d. External benchmarking of other universities' approaches to assessment and feedback, particularly of those institutions that perform well on external indicators, such as the NSS, TEF.

9. Based on the research undertaken, the proposal for a holistic and strategic approach to assessment and feedback comprises the following four key aspects:
 - a. **Assessment and feedback principles.** A set of key principles to guide practice in assessment and feedback. The principles set out the baseline expectations for quality, ensuring a degree of consistency in assessment and feedback practice. The principles also signal to students what they can expect to experience with regards to assessment and feedback practice. The intention is for the principles to have the status of a policy and to sit alongside the taught assessment regulations. Schools would be expected to map their practice against the principles, identify gaps and actions to address them.
 - b. **Strategic approach to assessment enhancement.** The principles set the baseline expectations, but we should also strive for creativity and enhancement of our assessment practice. Feeding in to the Curriculum Transformation Programme, the Task Group is also producing a set of strategic priorities for assessment. These will be forward-looking and aspirational, encouraging greater creativity in assessment practice including, but not limited to, the following areas: greater emphasis on authentic assessments; increased formative assessment and feedback; increased assessment for learning; increased student partnership in assessment and student agency in assessment.
 - c. **Support/guidance for staff.** To support colleagues in implementing the assessment and feedback principles, and strategic assessment priorities, we propose to curate a series of Teaching Matters blogs that address each of the core principles and priority themes, drawing on insight and best practice from within the university and further afield.
 - d. **Guidance for students.** To help students make the most of assessment and feedback, a student-facing guide will be produced explaining the assessment and feedback principles from a students' perspective and helping students to understand the assessment and feedback process and their role in it. The student guide will be co-created with the student interns that are working with the Task Group.

10. An initial draft of the Assessment and Feedback Principles was presented to the Directors of Teaching Network and the Curriculum Transformation Programme Reference Group. A series of small group discussions were held with Directors of Teaching. Detailed comments were received from a number of colleagues which have been taken into account in the version of the principles attached to this paper. The comments received to date have been positive and supportive of the broad principles. Some colleagues felt that the principles are appropriate but challenging to meet,

whereas other colleagues felt they were not aspirational enough. Comments have been very helpful in improving the expression and clarity of some of the principles and challenging others. Some of the comments have sought further clarification on the implementation of the principles, which will be taken forward through the development of guidance. Other comments pointed to challenges in the implementation of some aspects. A sense of the comments and changes made to the principles as a result is provided in the comments/notes boxes at the end of each of the key principles.

11. Senate Education Committee is asked to comment on the following:

- a. Are these the right key principles? Are there any missing principles?
- b. Are there any areas where you see the need for additional guidance or support?
- c. Are there particular aspirational developments in assessment and feedback which you think should be included in a developing strategic priorities for assessment and feedback?

Resource implications

12. There are likely to be some implications for staff time in the implementation of the Assessment and Feedback principles, although it largely provides a framework and reference point that can be used in annual course and programme review.

Risk management

13. The recommendations within the paper are aimed at reducing the risks associated with poor performance in assessment and feedback and the likelihood of an unsatisfactory outcome in a future ELIR from not taking action.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

14. N/A

Equality & diversity

15. One of the core principles directly addresses inclusive assessment practice and equality in assessment outcomes.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

16. Following this committee meeting a further iteration of the assessment and feedback principles will be produced for wider consultation and input. A final version will come back to a subsequent meeting of Senate Education Committee for approval and implementation from the start of academic year 2022/23. An implementation and communication plan will be developed, including guidance to support the implementation. Work will continue on the other aspects of the Task Group's work to feed into the Curriculum Transformation Programme.

Authors

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Presenter

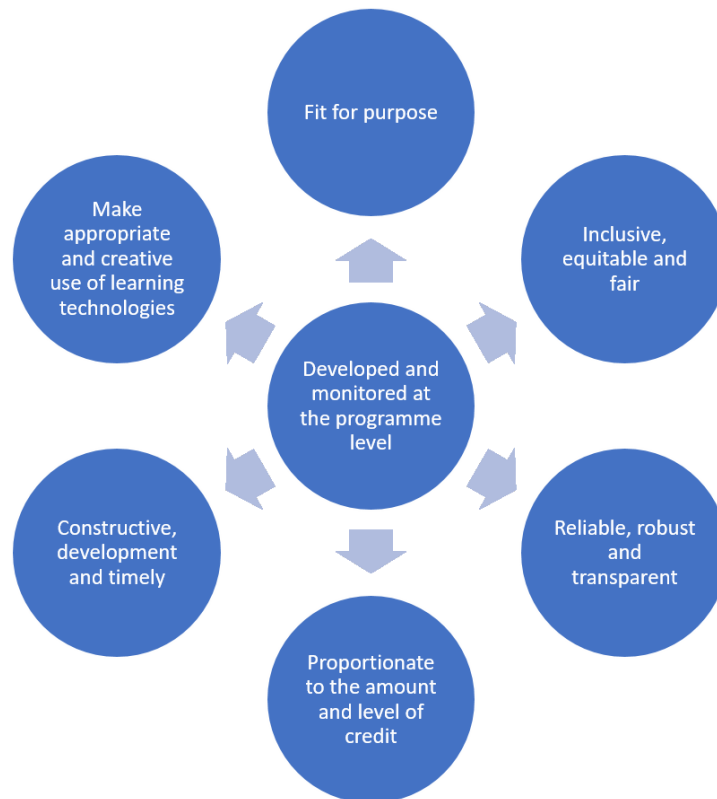
Professor Tina Harrison (Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)

Date 3rd March 2022

Freedom of Information *(Is the paper 'open' or 'closed') Open*

University of Edinburgh

Proposed Assessment and Feedback Principles



1. Assessment shall be fit for purpose

- a. Assessment shall prepare students to become practitioners in their field;
- b. Assessment shall be for and of learning;
- c. Assessment methods shall be appropriate to, and align with, the programme and course learning outcomes;
- d. The purpose and design of the assessment shall be understood by students, instructors and markers.

Comments/notes

- *Some concern expressed that not all assessment will prepare students to become practitioners in their field and that this is a global principle that shouldn't be applied to all individual assessments, but at a general programme level.*
- *Simply communicating the purpose of assessment to students isn't sufficient, there needs to be a shared understanding.*
- *Should feedback also be fit for purpose?*

2. Assessment and feedback shall be inclusive, equitable and fair

- a. Assessment shall be developed taking into account diverse student learning needs and approaches;

- b. As far as possible, assessments shall be designed to minimise the need for individual learning adjustments;
- c. Students shall have the opportunity to experience a range of assessments across their programme;
- d. Students shall be supported and prepared to undertake assessments;
- e. Assessment outcomes should be equitable; where outcomes are unequal assessment methods shall be reviewed and revised accordingly.

Comments/notes

- *An earlier principle advocating that students should have the opportunity to develop competency in different assessment types raised concern that we may be ‘teaching to the test’ rather than focusing on learning. This has been changed to supporting and preparing students.*
- *This is an area where further guidance may be needed to help colleagues in designing inclusive assessments.*
- *‘Equitable outcomes’ seems to have been interpreted that courses should produce the same profile of marks or we should mark to a distribution, which wasn’t the intention. The intention was that assessment shouldn’t disadvantage certain groups/characteristics.*
- *An earlier principle about assessment variety and choice has been changed to ‘opportunity to experience a range of assessments across their programme’ as this was interpreted that students should be given a choice of assessment.*

3. Assessment and feedback shall be reliable, robust and transparent

- a. Assessment design should support good academic practices and minimise opportunities for academic misconduct;
- b. Students, instructors and markers shall have a shared understanding of the marking criteria;
- c. Marking criteria (and any marking rubrics) shall be provided to students along with the assessment task;
- d. Where multiple markers are involved, the marking and moderation process shall support consistency in standards and feedback.

Comments/notes

- *Some comments seem to suggest that an attempt to minimise academic misconduct implies a return to exams, which is not the intention.*
- *It was pointed out that it is not enough to simply communicate marking criteria to students, students and staff need to have a shared understanding of the criteria – further guidance will be needed to help colleagues in doing this.*
- *An earlier version suggested that marking rubrics should be used. This received very mixed comments. Marking rubrics may not be desirable in all circumstances, so the intention is to include this in guidance as one of many ways in which marking criteria can be made more explicit to students and understandable.*

4. Assessment and feedback shall be proportionate to the amount and level of credit

- a. Assessment load shall be manageable for students and staff, while providing sufficient breadth and depth to maintain standards and facilitate student learning;
- b. Assessment workload shall be comparable across courses at the same level and credit weighting.

Comments/notes

- *A number of comments welcomed further guidance on how to achieve greater consistency in assessment load, whilst also recognising that this would be difficult/impossible to mandate and institutional level (and could stifle creativity in assessment).*
- *Exemplars can be provided, leaving schools and programmes to agree consistency/comparability of assessment loads that are more meaningful at the local level.*
- *The type and amount of feedback provided will vary according to the type and scale of assessment.*

5. Feedback on assessment shall be constructive, developmental and timely

- a. Feedback shall be provided on all assessed work;
- b. All feedback shall facilitate student learning by helping students evaluate and develop their performance;
- c. Students shall be given sufficient time to reflect and act upon feedback between assignments, where this is practical;
- d. Feedback on all assessed work shall normally be returned within three weeks of submission. Where this is not possible, students shall be given clear expectations regarding the timing and methods of feedback.

Comments/notes

- *Some comments asked should we be expected to provide feedback on all assessed work? Including exams and dissertations? I think so, but the amount and nature of the feedback will vary.*
- *Feedback turnaround times – It is proposed that we state 3 weeks, rather than 15 working days – as this seems to be used across the sector and more accurately reflects the time from a students’ perspective. The regulations would need to be adjusted to remove 15 days from the assessment regulations. An indicative standard is desirable, but allowing flexibility to schools to vary this where 15 days is not achievable, or where shorter turnaround times are the norm. In such cases, students shall be given clear expectations regarding the timing.*

6. Assessment and feedback shall make appropriate and creative use of learning technologies

- a. Learning technologies shall be used to facilitate efficient and user-friendly assessment, marking and feedback for students and staff;

- b. Learning technologies shall be used to enable scope for increased creativity, innovation and experimentation in assessment and support new kinds of assessment;
- c. Learning technologies shall contribute to enhanced diversity, authenticity and choice of assessments.
- d. Learning technologies shall be used in ways that respect and support the development of students as data subjects and data citizens;
- e. Learning technologies shall be used with due consideration of the effects of potential biases and limitations of algorithmic systems and/or automated components on which the technology may be based.

Comments/Notes

- *A number of comments noted that our existing learning technologies are not user-friendly or enhance assessment practice and this should drive investment in technology that we need.*
- *Some concerns that colleagues will be told which technologies to use and won't be able to exercise academic judgement.*
- *Should emphasise use of learning technologies where appropriate.*

7. Assessment and feedback approaches shall be developed and monitored at the programme level to ensure:

- a. Overall fitness for purpose of assessment and alignment with programme learning outcomes;
- b. Alignment with and development of the Edinburgh Student Vision (TBC following CTP);
- c. Variety in assessment across a programme;
- d. Appropriate challenge for the level of study, enabling students to develop and improve during their degrees;
- e. Assessment timing is suitably coordinated and sufficiently flexible affording students appropriate time to undertake each assessment;
- f. An appropriate balance of formative versus summative assessment across a programme;
- g. Consistency in assessment load relative to credit (to protect against over-assessment);
- h. Enough time for feedback to be provided by staff and used by students.

Comments/notes

- *This is a central principle that ensures oversight of all the other principles.*
- *Overall, there was much support for this as a principle, but recognition that it may be difficult to operationalise at least in the short term. Where courses are not aligned to distinct programmes, oversight may be maintained at the subject or even school level. The basic premise of the principle is to take a coordinated and holistic approach to the design and management of assessments.*

Senate Education Committee**10 March 2022****Update on the CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching****Description of paper**

This paper provides an update for information and discussion on the operation and impact of the University's Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching. This Framework was reaccredited by AdvanceHE (formerly Higher Education Academy) in 2017 until 2021. This period of accreditation has now been extended to August 2023. Good progress is being made with positive feedback from participants. Participation was steadily increasing until AY 20/21 when growth stalled as a result of the pandemic. The main barriers to further increases in participation are academic staff workloads and workload models. These issues have been exacerbated by the increased pressure on staff as a result of Covid-19. While we have some capacity to increase numbers on the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP) the University level Edinburgh Teaching Award is running at full capacity with waiting lists. Any significant increase in capacity would require additional resourcing. Feedback is sought on the proposed changes to each dimension of the Framework in advance of reaccreditation.

Action requested / recommendation

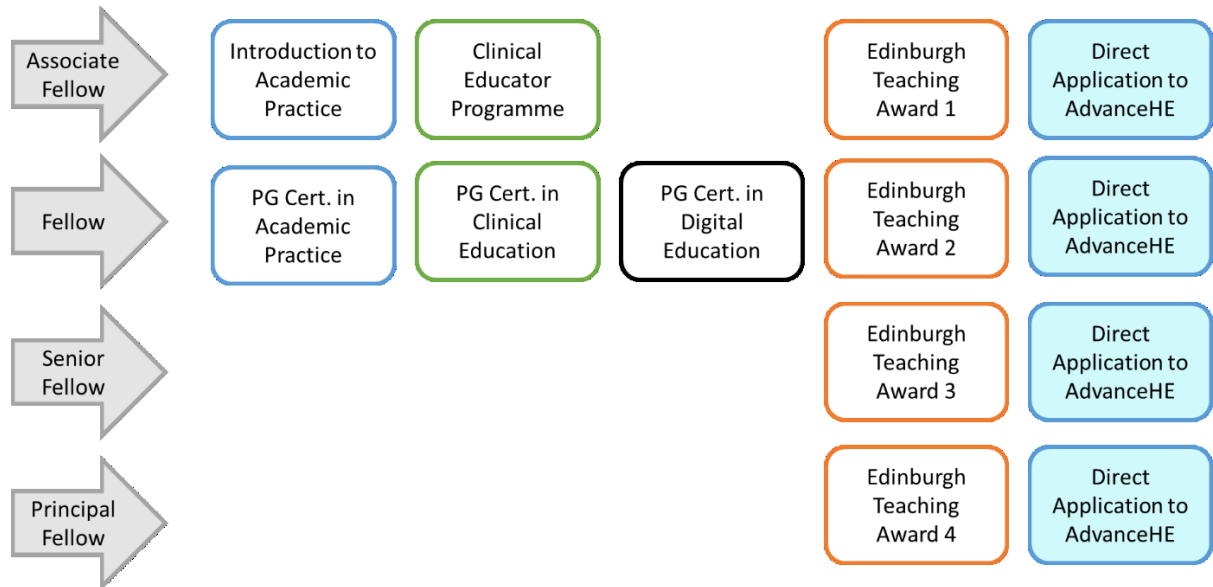
The Committee is asked to note the first part of the paper for information and to discuss the recommendations for reaccreditation of the Framework.

We recommend that the Committee consider the impact of academic workloads on participation in professional development for learning and teaching in the context of the Curriculum Transformation Programme and ELIR Action Plan.

Background and context

This paper provides an update on the operation and impact of the University's Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching. This Framework was requested by Learning and Teaching Committee in 2012, accredited by AdvanceHE in 2013, and reaccredited in 2017 until 2021 against the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (UKPSF). The accreditation period has been extended to 2023. The provision within the Framework is intended to provide relevant and flexible professional development for all University staff involved in teaching or supporting learning at any point in their careers. The Framework is delivered in collaboration with Schools and Support Services. The current Framework is illustrated in Figure 1 (overleaf). Gaining professional recognition from AdvanceHE provides national recognition for colleagues of their commitment to professionalism in teaching and learning in higher education.

Figure 1: The CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching



The Framework

There are three main pathways through the Framework for University staff: the Introduction to Academic Practice (IntroAP); the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP); and the Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA). A fourth pathway, the Digital Education programme, is coming out of the Framework because the AdvanceHE requirements do not fit well with the needs of their participants, many of whom are not working in HE.

The IntroAp was developed to provide a route to Associate Fellowship of AdvanceHE for experienced tutors and demonstrators who previously had no internal UoE route to accreditation. The IntroAP was designed to include rich and structured face-to-face and online interaction as well as teaching observation. This provides an ideal learning environment for less experienced teachers. Postgraduate students appreciate having a nationally recognised professional accreditation for teaching on their curriculum vitae as this is appearing in advertisements for academic posts. In response to Covid 19 we have been running IntroAP online. This shift has been very well received by participants and completion rates remain very high.

The PGCAP is aimed at academic and other staff with a substantive role in teaching or supporting learning. Most participants are at a relatively early point in their career. It is a 60 credit programme that is undertaken on a part-time basis and is spread over a period of between 14 months and three years. The 40 credit compulsory course is aligned with the University’s strategic commitment to education and includes blocks on promoting active and engaged student learning and on designing high quality learning environments. Assessment is rich and varied with participants developing personal and academic

development plans, identifying threshold concepts, designing a hypothetical new course for their Schools and undertaking peer observation of teaching. The range of teaching and assessment practices gives them valuable insight into curriculum design and development. The switch to fully online learning as a response to Covid has been well received by participants.

Our External Examiner, Professor Helen Barefoot, has indicated that the standards on the PGCAP compare well with other UK universities and that participants are provided with excellent feedback. She has also commented that the participants' development over the course of the Programme is impressive and that the compulsory course is particularly good at supporting staff to reflect on their professional practice in a scholarly way. Feedback from participants on the Programme has been largely positive with colleagues particularly welcoming the opportunity to learn with and from peers, the exposure to a range of pedagogies, and the confidence that the teaching observation gives them. This feedback is confirmed by a recently completed Principal's Teaching Award Scheme project which investigated the role of the PgCAP in supporting our graduates to develop agency around learning and teaching.

The EdTA is designed to provide a manageable and flexible portfolio route to AdvanceHE accreditation and covers all four categories of Fellowship. It is aimed at all colleagues, including those in professional services, who are contributing to the student learning experience at any stage in their careers, and who may not wish, or be able to complete, a certified taught course. The EdTA requires participants to write a series of blog posts about their professional values and academic practice and to provide an overview of their success in teaching and supporting learning and their engagement with CPD related to this work. The EdTA can be completed over six months to two years depending on participants' work patterns. All participants are supported by dedicated mentors from across the institution.

The EdTA is well received by participants and this was confirmed by the findings of an external review in 2016-17 and an internal evaluation in 2019. The Scheme has two External Assessors and both agreed that "there is very careful, detailed and considered review of each application and good quality discussions", "the EdTA assessment process was comparable and of a quality similar, if not higher, in its rigour to other higher education institutions". Completers identify a range of positives about the EdTA including how reflective, rewarding and inspiring it is.

Both participants and mentors identified some challenges, in particular, freeing up time to participate in the midst of already busy work schedules. Previous challenges and frustrations about the process have been alleviated by the introduction of the WordPress blogging platform. It is likely that pressures of work have intensified as a result of Covid and this will probably have implications for completion times in AY 21/22.

Local EdTAs are operating within seven schools across the University. These are run in partnership between Schools and the IAD, and give an opportunity to provide a closer fit to local needs and to secure greater buy-in locally. Six of these School EdTAs have had successful completions and we are in discussion with eight other Schools. In addition to the EdTA, a small number of staff also choose to gain Fellowship directly through Advance HE.

Successful candidates are automatically recorded by Advance HE as part of the UoE completion records.

All three routes are built around the UKPSF which is currently being redeveloped. We will be consulted on this process and we will be keen to stress the dimensions that work well/do not work well for our participants. Participants sometimes struggle to see the value of the UKPSF so we have ensured that it is discussed in participant guidance and ongoing mentor training.

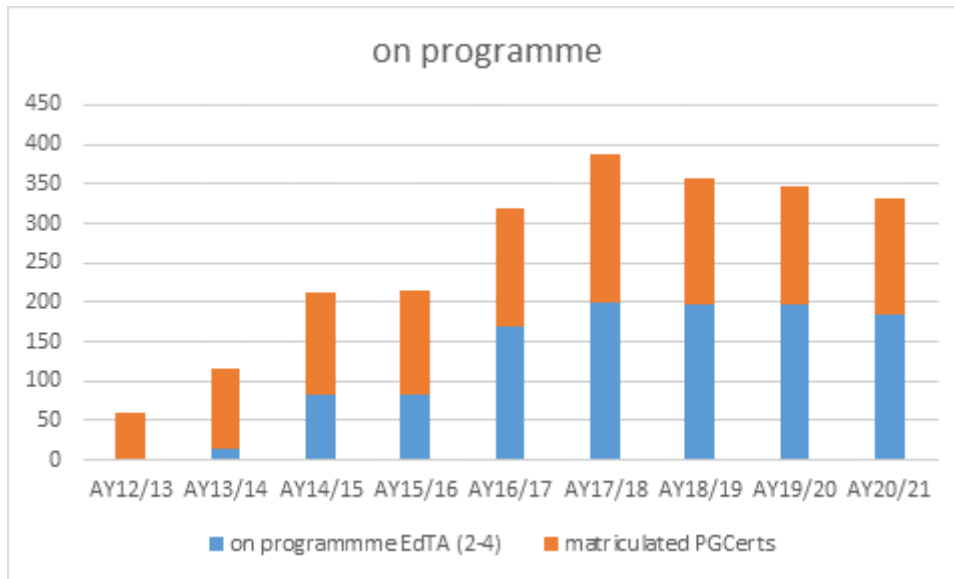
Participation in the Framework

Participation in the PGCAP (see Figure 2) has remained generally stable in recent years despite the introduction of the Edinburgh Teaching Award as an alternative possibility for staff. This suggests an increase in willingness of staff to participate in accredited provision. There is potential for growth on the PGCAP, we could take two cohorts of around 50 participants per year leading to around 200 participants on the programme at any given time (assuming 2 years to completion). At present we are accepting around 35-45 participants per cohort.

Participation in the Edinburgh Teaching Award has been stable since academic year 2017/2018 (see Figure 2). We have reached a steady state of around 200 participants per year on the central and existing School EdTAs. Demand regularly exceeds capacity; we typically run a waiting list for the central provision from some months before each intake. Growth in the numbers or scale of School EdTAs may result in participation numbers increasing.

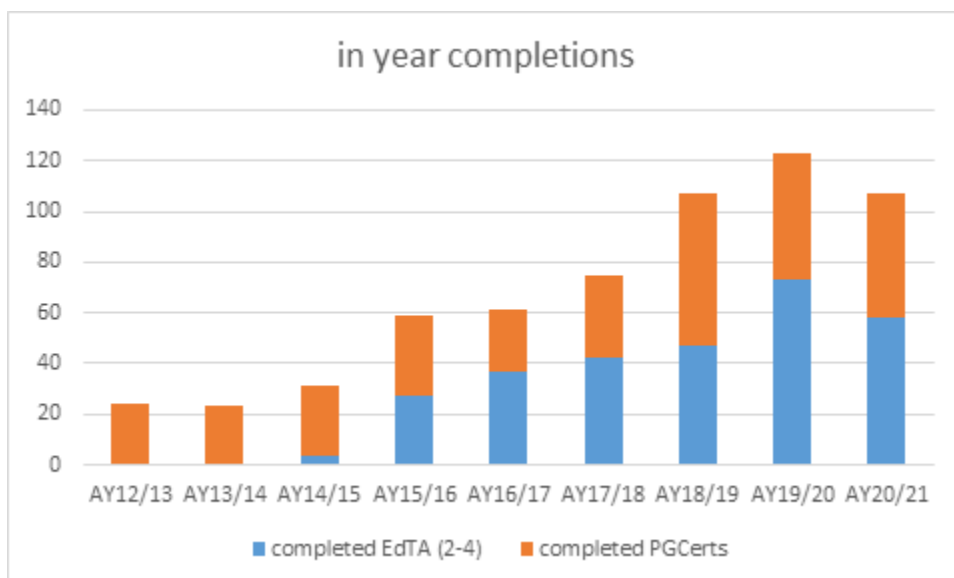
Participants tell us that finding time is the biggest barrier to full participation in the PGCAP and EdTA, and this has been exacerbated by Covid. We are getting regular comments from participants in the PGCAP and EdTA (and also from EdTA mentors) about the lack of recognition of this work in many School workload allocation models. The precarious working lives of some of our colleagues are also a factor, with some of those on short contracts leaving before they are able to complete. They may be able to use what they did on the PGCAP as Recognition of Prior Learning into programmes in new institutions in these cases.

Fig 2 Participation in the EdTA (levels 2-4) and PGCAP (AY12/13 to AY20/21)



The number of colleagues completing the full PGCAP has increased since the introduction of the new version of the programme (see Figure 3). Completions of the EdTA grew from AY15/16 onwards and peaked in AY19/20. Completions dropped in AY20/21, potentially as a result of additional workload pressures linked to the pandemic. Participants who do not complete the PGCAP or the EdTA typically cite time pressures as the main barrier.

Fig 3 In year completions for the EdTA (levels 2-4) and PGCAP (AY12/13 to AY20/21)



Completion data for the Introduction to Academic Practice are provided in Figure 4 along with completion data for the EdTA category 1. The excellent completion rates for the Introduction to Academic Practice (IntroAP) of around 95% reflect the close support given to participants by the IntroAP team. Other influences on completion are that tutors and

demonstrators tend to have somewhat milder time pressures than other staff and do not yet have secure careers thus providing another incentive to secure an accredited award. Recruitment to the IntroAP is buoyant and the intake is running at almost capacity. We operate a waiting list and this involves applicants who want to come on IntroAP but who have not as yet met the eligibility criteria. We cap the number of EdTA participants for category 1 in order to prioritise spaces on this oversubscribed provision for academic staff rather than tutors and demonstrators. We also offer non-accredited workshops on tutoring and demonstrating to a larger numbers of participants.

Fig 4. Completion of the IntroAP and EdTA Category 1 (AY13/14 to AY20/21)

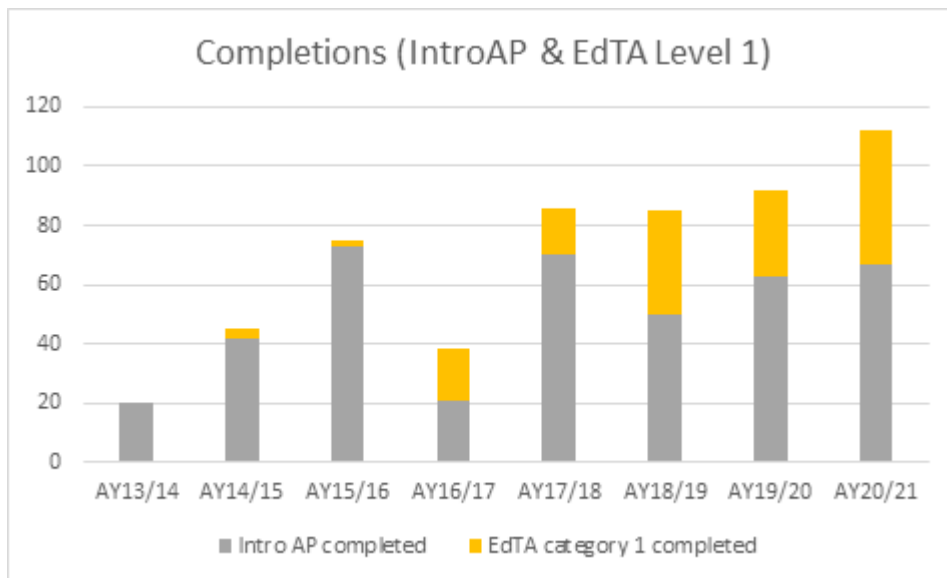
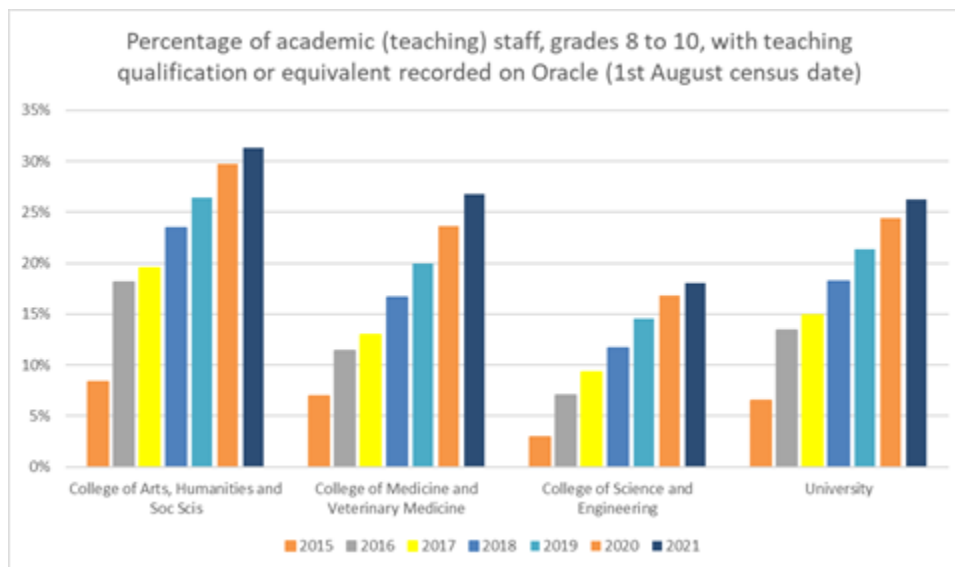


Figure 5 shows the percentage increase in the numbers of academic (teaching) staff on grades 8 to 10 who hold a teaching qualification. This shows a steady upward trend with some variation between Colleges. These data include EdTA and PGCAP completers as well as colleagues who came from other institutions with their AdvanceHE Fellowship already in place. It also includes other qualifications recognised by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), such as holders of PGCE qualifications in secondary or further education.

Fig 5 Percentage of academic (teaching) staff, grades 8-10, with a teaching qualification by College and for University as a whole.



Impact

A formal impact assessment has not been carried out, however it is possible to see evidence of how participation in all of the parts of the Framework contributes to teaching excellence across the University. Completers are frequently contributors to the Teaching Matters blog, the Annual Learning and Teaching Conference, ENGAGE Network events and School learning and teaching blogs. They are also recipients of PTAS awards. Work completed on the routes often references positive influence on the learning and teaching practices of colleagues as well as increased student success and satisfaction.

Looking ahead

The CPD Framework is due for reaccreditation in 2023. In looking to the future we will be guided by the University's strategic priorities including the ELIR Action Plan and the delayed implementation of recommendations from the Academic Teaching Careers Project, Curriculum Transformation Programme and the lessons we have learned from adapting the Framework for fully online delivery during the Covid pandemic.

This paper is the first step in a consultation process with the learning and teaching community about their aspirations for the Framework. We will work collaboratively with Directors of Learning and Teaching, the Experienced Teachers Network and other stakeholders to develop a broad range of guiding principles for the reaccreditation process. It is important that the Framework contributes to the upskilling of staff for curriculum transformation, as well as to the recognition, reward and support of teaching in academic careers.

Lessons learnt from the shift to on-line provision are likely to lead to much more digital delivery, which participants have been very positive about. While Covid has exacerbated time pressures on staff, initial feedback from the shift to on-line provision suggests that participants find this easier to manage as part of demanding workloads and it has been important for accessibility reasons. There is anecdotal evidence that participation on the Framework has been enhanced by the movement to fully online working although completion times are likely to be affected as staff struggle to meet deadlines. As digital working becomes increasingly important to the University it is vital that the Framework gives participants the experience of working in an on-line environment.

Discussion

For the IntroAP course, we are anticipating that we will largely keep the same structure of the course, due to its continuing positive feedback and evidence of good outcomes in the assessment results. We are mindful of the good reputation the course enjoys and are keen to see the course grow and develop to continue to meet high expectations and best serve our participants. We will be employing an Employ.Ed Intern during Summer 2022 to evaluate the course, its content and structure by engaging with the materials, assessment outcomes, course staff and consulting previous participants to help identify areas for improvement, inclusion or removal. We aim to formally adopt the minor changes that have been made to the course since its previous accreditation, including assignment templates and pre-seminar tasks. Due to the success of the online provision during COVID restrictions, and in light of feedback from participants, we would like to continue to offer an online option in post-COVID times. This would either follow the pattern of alternating online and in-person provision each semester, or offering online and in-person options in parallel each semester. We will continue to investigate the best pattern to take forward.

For the PGCAP we would like to ensure that the Programme is meeting the University's strategic objectives as well as equipping our participants to develop their careers in learning, teaching, research and knowledge exchange. We are also mindful of preparing participants to teach in the post-Covid university as well as introducing them all to debates around accessibility, inclusion, digital education and leadership. Our Programme has more options than most similar programmes across the sector.

We are considering making the Programme a straight 60 credit compulsory course, or a linked set of three 20 credit modules, centred on the existing Foundations course. Foundations is currently working extremely well and is very favourably reviewed by the participants and the External Examiner. Extending it by 20 credits would allow us to expose all of our participants to debates about digital education, accessibility and inclusion and leadership. At present these issues are covered in option courses. We believe that these issues are now so important to the core functions of the University and its staff that they should be addressed in the compulsory course. This would allow us to streamline the teaching of the Programme and should ensure that completion rates are further increased. Although participants would lose the element of choice and flexibility they currently have from option courses we believe the new structure would better prepare them to develop

their careers here at the University and we will build in opportunities for participants to tailor these courses and assessment tasks to their own interests and priorities. The sector norm is for PGCAPs to be taught by compulsory courses only.

Further we would like to attend to the mode of delivery of the Programme and seek to develop a hybrid model that could be completed digitally with the option of some on campus sessions and elements. This would allow us to prepare our participants for teaching in a digital environment as well as allowing us to offer the Programme to staff at international partner institutions.

For the EdTA we will be making only minor adjustments as overall the scheme is working well and participants report high satisfaction. For example, minor changes to the format in which people present their claims through the WordPress site will be made. The aim of this is to increase the clarity of what is required for each category of fellowship. The new supporting workshops for participants and the training and update events for mentors and assessors will continue to be provided throughout the year. We will strengthen the assessment process through a new moderation procedure to ensure consistency and calibration across the four categories. We will be looking at ways to support the School schemes and ensure that they also benefit from the calibration and training events so that their participants are not disadvantaged and so that their schemes are sustainable and less dependent on key individuals. For completing fellows, we would like to create more opportunities for collaboration and contribution to the wider discussions on learning and teaching taking place around the University. It will be a priority to carry out an evaluation and impact assessment of the scheme prior to re-accreditation.

Resource implications

If, as is likely in response to staff demand and the requirements of curriculum transformation and support for academic career development and progression, the University wishes to increase participation in the CPD Framework and the achievement of professional accreditation for teaching there are two key resource implementations. First is to ensure that participants and mentors have time for participation and involvement built into their workload allocations. Second is that we would need to invest in more capacity within the IAD to run and support any significant increase in participation, especially on the PgCAP and the EdTA.

Risk management

The key risk is that workload pressures make it difficult for sufficient colleagues to participate. This has been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals



The Framework contributes to SDG 4 on Quality Education to Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Equality & diversity

An equality impact assessment has been conducted on the Framework

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

The IAD will continue to work with colleagues across the University to build participation in the Framework and collect further evaluation data.

This paper has been reviewed and approved by the leads of the Introduction to Academic Practice, Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and Edinburgh Teaching Award.

Author

Hazel Christie, Velda McCune and Jon Turner

Presenter

Hazel Christie

23/02/2022

Freedom of Information *Open*

Senate Education Committee

10 March 2022

Draft University of Edinburgh Research Ethics Policy

Description of paper

1. This paper presents the latest draft University of Edinburgh Research Ethics Policy. The purpose of this policy is to articulate the ethical principles, procedures and expectations that inform the conduct of research activities undertaken by University of Edinburgh staff and students, in the UK and internationally. This policy aims to set out principles and to harmonise processes and approaches across the University, and support staff and students to enact the highest standards of ethical conduct in research. This Research Ethics Policy is intended to apply to all students and staff at the University, and all research carried out at, or in the name of, the University of Edinburgh, including research at other sites, including research conducted overseas.

This policy enacts our wider University values to be principled, considerate and respectful, and act with integrity in our research (Strategy 2030). The policy aims to safeguard the interests and well-being of researchers, research participants, the wider research community, and the broader society and environment.

The implementation of the policy will support a number of the Strategy 2030 objectives including:

- i) We will see our research having a greater impact as a result of partnership, international reach and investment in emergent disciplines.
- ii) The undergraduate curriculum will support breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it.
- iii) We will have more user-friendly processes and efficient systems to support our work.

Action requested / recommendation

2. We welcome review and comments to ensure this policy is a mechanism to support UG and PG students. The sections most relevant to student research are highlighted in yellow. The policy will be reviewed again by the Research Ethics and Integrity Review Group (March) prior to presentation for approval at the University Research Strategy Group in April.

Background and context

3. Across the higher education sector, there has been increased focus on the importance of research integrity. Central to research integrity is the implementation of high-quality ethical processes and policies, as highlighted by recent [guidance](#) produced by ARMA/UKRIO. This Research Ethics Policy has been developed by representatives from the University Research Ethics and Integrity Review Group (REIRG), and members of the ethics community across the University. This policy aims to set out principles and facilitate harmonisation of processes and approaches within the University, and ultimately raise standards for the ethical conduct of research. This work is particularly timely because it complements the ongoing work of the Research Cultures Working Group, and it takes place as we prepare to roll-out our new University-wide online ethics application and review platform.

This draft has been written over last 18 months by a team representing the ethics community across the University, on behalf of REIRG including:

Dr Ailsa Niven (CAHSS)
 Charlotte Smith (CAHSS)
 Carol Ball (CAHSS)
 Jacq McMahon (CAHSS)
 Dr Fiona O'Hanlon (CAHSS)
 Dr Edward Dove (CAHSS)
 Dr Lena Lorenz (CMVM)
 Prof Shannon Vallor (CAHSS/ Baillie Gifford Chair in the Ethics of Data and AI)
 Dr Sam Staddon (CSE)
 Paul Dearie (ACCORD)
 Dr Fiona Murray (ERO)
 Alan Campbell (ERO)
 Dr Peggy Series (CSE)
 Dr Timm Krueger (CSE)
 Dr Christine Campbell (CMVM)
 Prof Sue Fletcher-Watson (CMVM)

The process has involved both reviewing external policies from other universities alongside sector guidance, whilst also being responsive to issues and concerns raised by the UoE ethics and researcher community. Members of REIRG and the broader research and ethics community within the three Colleges have been consulted.

Discussion

4. We welcome review and comments to ensure this policy (attached) is a mechanism to support UG and PG students. The sections most relevant to student researchers are highlighted in yellow.

Resource implications

5. None

Risk management

6. This policy is intended to mitigate the existing risk that the University does not have a research ethics policy

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

7. In the policy, we have outlined in the ethics principles and values the importance of valuing and mitigating risks to planetary health in undertaking research.

Equality & diversity

8. EQIA to be completed.

In the policy, we have outlined in the ethics principles and values the importance of evaluating and mitigating risks to equality and diversity in undertaking research, and in the implementation of the research ethics review processes.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

9. Any feedback will be implemented into the next version of the policy prior to presentation to the University Research Strategy Group.

Author

As above

2 March 2022

Presenter

Dr Ailsa Niven (CAHSS Associate Dean of Research Ethics and Integrity)

Freedom of Information Open

Draft University of Edinburgh Research Ethics Policy

Purpose and Scope

The University of Edinburgh is committed to supporting the highest standards of research integrity. Integral to this commitment is the implementation of a culture that promotes robust and transparent ethical standards. The purpose of this policy is to articulate the ethical principles, procedures and expectations that inform the conduct of research activities undertaken by University of Edinburgh staff and students, in the UK and internationally. This policy aims to set out principles and to harmonise processes and approaches across the University, **and support staff and students to enact the highest standards of ethical conduct in research.** This Research Ethics Policy applies to all students and staff at the University, and all research carried out at, or in the name of, the University of Edinburgh, including research at other sites and overseas.

Definitions:

Research is broadly conceived to include any form of disciplined inquiry undertaken by staff and students that aims to contribute to a body of knowledge or theory. Some consultancy, and knowledge exchange and impact activities, including public engagement, may also include activities that may be categorised as research.

Researcher is broadly conceived to include those who engage in the research activities outlined above and are employed by, **or registered as a student, at the University of Edinburgh.** Researchers also include honorary staff, those who are visiting from other institutions, and those who are undertaking or supervising research at or for the University.

Research ethics involves the application of ethical principles [see below] to research activities. These ethical principles are applied throughout the lifetime of a research project: from conception and design, via data collection and analysis, to dissemination, archiving of research materials, and beyond. Researchers have a responsibility to undertake their research with due diligence of all relevant ethical considerations.

Research ethics review comprises the proportionate review of the ethics issues associated with planned research activities, and how those ethics issues will be addressed by the researchers. All researchers should explicitly self-evaluate the ethical implications of their research. Where the research might reasonably be considered to raise ethical questions¹, then research ethics review will be required before the research commences. Where independent scrutiny is required, the review will be undertaken by a research ethics committee (or one or more members therein) at the University, or credible alternative, with the intention to provide an opinion on the ethical appropriateness of the proposed research, and, if appropriate, to suggest changes to the research which would improve its ethical status. Researchers should continue to engage with their ethics review committee throughout the lifetime of a research project, including submitting proposed amendments and, if appropriate,

¹ Although not an exhaustive criteria, where the research involves new or existing data of any kind collected from humans or animals, research ethics review will normally be required.

annual updates on progress. As standard, retrospective requests for ethical opinion will not be supported.

Research integrity requires complying with the ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards required by stakeholders, including statutory and regulatory authorities, employers and funders. A favourable opinion following ethical review is an important, but insufficient, requirement on its own to enable the research to proceed and meet the highest research integrity standards. Researchers must also ensure appropriate governance procedures are adhered to prior to and throughout the lifespan of the research (see below Ethics and Governance).

Research ethical principles and values

NB for info (will be removed)- Based on Belmont principles (beneficence, respect, justice); CAHSS College Research Ethics Framework (itself based on the European Commission, Association of Research Ethics Committee and ESRC frameworks.)

This policy enacts our wider University values to be principled, considerate and respectful, and act with integrity in our research (Strategy 2030). The policy aims to safeguard the interests and well-being of researchers, research participants, the wider research community, and the broader society and environment. The overarching principles informing our research are:

- **Beneficence and non-maleficence**
 - Researchers seek to maximise the benefits of their research for individuals and society, and to avoid or minimise risk of harm via appropriate robust precautions.
- **Integrity, openness and transparency**
 - Researchers design and conduct research to ensure its methodological integrity, and contribution to knowledge², working within the limits of their professional competence, and/or with appropriate supervision. The aims of the research are transparent, and the full record of the research should be as open as possible, and as closed as necessary. Researchers undertake due diligence to assess the integrity of potential research partners, maintain independence of research, and make explicit any unavoidable actual or potential conflicts of interest.
- **Dignity and respect**
 - Researchers respect the rights, autonomy, privacy, interests, values, and dignity of research participants, including humans, human tissue, and non-humans alike. The principle of proportionality discourages researchers from going beyond stated objectives or imposing more than is necessary on research participants. Predictable risks are clearly communicated to human

² Judgements on standards of methodological integrity and contribution to knowledge should be appropriate to the context and purpose (i.e., educational vs research)

research participants, allowing informed consent. Where informed consent is not possible or not appropriate, then researchers are guided by standards for best practice. Researchers ensure participants are free to participate without coercion or penalty for not taking part, and that their right to withdraw from the research is clearly communicated and delineated at any time. Throughout the life-cycle of the research, data will be managed to maintain confidentiality, security, and adherence to legal and ethical obligations by all those who have access to the data.

- **Responsibility and accountability**

- Researchers take responsibility for adhering to the ethical principles in this policy and give due consideration to them in their actions and decisions throughout the research lifecycle. Researchers are also accountable for the actions and decisions they make, including promoting ethical conduct and guarding against research misconduct. This means, among other things, that researchers give due consideration to the ethical implications of their research and the social, political, cultural, economic and environmental consequences of their work for the participants, collaborators (including both staff and students), funders, the public, and wider society and planet.

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

- Researchers consider equality, diversity and inclusion in all of their research activities, and promote a positive inclusive environment, which ensures fairness, challenges prejudice, and celebrates difference.

- **Planetary health**

- Researchers respect planetary health and sustainability, and make socially and environmentally responsible choices regarding research methods and practices to avoid contributing to or exacerbating environmental harms and injustices.

It is acknowledged that researchers may also align their work with principles outlined by research funders, and/or professional or disciplinary organisations, and with respect for cultural contexts. In most cases, these additional principles will be complementary to the principles articulated above. Where there is conflict, researchers should reflect on these conflicting demands, and articulate how they propose to proceed, and why they have chosen that course.

Roles and responsibilities of the University

As an employer and educator of researchers, the University has a responsibility to maintain a positive research environment that encourages the highest standards of research practice. The provision of adequate structures for governance and research ethics review, as well as training opportunities for both researchers and those involved in operating these structures, is vital in supporting this positive environment.

Colleges, Schools, Institutes and research units have a responsibility to recognise through workload allocation or other compensations that contributing to ethics review and other support processes is accepted and rewarded institutional work. The preparation of ethics protocols and applications by researchers is a fundamental part of the research process and, likewise, is regarded as an essential contribution to the work of the institution.

The University has a responsibility to provide a mechanism for applying for research ethics review that is user-friendly, fit for purpose, proportionate to the risks involved, and facilitates the review process. Where possible, template copies of information sheets, consent forms, invitation letters, recruitment materials and other routinely used documents will be made available to researchers.

Roles and responsibilities of researchers

Ethics is a cornerstone of research integrity, and the policy and procedures in place aim to support researchers in undertaking high quality research. Researchers have an individual responsibility to ensure that they have an up-to-date working knowledge of relevant ethical issues for their research area, and that they have undertaken all mandatory research training required for their role (e.g., Data Protection Training, Information Security Essentials), as well as specialist training relevant to their field or methods. **Additionally, research leaders and supervisors have a responsibility to support others to work ethically.**

Researchers are responsible for ensuring that all of their research activities have undergone active, proportionate and appropriate consideration of ethical issues, risk-benefit balance, and are conducted in accordance with relevant University and national policy/guidelines. Where their research is subject to research ethics review, researchers have a responsibility to engage with the ethical review process in a respectful and conscientious manner.

In applying for research ethics review, researchers are responsible for ensuring they apply in a timely manner in advance of the commencement of any research activities, with complete submissions, which include all appropriate documentation (where required). Researchers should consider if complex projects could be instead be considered as individual studies or work-packages for review purposes, to facilitate sufficient scrutiny and manageable and timely review. Researchers are responsible for considering the ongoing ethical issues throughout the lifetime of the project, and (where required) providing Annual Progress Reports, and End of Project reports.

Researchers are encouraged to view the ethics review process as a collegial and constructive process that is conducted with the intention of supporting researchers to adhere to the highest ethical standards. Failure to meet research ethical obligations can constitute research misconduct, and as such could lead to the implementation of a research misconduct investigation.

Student researchers

Students undertaking research as part of their UGT, PGT or PGR studies must also adhere to appropriate ethical principles and procedures, proportionate to the nature and level of their studies. The application of the ethical principles and procedures outlined in this document will be communicated and operationalised at the local level in a way that is proportionate to project risks and context. It is acknowledged that engagement with research ethics also represents a teaching and learning opportunity, and students will be supported and supervised by appropriate staff supervisors (or equivalent) to develop their ethical practice. Supervisors have an ongoing responsibility throughout the research to make students aware of the ethical issues and requirements associated with their research. For students, failure to meet research ethical obligations may constitute research misconduct, and as such could lead to a referral to the relevant Academic Misconduct Officer.

The Research Ethics Review Process

Robust, rigorous and proportionate research ethics review is central to supporting high quality research activity. At the University of Edinburgh, research ethics review is devolved to School (or equivalent) local research ethics committees (RECs) within the Colleges, which bring subject-specific expertise. Figure 1 illustrates the principal committees within the University with responsibility for the implementation of research ethics reviews. These committees may have a strategic function, or both strategic and review functions. RECs may also seek more specialist expertise to support robust ethics reviews when elements of the research are beyond the committees' boundaries of competence (e.g., Artificial Intelligence and Data Ethics; Global Research; Research with Animals). In some circumstances, researchers may be required to seek ethical review from external credible organisations (e.g., NHS). For low risk UGT and PGT research, ethics review may be cascaded to programme level procedures.

Figure 1: Organisational structure of ethical committees (see end of doc)

The overarching principles informing the functioning of these RECs are independence, competence, facilitation, and transparency and accountability.³ RECs are responsible for undertaking ethics reviews in a timely manner and providing constructive reviews with the intention of supporting researchers to adhere to the highest ethical standards. RECs will undertake a proportionate level of scrutiny dependent on the risks of the project, balancing duties of care to research participants and to society with the goals of enabling and supporting ethical research and innovation for public and societal benefit.

The terms of reference (add example template) of the individual RECs should be articulated and made available to all students and staff whose research falls within the scope of that REC, with specification of the purpose and remit of the committee, the membership, responsibilities and expectations of members and designated roles, operating procedures and reporting processes. RECs are encouraged to include a member from outside the local research unit, and, where appropriate, at least one lay

³ UKRIO and ARMA (2020). *Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations*. Accessed from <https://ukrio.org/wp-content/uploads/Research-Ethics-Support-and-Review-in-Research-Organisations-UKRIO-ARMA-2020.pdf>

member external to the University. REC convenors should monitor membership and ensure an appropriate spread of discipline and methodological expertise to fulfil the remit and purpose of the committee. The EDI representativeness of the REC should be considered in line with local level governance procedures.

The ethics application process should be transparent, clear, easily accessible, and ask no more detail than is necessary. Where possible, template copies of information sheets, consent forms, invitation letters, recruitment materials and other routinely used documents should be made available to researchers from xxxxx. RECs should maintain records of applications, final approved documentation, and decision letters, with an appropriate retention and disposal schedule.

Roles and responsibilities of REC reviewers

The optimal functioning of RECs relies on the support, time and collegiality of its members. Processes for recruitment to RECs will vary at local levels. RECs may also rely on additional reviewers who are not committee members to support their remit, and the term REC reviewer is used inclusively. It is expected that RECs will, through its membership, fulfil the following roles and responsibilities:

- a. To receive and review an ethics application in a timely fashion (adhering to locally stipulated timescales) and provide an opinion that is a) favourable of the proposed research; b) conditionally favourable, under certain defined conditions or specific requirements; or c) unfavourable.
- b. To require the halting of research if there is evidence of substantive ethical concerns, with the research only restarting once those concerns have been fully addressed.
- c. To withdraw a favourable opinion when substantive ethical issues are identified, unless these are addressed to the satisfaction of the REC.
- d. To review substantive amendments to original project proposals, and provide an ethical opinion (as above).
- e. To be constructive and clear in feedback provided to applicants, and provide justification for the ethical opinion given.
- f. To review the applications within boundaries of competence considering the broad ethical principles detailed in the University Research Ethics Policy, and other ethical standards specific to the research project.
- g. To seek advice from other colleagues when the research, ethical, governance or legal issues extend beyond boundaries of competence. This may require consultation with colleagues in other Schools (or equivalent) or Colleges.
- h. To remain independent in the review process and flag any potential conflicts of interests that may compromise this independence.

- i. To take up opportunities to engage in appropriate training.
- j. To have a good working knowledge of the Research Governance procedures that may be relevant to the application (including, but not exhaustive, need for sponsorship, external approvals, GDPR adherence, health and safety risk assessment, and lawful processing and storage of data).
- k. It is not within the remit of the REC to focus or comment on matters of methodology or design unless these raise ethical issues.
- l. To act as an advocate for good ethical practices in research and be available for consultation throughout the research process.

Accountability, transparency and reporting of RECs

The processes used and decisions reached by RECs must be transparent and accountable through the University's research ethics governance structure. RECs will adhere to the principles and procedures outlined in this policy. RECs will communicate the remit, committee membership and training protocols to all students and staff falling within its scope through an appropriate channel.

RECs will ensure robust record keeping of applications, final approved documentation, and decision letters. On an annual basis, local RECs are required to report summary records of research ethics review and support processes to its College Research Office or College Research Ethics Committee. The Colleges will in turn report to the Research Ethics and Integrity Review Group (REIRG) by way of the College Annual Ethics and Integrity Reports. REIRG will review the College Annual reports on behalf of Research Strategy Group (RSG).

The Edinburgh Research Office is responsible for preparing the University's Annual Research Ethics and Integrity Report. The Annual Report provides a broad summary of the policy, processes and initiatives in place across the institution, and within the individual Colleges, for the purposes of supporting and strengthening the understanding and application of research integrity, as well as the promotion of a positive research culture.

The University Annual Ethics and Integrity Report is subject to approval by Research Strategy Group, Risk Management Committee and Audit & Risk Committee. Following approval by Risk Management Committee, and in line with the requirements of the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity, the University Annual Research Ethics and Integrity Report is published on the [University website](#).

REC members are indemnified by the University of Edinburgh insurance under the University's Clinical Trials insurance policy, which also covers broader research activities undertaken across the University. The University of Edinburgh will take full

responsibility for committee members' actions during the performance of their duties as a member of a REC as outlined in this policy, except where these actions are found to involve bad faith, willful default or gross negligence (**being revisited with insurance office**).

Training and Development of the Ethics Community

The University is committed to supporting a community of learning on research ethics where good practice, learning and challenges can be shared to optimise research integrity. Further, through regular training, the University will support RECs in exercising their roles and responsibilities to conduct thorough and consistent ethics scrutiny of research.

Training in research ethics and integrity for all researchers is provided through central training opportunities curated by the Institute for Academic Development ([link](#)). Additional training for the ethics community is provided through training at a University, College, School or discipline level, and includes presentations from external speakers, workshops, and use of bespoke resources. Training will draw on current national and international developments in research and will support participants to develop adequate expertise to assist applicants in new and emerging research areas.

Where additional expertise is required to support substantial specialist research activities, the University may facilitate the development of committees to advise on the ethical implementation of these research activities (e.g., Ethics and AI, Global research, Good Clinical Practice, Research with Animals).

For UGT and PGT students, proportionate and appropriate training in research ethical principles and procedures will be integrated at the programme level.

Multi-Institutional Projects

In cases where research involves collaboration with external lead organisations, then the ethical review requirements should be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine whether multiple institutional ethical review is required. These considerations should be informed by the need for efficiency in avoiding duplication of effort, the level of University of Edinburgh researcher involvement in the project, and also the credibility of the external partners' review processes in terms of independence, competence, facilitation, and transparency and accountability (as per above), including consideration of potential cultural sensitivities. REC processes may vary between Colleges, Schools, and Units, but it is recommended that University researchers with a substantive role in the research project apply to their local REC with a brief overview of the project, along with a copy of the application to and favourable opinion from the partner organisation. This minimum requirement may be sufficient, or the local REC may require further scrutiny to safeguard the ethical integrity of the research.

Beyond the ethics reviews undertaken at the University and/or other collaborating organisations, it should be noted that research conducted outside of the UK may require, and/or may benefit from, ethical review in the country it concerns. Researchers should make themselves familiar with such a need where appropriate, including requirements of specific funders.

Ethics and Governance

A favourable opinion following research ethics review is an important but insufficient requirement on its own to enable the research to proceed and meet the highest research integrity standards. Prior to starting the research, researchers must also ensure that institutional approval for all relevant governance procedures are obtained from the appropriate bodies. Such governance procedures may relate to sponsorship (for health- or social-care related research), insurance, health and safety risk assessment, travel risk assessment, study design and management, data management and data protection considerations, verification of funding, and verification of adequate resource availability (e.g., facilities, staff).

The ethics review process provides a forum through which some governance requirements can be signposted. In some RECs, members may be required to consider if governance requirements have been met (e.g., questions on data protection may be embedded in an ethics application form; data management plans may be attached).

DRAFT

Useful University of Edinburgh Links

[Equality, Diversity & Inclusion | The University of Edinburgh](#)

[Ethical Action in Global Research](#)

[Research Data Management Policy | The University of Edinburgh](#)

[Research misconduct | The University of Edinburgh](#)

[Social Responsibility and Sustainability | The University of Edinburgh](#)

[Strategy 2030](#)

[Whistleblowing policy | The University of Edinburgh](#)

Useful sector links:

[ARMA/ UKRI Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations](#)

[Code of Practice for Research - UK Research Integrity Office \(ukrio.org\)](#)

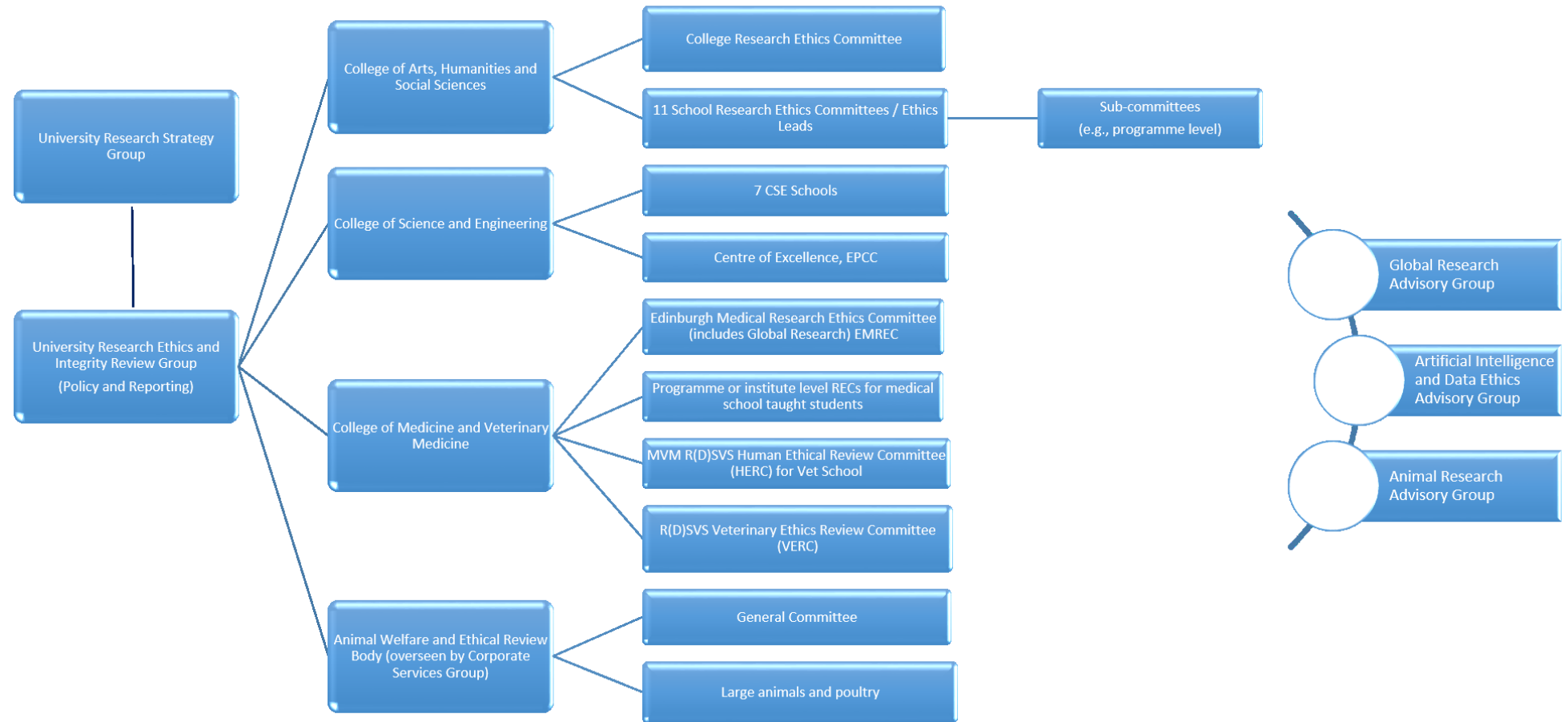
[Research Governance | NHS Research Scotland | NHS Research Scotland](#)

[Research integrity – UKRI](#)

[The concordat for research integrity \(universitiesuk.ac.uk\)](#)

[UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research - Health Research Authority \(hra.nhs.uk\)](#)

Figure 1: Overview of the committees with responsibility for the implementation of research ethics procedures and reviews at the University of Edinburgh, and current specialist advisory groups (February 2022) (Please check for individual Colleges – are there other levels that need to be added (as per CAHSS))



Senate Education Committee

10 March 2022

**Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR): Proposal to Introduce a New
'Additional Recognised Activity' and Broader HEAR Issues**

Description of paper

1. This paper invites Senate Education Committee (SEC) to discuss a proposal to add a new 'Additional Recognised Activity' to the HEAR and some broader issues relating to the HEAR.

Action requested / recommendation

2. SEC is asked to decide whether the proposed 'Additional Recognised Activity' should be added to the HEAR and to discuss the broader issues outlined in the 'Discussion' section of the paper.

Background and context

3. A proposal to add a new 'Additional Recognised Activity' to the HEAR – *Moray House Community Champion* – was taken to the January 2022 electronic meeting of SEC.
4. Whilst members broadly supported the proposal, it was felt that it raised some wider issues relating to the HEAR that warranted further discussion at the March 2022 meeting.

Discussion

5. SEC is asked to discuss the following wider issues relating to the HEAR:
 - Equity for PGR students who do not, at present, receive a HEAR (Appendix 1)
 - Whether the HEAR should be recording School-specific roles or only University-wide roles.
6. In light of this discussion, SEC is also asked to decide whether to approve the *Moray House Community Champion* role (Appendix 2 – paper originally taken to January 2022 electronic meeting of SEC) for addition to the HEAR and to discuss whether there would be benefit in all Schools adopting a similar *Community Champion* role.

Resource implications

7. None at this stage

Risk management

8. N/A

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

9. N/A

Equality & diversity

10. The concerns raised here relate to lack of equity for PGR students who do not currently receive a HEAR and potentially across Schools if some roles recognised on the HEAR are School-specific.

Author

Philippa Ward
3 March 2022

Presenter

Philippa Ward

Freedom of Information *Open*

Postgraduate Research Higher Education Achievement Record (PGR-HEAR)**Summary and Update on Progress****Description of paper**

A summary of the PG-HEAR and the current status of implementation since its proposal in December 2017.

Action requested / recommendation

Senate Education Committee is asked to note that there was strong support for the proposed introduction of a PG HEAR. This decision was conveyed to the Service Excellence Project but has stalled.

It is requested that Senate Education Committee supports and drives the implementation of the PGR HEAR.

Background and context

This paper provides a brief overview of the proposal made by the PG HEAR task group.

Discussion

The Personal and Professional Development Record Task Group presented a paper to the Researcher Experience Committee (REC) in December 2017 entitled "Recording PGR students' personal and professional development". This paper set out the case for a personal and professional development record for post-graduate students. The task group assessed the provision of equivalent documents within the sector, and mapped this against the desire for such a document amongst employers and students. Consideration was given to: the purpose of the document (summative or formative); the scope (including verification) of the information included; the administrative burden (on students, supervisors and administrative staff); and, appropriate platforms for hosting the document (with a view to future-proofing). The group recommended adoption of an achievement record for post-graduate research students, to be called a Post-Graduate Research Higher Education Achievement Record (PGR HEAR) for consistency with similar documents for undergraduate (UG HEAR) and Post-Graduate Taught (PGT HEAR) students. This document was conceived to be mainly summative but, by integration within the Thesis Committee/ Annual Review process, to provide a stimulus for formative planning. It was deemed essential that the information included in the PGR HEAR could be verified by the University of Edinburgh, that recording the information did not overburden administrators, and that an appropriate, future-proofed platform was used to host the information.

This original proposal fell under the University's Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme and aligned with the Strategic Objective of Leadership in Research and the REC priority of postgraduate research enhancement.

Action requested for this proposal

The task group recommended that REC set up a working group to take forward implementation of the PG HEAR. REC agreed that this proposal should be passed forward for prioritisation and implementation as part of the planned PGR lifecycle workstream within the Student Administration and Support strand of Service Excellence.

Task Group Members

Patrick Hadoke (Convenor)
Pippa Ward (Administrator)
Fiona Philippi (Head of Doctoral Education, IAD)
Gavin McCabe (Employability Consultant)
Tom Ward (Director of Academic Services)
Emily Gribbin (Head of Student Administration, School of Health in Social Science)
Konstantin Kamenev (Chair of Extreme Conditions Engineering, School of Engineering)
Gabriela Hajduk (PG Student Representative)
Katherine Geoghehan (PG Student Representative)

Update

Implementation of the PGR HEAR has stalled, with no progress following the completion of the paper in 2017. It is recommended that SEC reinvigorates the proposal and identifies a mechanism for prioritising and securing its implementation.

Resource implications

Implementation of the proposed PGR HEAR will have significant systems development implications, as well as potential ongoing resource implications both for Student Systems and Administration and for Schools.

Risk management

The original Task Group was strongly of the opinion that the University was at risk of falling behind good practice in the sector. The provision of PGT HEAR and UG HEAR indicates the desire for, and utility of, this type of record. Developments since 2017, with increasing diversity in PGR programmes and the availability of additional training/ experience has increased the desirability of a mechanism for documenting the entirety of PGR student experience.

Equality & diversity

Providing a record of the entirety of PGR students' experiences/ achievements whilst at Edinburgh is likely to benefit Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and public engagement.

Author

Patrick Hadoke

02/03/2022

Senate Education Committee

Electronic Business

13 – 20 January 2022

Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR): Proposal to Introduce a New 'Additional Recognised Activity'

Description of paper

1. This paper proposes adding a new, 'additional recognised activity' to section 6.1 of the HEAR: ***Moray House Community Champion***

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate Education Committee (SEC) is asked to approve the recommendation that the new activity is added to the HEAR.

Background and context

3. Section 6.1 of the HEAR records students' wider achievements whilst matriculated students. It records:
 - Additional awards (in Edinburgh's case, 'The Edinburgh Award')
 - Additional recognised activities
 - University, Students' Association and Sports Union prizes and awards

A list of the additional recognised activities that are currently recognised on the HEAR can be found at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/order-documents/transcripts/hear> (Please note that some updating of the website is required. This will be done in the near future.)

4. Proposals for new, additional recognised activities are initially considered by the HEAR Recommendation Panel. SEC is then asked to consider and, where appropriate, approve the recommendation made by the Recommendation Panel.

Discussion

5. The proposal form for the 'Moray House Community Champion' role and some additional background information are attached as appendices.
6. The Recommendation Panel agreed that the role is sufficiently substantial and valuable to justify recognising it as a standalone additional recognised activity under section 6.1 of the HEAR. **Senate Education Committee is asked to approve this recommendation.**

Resource implications

7. To be considered by Moray House School of Education and Sport (MHSES). Some development work by Student Systems will be required to add the new activity to the HEAR.

Risk management

8. To be considered by MHSES.

Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals

9. To be considered by MHSES.

Equality & diversity

10. To be considered by MHSES.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

11. If the proposal is approved, the School will advise affected students, and the new additional recognised activity will be added to list on the [HEAR webpage](#).

Author

Philippa Ward

7 January 2022

Freedom of Information

Open



HEAR: Proposal for Adding Categories of Achievement to Section 6.1 (or Amending Existing Categories)

Section 6.1 of the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) covers achievements by students that are not directly related to their degree result. These achievements must be verified by the University of Edinburgh.

This form should be completed if you wish to propose a new achievement or activity for inclusion in Section 6.1 (or to amend an existing achievement). The proposal will be considered by Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), which will ensure that the category adheres to the following principles:

All activity recognised in Section 6.1 of the HEAR should be undertaken **whilst a matriculated student**, and should fit under 1 of 3 headings:

1. **Additional Awards** – in Edinburgh’s case, the [‘Edinburgh Award’](#).
2. **Additional Recognised Activities** – including volunteering, leadership and representative roles, and other significant, verifiable roles. (See page 2 for details of the additional activities that are currently recognised.)
3. **University, Students’ Association and Sports Union Prizes and Awards** – both academic and non-academic.

In addition, all activity should be:

- **Substantial** – the activity has impact, encourages reflection, and provides opportunities for learning development and ‘stretch’. It is likely to involve a substantial time commitment.
- **Verifiable** – the activity can be verified and is endorsed by the University.
- **Equitable** – the activity is available on an equal basis to a clearly defined group of students, and should be available to students on an ongoing basis eg. in successive years.
- **Factual** – information included is factual and non-evaluative.
- **Additional** – the activity is not required as part of the academic, credit-bearing curriculum.



HEAR: Proposal for Adding Categories of Achievement to Section 6.1 (or Amending Existing Categories)

The following 'Additional Recognised Activities' are currently approved by the University of Edinburgh:

<p style="text-align: center;">Students' Association Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edinburgh University Students' Association Activities Position • Edinburgh University Students' Association Elected Office Bearer • Peer Support – PALS Student Leader and Peer Support Leader • Student Representative 	<p style="text-align: center;">University Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student member of University Internal Review team (TPR, PPR and Thematic Review) • Student Representative • History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA) Student Research Room Volunteer
<p style="text-align: center;">Sports Union Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edinburgh University Sports Union Representative or Office Bearer • Edinburgh University Sports Union Sports Club – Official Position 	<p style="text-align: center;">Roles Within Other University-Affiliated Bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Student Centre Committee Member • Edinburgh Nightline Committee Member • Edinburgh Students' Charities Appeal Executive Committee Member

Further information on the University of Edinburgh's approach to the HEAR is available here: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/other-info/hear>



HEAR: Proposal for Adding Categories of Achievement to Section 6.1 (or Amending Existing Categories)

1. What is the name of the proposed category of achievement?*

Moray House Community Champions

2. Please give a brief description of the category of achievement*

The Community Champions are a group of students at the core of Moray House in a position in which they can liaise with all groups within the school, staff and students, to facilitate communication, information dissemination, propose activities and create opportunities for community building. They are also an advertised contact for MHSES students and staff. The roles to be covered within this group are Well-being Champions, Diversity and Inclusion Champions, and Communication Champions, for a minimum of two students for each role. A group of staff mentors will be accessible to the Champions. This is a voluntary role.

3. Which students are eligible for this achievement?*

(For example, is it open to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, or restricted to a specific group?)

This achievement is open to all students of Moray House School of Education and Sport.



HEAR: Proposal for Adding Categories of Achievement to Section 6.1 (or Amending Existing Categories)

4. What does the student need to do to gain this achievement?*

(For example, if the achievement involves representation, is there a minimum number of meetings that must be attended or hours completed?)

The Champions meet around three times a month to plan activities. They are in contact with the Student Experience and Support Office to discuss their tasks and plans. Some of the tasks they are asked to dedicate their time to are: be present in social group across the school, liaise with representatives, disseminate information on events and opportunities, organise/contribute to the organisation of school events.

The minimum time commitment we would expect would be 4 hours per month, on average – some flexibility will be required given that the role involves engagement from students across UG, PGT and PGR so there will be varying availability at different times of the year for these cohorts.

5. Verification*

(Please describe **in detail** how the achievement will be verified.)

The Community Champions will respond directly to the Student Experience and Support Office (SESO).

A Teams channel will be set up for them to communicate and hold their meetings. A SESO Officer will monitor this group as well.

The Community Champions will take detailed minutes of their meetings including names of the students present, day and time, items discussed, actions steps. The minutes will be posted in the File section of their Teams channel.

They will have a monthly meeting with SESO to discuss developments.

At the end of the year, they will prepare an Annual Report to hand over to SESO and the Community Champions of the following year.

6. When will the verification be complete each academic year?*

The verification will be complete upon submission of the aforementioned Annual Report. SESO will sign off on this to confirm satisfactory completion.

HEAR: Proposal for Adding Categories of Achievement to Section 6.1 (or Amending Existing Categories)



7. Is there any other information you wish to supply in support of your application?

Moray House School of Education and support have invested in a Community Rep Intern role specifically for the purpose of creating a community group like this. This group is going to play a key role in the development of the student community in the School.

We envision this role as an ongoing one. This will largely depend on the success of the group in the first 2 years but we are looking for this to be a key role in the School for years to come.

CONTACT INFORMATION

8. Name of proposer*

Neale Summers

9. Email address of proposer*

nsummer1@ed.ac.uk

10. Proposing School / Department*

Moray House School of Education and Sport

11. Date*

24/09/21

Please return this form to the Secretary to Senate Learning and Teaching Committee
philippa.ward@ed.ac.uk (telephone 0131 651 6083)



HEAR: Proposal for Adding Categories of Achievement to Section 6.1 (or Amending Existing Categories)

Once received, the form will be passed to Student Systems who will ensure that the proposing School or Department holds appropriate, robust data in a suitable format for uploading to the Student Record.

Following vetting by Student Systems, the form will be passed to a Learning and Teaching Recommendation Panel for initial consideration and subsequently to Learning and Teaching Committee for final approval.

The Learning and Teaching Committee Recommendation Panel meets annually in late October / early November, and proposals are signed off by Learning and Teaching Committee at its November meeting. (This schedule allows Student Systems sufficient time to make required Systems changes and to ensure that any new or changed categories can be included in the HEARs of students graduating the following summer.)

ALL PROPOSAL FORMS SHOULD THEREFORE BE SUBMITTED TO THE SECRETARY TO LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE BY 15 OCTOBER EACH YEAR.

For Student Systems use only:

I confirm that the data that will be provided for this category of achievement is relevant, robust and available in a suitable format for upload to the Student Record.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Role: _____

Defining Community Champions

The Community Champions team would be at the core of the school in a position in which they can potentially liaise with all groups within the school, staff and students, to facilitate communication, information dissemination, propose activities and create opportunities for community building. They would also be an advertised contact for MHSES students and staff.

Benefits of becoming Community Champion for the students:

- **Skills:** in this leadership position students not only will make a difference for other students in the school, but also you will gain transferable skills, such as communication skills, creative thinking, leadership, and teamwork skills;
- **Experiences:** Community Champions will have the opportunity to work and closely collaborate with students of different levels of study and programmes as well as staff members with different expertise, gaining valuable insights and a deeper understanding of the university system;
- **Recognition:** the role of Community Champion is recognised as an extra-curricular activity and students will be able to provide evidence of their role.

Group structure and tasks

The role is open to all Moray House students. The Community Champions will be monitored by the Student Experience and Support Office which will provide guidance and support. A group of staff mentors who work in different areas (e.g. wellbeing, diversity, communication, etc.) will be accessible to the Champions, too.

SESO will provide the team with the initial general guidelines on the structure of the group and possible tasks; then the team will work independently in a similar way university societies work, meaning they could:

- work on a series of actions/events/activities,
- divide tasks
- work separately
- keep in touch (e.g. on a Teams channel)
- hold meetings every two weeks with news and updates
- have action steps
- take minutes of the meetings

They then would need to feedback to SESO once a month. The reasons behind the proposed frequency of the meetings are that firstly frequent meetings of the team will allow students to create a more cohesive group which would make it easier for them to get to know each other better and more easily follow up on tasks

While some initial guidelines are necessary, some flexibility may be beneficial to the group, too. Considering this would be a brand-new group, the Community Champions may propose some adjustments to the group structure (e.g. additional roles, more students needed, etc).

The group will include the following areas of interest:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Student Communication

The rationale for these roles is that they cover important subjects on the university agenda that ensure the school is inclusive and represents the diversity of the student population while promoting the group as a reference point and example that brings students together.

Senate Education Committee

10 March 2022

Learn Ultra Early Adopters and Accessibility

Description of paper

1. To update SEC on the progress of the Learn Ultra Upgrade project (previously tabled at the most recent ITC and KSC sessions), providing details on the Early Adopter programme.
2. The Strategy 2030 outlines that the University will offer an excellent student experience with improved digital outreach to enable global participation in Education along with offering the relevant tools to support in the delivery of these ambitions. The Digital Strategy has been developed with student experience being front and centre of the development of learning technology tools, digital skills, working practices and culture.

Action requested / recommendation

3. This paper is for information only with no actions being required from this group.

Background and context

4. Blackboard Learn is the core VLE, used to support all undergraduate teaching and most postgraduate teaching on campus and online. Each year, around 5000 courses are delivered on Blackboard Learn with up to 75, 000 daily logins.
5. As part of the Learn Ultra Upgrade project, the University continues to invest in the learning environment and the student experience through the VLE Excellence programme. This programme has laid the foundations for enhancing the Blackboard Learn VLE with a variety of successfully completed projects:
 - a. VLE Consolidation: Consolidation of multiple aging platforms into one VLE (2016 – 2019);
 - b. Learn to the Cloud: Moved VLE from self-hosting to cloud hosting (2019);
 - c. Learn Foundations: Improved accessibility and created a consistent approach in course structure for 22 Schools and Deaneries within UG courses (2018 – 2021).
6. The Learn VLE was last updated in 2011 meaning it has been perceived as being outdated when compared to modern web sites. In response to staff and student demands the next project within the VLE Excellence programme (Upgrade to Learn Ultra) sets out to address this concern by moving Learn to the most up to date version available – thus creating a more modern user experience for colleagues and students.
7. As part of the Learn Ultra Upgrade project, the project have launched an ‘Early Adopter’ programme (similar to the one undertaken by the University of Durham) where all Schools and Deaneries were invited.
8. The Early Adopter programme now has **100 courses** being submitted for consideration across 12 Schools and Deaneries.
9. The Early Adopter programme will run from February 2022 until the end of teaching AY 22/23. During this time, the project team will work closely with all Early Adopter teams within the Schools and Deaneries to understand any

challenges or constraints in preparation for the full roll out (currently scheduled: mid-2023).

Discussion

10. Blackboard Learn is front and centre for online learning and teaching with all UG and a significant proportion of the PG courses being taught from the platform.
11. As a result of the pandemic, usage of Blackboard Learn has increased with the dependency on this platform to support learning and teaching being enhanced.
12. With a return to on-campus teaching, it is expected that the dependency on Blackboard Learn will not revert back to pre-pandemic days and as such, it is expected that continuous improvement is required.

Resource implications

13. The PM from the Learn Foundations project has taken on responsibility for the Learn Ultra Upgrade project.
14. A project team from LTW has been put together to support the PM with the Learn Ultra Upgrade project.
15. Support has been provided by the Colleges to have Learning Technology support as part of the project team (0.2 FTE/week).
16. A governance structure is in the process of being created, included senior representatives from across the University who will have ownership and accountability for their represented areas.
17. Early in the project early adopters will do more work and be more engaged with the design of the system. After that, the work load for course leaders using Learn Ultra will be an **additional 2 hours of training to learn the new interface**. This training will be offered to schools at the appropriate time over the rolling 3 years of the project

This estimate is based on a number of assumptions:

- Course leaders already spend time at the start of each semester preparing the learning environment for their students, uploading documents and preparing online activities and this is part of their existing workload.
- Course leaders are confident users of Learn VLE already.
- Schools have already engaged with the accessibility, usability and consistency aspects of Learn Foundations.
- Curriculum Transformation programme will be factoring time into workloads for teachers to redesign courses where needed.
- Schools have local learning technology support in place.
- Budget is allocated to support training development and delivery.
- Budget is allocated to support student's workers in migrating content over the summer.

The lessons learned from the Learn Foundations project suggest a number of anticipated risks in terms of workload for course leaders:

- Higher workload (volume) will fall on school offices and learning technologists where course leaders delegate responsibility for preparing the learning environment for their students, uploading documents and preparing online activities.
- Higher workloads will fall on course leaders who are not currently confident users of Learn VLE or have not already engaged with the accessibility, usability and consistency aspects of Learn Foundations.
- If budget is not allocated for training to be developed and delivered centrally, each school will have to develop and deliver their own training.
- If budget is not allocated for student workers to migrate content, local learning technologists and course leaders will have to do this themselves.
- PG courses have not been part of Learn Foundations, so PG course leaders may be facing more change than UG teachers.
- 2 schools have not been part of Learn Foundations, so course leaders may be facing more change there.

Risk management

18. As almost all learning and teaching is facilitated via Blackboard Learn, there is a significant risk on both student and staff experience should updates to the VLE not be undertaken.
19. Learn is integrated with multiple major online systems and must be secure, robust, resilient, and rigorous. We must move to the next version.
20. Impact upon Curriculum Transformation should Blackboard Learn not be updated to the most up to date version.
21. There is the potential of a reputational risk for the University of not providing up to date technologies for teaching and ignoring staff and student feedback.
22. Online learning – risk of not having in place the technologies and platforms necessary for business continuity.
23. Risk of not supporting the University to reach its goals to widen participation, improve the student and staff experience and progress strategic projects focussed on reviewing the curriculum.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

24. UNSDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education lifelong learning opportunities for all

Equality & diversity

25. Use of the VLE supports the Accessible and Inclusive Learning policy. There are particular features of Learn Ultra which will enhance the student experience at University of Edinburgh:

- User profiles will have enhanced inclusivity features giving both students and staff the ability to:
 - Add pronouns to their profiles;
 - Clarify the pronunciation of your name by adding the phonetic spelling and recording name pronunciation direct in the platform.
- Improved Ultra Navigation for all users when accessing Learn. Ultra navigation enhances the navigation for new course activity including ability to access grades, feedback, submission deadlines at programme level without the user needing to access a course.
- Enhanced accessibility with Learn Ultra being built with Universal Design in mind.
- A more modern, intuitive and usable VLE that meets student expectations of an “up to date” website and that allows for courses to be created and delivered more easily with more user-friendly content features.
- Responsive web design, with an interface that works well on all types of device and screen sizes.
- Access to Blackboard’s “File Transformer”, which allows users to upload a course file and download it in an alternative format. This will be easily accessible from the main Ultra navigation page.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

26. No action required due to the nature of the paper being ‘for information only’.

Author

*Lee-Ann Simpson, Project Manager, ISG
March 2022*

Presenter

*Melissa Highton, Director of Learning,
Teaching and Web Services*

Freedom of Information ‘Open’