

**Minutes of the Meeting of Senate Education Committee
held at 3pm on Wednesday 11 March 2020
in the Liberton Tower Room, Murchison House, Kings Buildings**

1. Attendance

Present	Position
Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (Deputy Convener) – Ex Officio
Sabine Rolle	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Lisa Kendall	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Judy Hardy	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Michael Seery	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)
Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, PGT)
Neil Turner	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, UG)
Steph Vallancey	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice-President Education – Ex Officio
Stuart Lamont	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Permanent Staff Member – Ex Officio
Iain Gordon	Head of School, CSE
Richard Andrews	Head of School, CAHSS
Mike Shipston	Head of Deanery, CMVM
Sue MacGregor	Director of Academic Services – Ex Officio
Velda McCune	Representing Director of Institute for Academic Development – Ex Officio
Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions – Ex Officio
Shelagh Green	Director for Careers & Employability – Ex Officio
Paula Webster	Head of Student Data and Surveys (Student Systems), co-opted representative for Student Systems.
Apologies	
Colm Harmon	Vice-Principal Students (Convener) – Ex Officio
Fabio Battaglia	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)
Stephen Bowd	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)
Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)
Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services – Ex Officio
Sian Bayne	Co-option – Digital Education
Philippa Ward	Academic Services (Secretary)
In Attendance	
Brian Connolly	Academic Services (Secretary)
Fiona Philippi	Institute for Academic Development
Rena Gertz	Data Protection Officer

The Convenor welcomed Stuart Lamont, new Edinburgh University Students' Association Permanent Staff Member (Ex Officio), and Rena Gertz, Data Protection Officer attending for agenda item 5.3.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2019.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Future Direction for the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy (*LTC 9 October 2019, agenda item 5.3*)

Action: Convener to meet with Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of IS and CAHSS Dean for Undergraduate Studies to discuss the development of a revised statement of the University's intentions around learning and teaching.

The Convenor noted that the meeting would be held in advance of the next meeting of Education Committee.

4. For Discussion

4.1 Student Satisfaction Surveys

4.1.1 Effect of Alumni on Levels of Satisfaction in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

The Committee considered an analysis of the relative levels of satisfaction of University of Edinburgh alumni and students who are alumni of other institutions in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).

It was noted that University of Edinburgh alumni were less satisfied than their peers in PTES 2019 however this difference was not statistically significant. It was also noted that being an alumnus did not appear to be a good predictor of satisfaction.

4.1.2 Effect of School Size on Student Satisfaction

The Committee considered an analysis of the relationship between School size and student satisfaction at the University of Edinburgh.

It was noted that whilst there was a negative correlation between overall satisfaction and the number of first degree students ($r = -0.595$) only weak negative correlations could be found between satisfaction with teaching and learning and assessment and feedback and first degree numbers. There was no evidence of a relationship between postgraduate taught (PGT) student numbers and student satisfaction in PTES. However, there was a negative correlation between satisfaction with supervision in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and postgraduate research (PGR) student numbers ($r = -0.470$). Only weak correlations were found between overall satisfaction and satisfaction with assessment and feedback and PGR student numbers.

Action: Head of Student Data and Surveys to analyse student satisfaction data (across the University and sector peers) to determine optimal cohort size.

4.2 Use of Coursework / Dissertations as Examples

The Committee discussed the use of coursework or dissertations as exemplars and the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The following approaches to ensure lawful use of coursework or dissertations were considered:

The Committee considered the use of a privacy notice to inform students that their work may be anonymised by course coordinators and used as an exemplar. It was noted that anonymization might not always be possible in highly specialised areas, depending on the topic. Also, if the authors remained in academia and built on the work of their dissertations, it may be fairly easy for any future student to identify them.

The Committee considered the alternative option of informing students of the potential use of their work with the application of one of two lawful bases: student consent or 'legitimate interest'.

Student consent could be sought at the point of submission. It was noted that technological issues prevented a consent request at the point of submission in the 'own work declaration' (OWD) page of Learn as the form does not allow students to state 'yes' to the OWD but refuse consent for the use of their work. It was also noted that while some Schools used a more interactive form which made an opt-in/opt-out question theoretically possible, the adaptive release used to hide the drop-down box until the OWD was completed may not always work and retrieving the consent data may be difficult.

The University could make a blanket assessment of 'legitimate interest' in the potential use of student work while also providing students with an opt-out at any time. Members agreed that this would be the simplest approach but noted concerns as to the validity of this type of consent particularly in regard to the specific uses of each piece of work and the legitimacy of any consent given.

The Committee discussed the option of seeking consent at the start of each year at the point of matriculation. Handbooks could be used to explain why consent was requested, how the system would be managed, and how each student could withdraw consent. It was noted that the success of the system would depend on how changes to consent were managed and communicated to staff, particularly course coordinators. It was also noted that consideration needed to be given to how consent was managed once students had left the University.

Action: Data Protection Officer and Head of Student Data and Surveys to explore operational options for opt-in consent, including when and at what level to seek consent, and how to manage the process.

The Committee agreed that the consent form must be clear on how long exemplars could be in use and how students can withdraw their consent.

Action: Convenor and Students' Association Vice-President Education to liaise with Data Protection Officer to design opt-in consent form.

4.3 Standalone Courses

The Committee discussed the growth of credit bearing standalone courses, particularly for continuing professional development (CPD).

The Committee broadly welcomed the development of standalone courses noting the flexibility and scope they allowed in many disciplines to cultivate new and innovative provision. Credit bearing courses would provide an opportunity to recognise a diverse range of work and should be aligned with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

It was agreed that academic governance arrangements, quality assurance frameworks, and associated systems should be aligned to support an increase in such provision in a consistent, robust and systemic way. It was noted that the strategic case for these courses would vary across disciplines and therefore the wider institutional appetite to resource and support these courses needed to be explored in more detail.

Action: Academic Services to establish a small task group to consider options and report back to Committee.

4.4 Assessment and Feedback

The Committee discussed aspects of assessment and feedback identified as a University-level area for further development by Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) through annual and periodic review.

It was noted that some Schools had requested that the 15 day feedback turnaround deadline be reconsidered in light of student feedback and challenges staff had in meeting this blanket deadline for different cohort sizes and types of assessments.

Recommendations from internal reviews focussed on the quality of feedback and implementing assessment and feedback policy on formative assessment, feedback turnaround times, and scaling of marks. It was noted that the widely held student perception of the deadline was of a two week turnaround period as opposed to the University expectation of 15 working days or a three week turnaround deadline.

The Committee agreed that the 15 day feedback turnaround deadline should not be reconsidered in isolation from the impending curriculum review.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer issue to Vice-Principal Students for consideration as part of the Curriculum Review.

4.5 Evaluating Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF)

The Committee considered an evaluation of the LEAF process including a summary of findings from the LEAF project which ran between 2013 and 2019.

The following key findings were noted:

1. Programme structure: high degrees of choice within degree programmes made it difficult to plan programme-level learning and teaching.
2. Workload: summative grades can be prioritised by students and result in lacklustre tutorial participation and students feeling overwhelmed.
3. Assessment expectations: it may take students time to understand disciplinary conventions, and without careful management these misunderstandings can persist throughout the degree programme.
4. Assessment: participants found exams stressful and believed they did not represent the breadth of students' learning well. Coursework was preferred, but it was noted that clashing deadlines or unrealistic workloads could also be a source of stress.
5. Feedback: students preferred embedded ways of receiving face-to-face feedback such as through small group teaching, to all other methods of feedback (face-to-face, audio/video, and written).
6. Sense of belonging and agency: positive experiences of assessment and feedback were supported by a disciplinary context in which dialogue was encouraged. Participants reported satisfaction where they felt valued and included by staff, understood what was expected of them, and were more likely to be engaged in disciplinary dialogue.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer key findings and recommendations of the LEAF process to Vice-Principal Students for consideration as part of the Curriculum Review.

4.6 Update on Doctoral College and Meetings of the Postgraduate Research Steering Group

The Committee noted the progress of the Steering Group and the proposed work strands on scholarships, fees, and tutors and demonstrators.

4.7 Evaluating the Revised Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students

The Committee noted an evaluation of the effectiveness of communication of the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students (Code of Practice) and revised content published in 2018.

4.8 Education Committee Planning

The Committee noted progress with the agreed priorities for Education Committee and Researcher Experience Committee (REC), whose business has been taken forward by Education Committee following the dissolution of REC.

The Committee noted the membership, remit and annual schedule of meetings of the Senate Committees' Conveners' Forum, which has been established to better coordinate the work of Senate and its Standing Committees.

The Committee agreed the following initial list of priorities for 2020-21:

1. Curriculum Review
2. Doctoral College
3. Scholarships

4. Explore how the University can utilize the staff time freed-up by ending of the Personal Tutor (PT) system
5. Strengthen links with Space Strategy Group

5. For Information

The Committee noted the following reports for information:

5.1 Update on the Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching

5.2 Space Strategy Group Report

5.3 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2020

5.4 Report from Meetings of Knowledge Strategy Committee – 11 October 2019 & 24 January 2020

6. Electronic Business Conducted Between Meetings

The Committee homologated the following:

6.1 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2020 Institutional Questions

7. Any other business

There was no other business.