

Minutes of the Meeting of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee  
(LTC) held at 2pm on Wednesday 15 March 2017  
in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House

**1. Attendance**

**Present:**

Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley	Assistant Principal (Research-Led Learning)
Mr Patrick Garratt	Vice President (Academic Affairs), Edinburgh University Students' Association (ex officio)
Ms Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (ex officio)
Ms Shelagh Green	Director, Careers Service (co-opted member)
Professor Judy Hardy	Director of Teaching, School of Physics and Astronomy, CSE
Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)
Dr Elaine Haycock-Stuart	Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Health in Social Science (co-opted member)
Professor Peter Higgins	Representative of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Professor Charlie Jeffery (Convener)	Senior Vice-Principal
Ms Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Academic Engagement Co-ordinator (ex officio)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Senior Lecturer, School of Mathematics, CSE (co-opted member)
Professor Anna Meredith	Director for Postgraduate Taught, CMVM
Professor Neil Mulholland	Dean of Postgraduate Studies (CAHSS)
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching, CSE
Professor Neil Turner	Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, CMVM
Mrs Philippa Ward (Secretary)	Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	University Secretary's Nominee, Director of Academic Services (ex officio)

**Apologies:**

Professor Sian Bayne	Director of Centre for Research in Digital Education (co-opted member)
Ms Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division (ex officio)
Mr John Lowrey	Dean of Undergraduate Studies (CAHSS)
Ms Nichola Kett	Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services
Dr Velda McCune	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's nominee) (ex officio)

**In attendance:**

Ms Angela Laurins	Library Learning Services Manager
Professor Susan Rhind	Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback
Ms Theresa Sheppard	Academic Services
Mr Jeremy Upton	Director of Library and University Collections

## **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2017 were approved.

## **3. Matters Arising**

### **3.1 University Learning and Teaching Strategy**

The Strategy had been published and an event to mark its launch would be held after the LTC meeting. Members noted that the next step for the Committee would be to develop an implementation plan for the Strategy.

### **3.2 Reporting Arrangements for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) Advisory Group**

It was reported that the MOOCs Advisory Group would aim to report annually to the January meeting of LTC.

### **3.3 PTES 2017: Institutional Questions and Start Date**

The Committee was reminded that concerns had been raised at the previous meeting about the number of Library-related questions in the PTES 2017 question set. This had been discussed with the Student Surveys Unit and the Head of Library Academic Support, who had proposed that the questions should remain for 2017 but be reviewed for 2018. LTC had approved the question set and start date by correspondence of 14 February 2017.

## **For Discussion**

### **4. Task Group to Review the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators**

The paper was presented by Miss Theresa Sheppard, Academic Services, who was providing administrative support for the Researcher Experience Committee (REC) Task Group that was reviewing the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators. It was noted that the Group had met during Semester 1 2016/17 and had produced a new draft of the Code of Practice to which Schools and Colleges had been invited to make a formal response. LTC's views on the draft, and on the proposal that the document be re-framed as a Policy with the aim of it being implemented more consistently, were being sought.

The following was discussed:

- It was agreed that the document was clear and covered all of the key issues, although there may be benefit in gathering together within the document all information relating to PGR students who are tutors and demonstrators.
- Members were supportive of the proposal that the document be re-framed as a Policy.
- Consistency of implementation was the key priority. Members discussed the potential benefit for Schools of making clearer within the document that which was mandatory and that which was guidance.
- Members recognised the value of the general training for tutors and demonstrators provided by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to complement School-specific training and orientation.

The Committee also made the following specific comments regarding the draft:

- 2.1 – there would be benefit in clarifying the terms of employment for those students for whom tutoring or demonstrating was an expectation under the terms of their scholarship.
- 2.4 – more consistency around what tutors and demonstrators were and were not remunerated for was deemed essential.

- 2.7 – it was agreed that additional information should be included about the circumstances under which a principal supervisor might withhold permission for a postgraduate research student to undertake tutoring and demonstrating activities.
- 2.8 - it was agreed that more consistency around the maximum number of hours that tutors and demonstrators were permitted to work, whether or not they were on Tier 4 visas, was essential. While the Committee did not form a view on the appropriate maximum period, Edinburgh University Students' Association representatives indicated that they supported a higher limit than 6 hours per week.
- 5.2 – LTC supported the view that tutoring and demonstrating should be permitted at all taught levels, including taught Masters dissertation. However, the appointment process needed to be sufficiently rigorous to ensure that they were adequately qualified for the required level.
- 6.2 – the Committee was broadly supportive of the concept of providing mentoring for tutors and demonstrators, recognising that this was important both for the tutor's development and because of the significant impact the quality of tutoring and demonstrating could have on the undergraduate student experience. However, there would be considerable resourcing challenges around implementing a mentoring system, and these would require careful consideration.

## 5. Senate Committee Planning 2017/18

The Director of Academic Services introduced the paper and invited LTC to discuss priorities for the coming academic session. It was noted that steps were being taken to integrate the Senate Committees within the University's planning process more effectively, and that, going forwards, it would be important to be clear about the way in which any priorities identified related to the new Learning and Teaching Strategy.

The Colleges outlined the key learning and teaching priorities for their Schools. These included redesigning the curriculum, assessment (reviewing both the volume and nature of assessment) and feedback on assessment. However, the key concern for all three Colleges was growing student numbers and consequent pressures on suitable teaching accommodation. LTC's view was that there had been underinvestment in the teaching estate over a number of years, impacting on both the student and the staff experience. The Committee strongly endorsed the Senior Vice-Principal highlighting the importance of investment in the teaching estate during forthcoming Planning Round discussions.

Members discussed the potential to make better use of the existing teaching estate by looking again at timetabling and assessment methods. It was agreed that the Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback would consider the feasibility of establishing a workstream to look at assessment methods and the value of examinations. The potential for this work to feed into the 'Portfolio' strand of the Student Recruitment Strategy implementation work was noted.

It was also agreed that the Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services would be asked to provide details of proposed learning technology developments for 2017/18.

The Committee did not identify any other priorities for 2017-18 beyond those already set out in the paper.

### **Actions:**

1. Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback to consider the feasibility of establishing a workstream to consider assessment methods and the value of examinations.
2. Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division to provide LTC with a report of proposed learning technology developments for 2017/18.

## 6. Feedback Quality Monitoring

LTC agreed that it was essential for Schools to be monitoring feedback locally and to be transparent about the way in which this was being done. It was noted that to date only 11 Schools had responded to a request to provide a brief update on plans for monitoring feedback turnaround times.

It was recognised that Course Evaluation Questionnaires (CEQs) would only be of value if participation rates were sufficiently high. Steps were being taken to increase Semester 2 participation.

Members discussed the existing 60% satisfaction target for the CEQ question '*Feedback so far has been helpful and informative*' and suggested that, since average satisfaction is more than 70%, Schools should focus their attention on courses with feedback satisfaction of less than 70% (rather than 60%).

The Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance) would consider whether there was potential for Schools to report on feedback and turnaround times via the Programme Monitoring Form.

### **Action:**

- 1) Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback to ask the remaining Schools to provide updates on their plans for monitoring feedback turnaround times.
- 2) Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback to consider asking Heads of Schools to focus their monitoring of feedback quality on those courses with satisfaction scores of less than 70%.
- 3) Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance) to consider whether there is potential for Schools to report on feedback and turnaround times via the Programme Monitoring Form.

## 7. Resource List Service: Service Delivery and Policy

The paper was presented by the Director of Library and University Collections and the Library Learning Services Manager. The Committee was advised that providing all students with resource lists in a standard, accessible format would improve the student experience, make it easier for academic staff to manage the provision of course materials, give the Library greater visibility of the materials required to support learning and teaching, and reduce costs. Good progress had been made in this area, but further support was needed if the Resource List Service was going to be developed further.

In general, LTC was very supportive of the Service, and was keen to see increased uptake by Schools. However, it recognised that since the Service was at an early stage, the focus should be on awareness raising and encouraging staff to utilise the Service, rather than on developing a University-level policy on resource lists.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- It noted that the Resource List Service supported the implementation of the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy (AILP).
- Resource lists were used more widely in some Schools than in others.
- It was good academic practice to ensure that a resource was available before adding it to a course resource list.
- There would be value in reminding Schools about the existence of the Service during the Course Rollover period.

- Awareness of the Service could also continue to be raised through the Teaching Matters website.
- There had been excellent uptake in the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, primarily because of the School's very proactive librarian who was a member of the School Learning and Teaching Committee and had promoted the Service.
- Academic staff were concerned about the amount of time involved in setting up resource lists using the Service, and there would therefore be benefit in the Library being clearer in its communications about the high level of support it could offer.
- LTC recognised that there was a lack of clarity over the resources the University would provide, and those that students were expected to provide. It endorsed the Library's proposal that Schools be asked to provide much clearer information about who was responsible for providing specific resources.

## For Approval

### 8. Report of Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Recommendation Panel

The paper would follow and would be considered by correspondence.

**Action:**

Secretary to circulate the paper for consideration by correspondence.

## For Information

### 9. Student Recruitment Strategy: Update on Portfolio Development, Innovation and Review

Members were reminded that the University's Student Recruitment Strategy had been approved by Court in June 2016. Implementation of the Strategy was now underway, and wherever possible, this was being achieved through existing University groups.

In relation to the implementation of the 'Portfolio Development, Innovation and Review' strand of the Strategy, two key areas had been identified, one more visionary and the other, more operational. The more visionary area aimed to articulate what we understand as the Edinburgh degree experience and how we make the Learning and Teaching Strategy a lived experience for students. As such, it was considering the value of University-wide courses, research-led learning, SLICCs and similar initiatives, how these fit with the curriculum, and how they make the Edinburgh experience unique. Ways in which Edinburgh might be bolder in its offer and take full advantage of its four year undergraduate degree programmes were being considered. Further discussion on this topic would take place at the Senate Committees' Away Day.

The more operational area related to the assessment of the academic credentials of and business case for new degree programmes. LTC agreed that it was essential to have effective methods in place to assess new programmes in the early stages, and to be prepared to discontinue programmes if necessary. It would be possible to gather best practice in this area from those Colleges that already had well-established processes in place for reviewing business cases for new programmes, and the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences' PGT Sustainability Review had developed a simple rubric for examining PGT programme costs. Members noted the importance of:

- assessing viability not only at programme level, but also at constituent course level;
- measuring success not only the basis of short-term uptake, but taking a broader view (for example, a programme may also be successful from a career destination point of view).

The Committee strongly supported the work that was being undertaken, noting that it related to sector-wide discussions about the value of the four year degree programme and the development of a subject-level Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

#### **10. Arrangements for Consulting with Stakeholders on Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Matters**

Members were advised that the paper provided some key principles and standard practices that Senate and the Senate Committees should adopt when consulting with Schools, Colleges and stakeholders. These had been approved by Central Management Group (CMG) at its meeting on 1 March 2017.

The Committee noted in particular that, where individuals had been appointed to committees or task groups to represent Colleges or Schools, it was important that they were able to represent the views of their constituencies and to have authority to make decisions on their behalf. It also recognised the importance of obtaining the views of Heads of Schools and Colleges when significant issues were being discussed.

Members agreed that there would be benefit in all proposal projects or initiatives outlining the planned approach to consultation in the proposal documentation. The importance of giving careful consideration to the format of consultation documents with a view to engaging the reader was also discussed.

#### **11. Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee Meeting held on 20 January 2017**

LTC noted the report.

#### **12. Report from Learning and Teaching Policy Group**

Members noted the report. In relation to the seventh bullet point, the Committee was advised that the handling and use of data regarding staffing would be considered at the next meeting of Academic Strategy Group.

#### **13. Groups Reporting to Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, March 2017**

The report was noted. Members were advised that the key changes were the addition of the Student Mental Health Implementation Group (agreed in May 2016) and the Student Disability Committee (agreed in March 2017). Oversight of Enhancement Themes would move to Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). It was noted that it would be important to establish arrangements for reporting to LTC on relevant elements of the Student Recruitment Strategy.

**Action:**

Director of Academic Services to discuss arrangements for reporting to LTC regarding relevant elements of the Student Recruitment Strategy.

#### **14. Enhancement Themes Update**

Members welcomed the 'Transitions Map' tabled which contained a summary of the University's work on the current Enhancement Theme, including plans for ensuring a legacy from the work.

The Committee was also advised that the 'Gearing Up for Transitions' conference had taken place the previous week and had proved extremely successful. Resources from the event were available on the 'Gearing Up 2017' website. It was hoped that resources could be made available to continue running a similar conference (potentially on broader learning and teaching topics) on an annual basis.

## **15. Any Other Business**

The Assistant Principal (Research-Led Learning) provided members with an update on the first meeting of the University-Wide Courses Task Group. LTC expressed strong support for the work.