

The University of Edinburgh

**Senate Education Committee  
Wednesday 15 September 2021, 2.00pm**

**A G E N D A**

- 1. Welcome and Apologies**
- 2. Minutes of Meeting held on 12 May 2021** SEC 21/22 1 A
- 3. Matters Arising from Meeting held on 12 May 2021**
  - 3.1 University's Involvement in the Delivery of Microcredentials Verbal update
- 4. Electronic Business Conducted Since 12 May 2021 Meeting**
  - 4.1 Student Mental Health Strategy 2021-2026 SEC 20/21  
e-Business  
1 July 2021
- 5. Convener's Communications**
  - 5.1 Update on Planning for Semester 2 2021/22 Verbal update
- 6. For Discussion**
  - 6.1 Exam Diets 2021/22 – Practical Implementation:
    - 6.1.1 December Exam Diet 2021/22 SEC 21/22 1 B
    - 6.1.2 Summer Exam Diet 2021/22 Preliminary  
discussion
  - 6.2 University of Edinburgh Students' Association Vice President Education Priorities 2021/22 SEC 21/22 1 C
  - 6.3 Proposal to Establish a Student Voice Sub-Committee SEC 21/22 1 D
  - 6.4 Edinburgh Futures Institute Postgraduate Taught Programmes: Policy on Duration of Study for Lifelong Learning Students SEC 21/22 1 E
  - 6.5 Open Educational Resources Policy Review SEC 21/22 1 F
  - 6.6 Review of Senate Committees' Effectiveness SEC 21/22 1 G

## **7. Standing Items**

### **7.1 Curriculum Transformation**

- 7.1.1 Curriculum Transformation Programme Update SEC 21/22 1 H
- 7.1.2 Curriculum Transformation Board - Terms of Reference SEC 21/22 1 I
- 7.1.3 Curriculum Transformation Board – Governance Links and Reporting Timeline SEC 21/22 1 J

### **7.2 Student Experience**

- 7.2.1 Student Survey Results 2021 SEC 21/22 1 K
- 7.2.2 National Student Survey Results SEC 21/22 1 L  
CLOSED
- 7.2.3 Enhancement-led Institutional Review Response Action Plan SEC 21/22 1 M

### **7.3 Doctoral College**

- 7.3.1 Postgraduate Research Admissions Working Group Report SEC 21/22 1 N

## **8. For Information**

- 8.1 Student Partnership Agreement 2021-22 SEC 21/22 1 O
- 8.2 Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy – Update on Review Verbal update
- 8.3 Committee Guidance and Review:
  - 8.3.1 Terms of Reference SEC 21/22 1 P
  - 8.3.2 Membership 2021/22 SEC 21/22 1 Q
  - 8.3.3 Senate Committees’ Members’ Guidance SEC 21/22 1 R
  - 8.3.4 Annual Report of Senate Standing Committees to Senate (2 June 2021) S 20/21 3 B
  - 8.3.5 Task Groups - Support for Curriculum Development Group SEC 21/22 1 S

## **9. Any Other Business**

**Senate Education Committee**

**15 September 2021**

**Curriculum Transformation Programme Update**

**Description of paper**

1. A summary of the Curriculum Transformation Programme progress since February 2021 including an update on engagement activity since launching in April.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate Education Committee is asked to note the information presented. No specific action is required although members' observations, or comment, on any of the items would be welcome.

**Background and context**

3. The primary focus of the Curriculum Transformation Programme led by the Vice-Principal Students since it was brought into formal governance in February 2021 has been the establishment of the Programme Board, aligned Work-streams and preparations for the successful launch in April 2021. This paper provides a summary of progress since a verbal update was received by Senate Education Committee in May from the Vice-Principal Students.

**Discussion**

4. The Curriculum Transformation Programme went live to all University staff on Wednesday 21st April with the launch of the Curriculum Transformation Hub, communicated in an email from Professor Colm Harmon. From the inception of the Programme there has been a strong commitment to institutional engagement, inclusion, transparency and collaboration and the Hub has already become a central tool helping to achieve this. There have been 1,915 unique viewers since launch, and 33,663 site visits to the Curriculum Hub since launch.
5. The Hub launched with six briefing papers supported by videos from the authors and individual padlets to allow our communities to feedback and let us know their thoughts. In May two new papers went live, Learning about Curriculum Transformation Processes from Institutions Internationally and Insights and Learning from 2020-21. The Wellbeing in the Curriculum paper is the most recent to have gone live. All papers to date have been received well. An in-depth interview with the Principal Peter Mathieson and Vice Principal (Students) Colm Harmon responding to the questions of why curriculum transformation and why now was uploaded to the Hub in August.
6. In addition to the establishment of the Curriculum Transformation Programme Board, there has been solid progress in forming the structure(s) which will be used to drive the work forward and provide the necessary support to the Board. The Programme has divided activity into two elements:-

**Core work:** Programme Leadership and Management; Engagement and Communications Strategy; Commissioned work which supports the achievement of overall Programme objectives

**Workstreams:** Lead by Programme Board members these task and delivery activities support thinking and development of activity which both contributes to the Edinburgh Graduate vision and the Edinburgh Curriculum vision also with license for broader scope / blue sky thinking.

The Programme currently has two critical milestones and decision points across the next 18 months and timelines will be reviewed by the Curriculum Transformation Board at the end of September:

- The definition of the Edinburgh Graduate
- The definition of the Edinburgh Curriculum

Revised timelines will be conveyed to Senate Education Committee members in due course.

7. An early priority for the Curriculum Transformation Programme is to develop a shared institutional vision for the Edinburgh Graduate. The purpose of this vision will be to describe the skills, values, knowledge and experiences we aspire to for our students. This will be a key reference point as we identify the characteristics and elements of the future Edinburgh Curriculum. The Edinburgh Graduate [\[https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/CurriculumTransformation/SitePages/Edinburgh-Graduate.aspx\]](https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/CurriculumTransformation/SitePages/Edinburgh-Graduate.aspx) section of the hub provides an overview of the approach we will take to develop and refine the Edinburgh Graduate Vision. An initial exploration phase began in August and will run into semester 1 of the new academic year. Senate Education Committee will receive the recommendations from this exploration phase late 2021/early 2022.
8. The initial set of Curriculum Transformation workstreams and groups have been set up and have met for the first time. This includes the Future Skills, External Engagement and Digital Education workstreams and Assessment & Feedback and Portfolio Review groups. Their immediate priority, particularly future skills and external engagement, will be to contribute to the development of the Edinburgh Graduate Vision. They also have a role in preparing for work that will begin during academic year 2021/22 looking at our curriculum design principles and the development of an Edinburgh Curriculum Vision.

### **Resource implications**

9. None as a result of this paper

### **Risk management**

10. There are no specific risk implications associated with this paper

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

11. The Curriculum Transformation Programme is actively exploring the concept of sustainability in the context of the Programme and will provide an update to Senate in due course.

**Equality & diversity**

12. The Curriculum Transformation Programme is actively exploring Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the context of the Programme and will provide an update to Senate in due course

**Author**

Amanda Percy  
06/09/2021

**Presenter**

Colm Harmon

**Freedom of Information** - This paper is Open.

**Senate Education Committee**

**15 September 2021**

**Curriculum Transformation Board - Terms of Reference**

**Purpose**

To provide strategic oversight to the curriculum transformation programme of work and its constituent projects and work-streams and the dependencies between these; and between these and the other relevant initiatives within the University.

Maintain oversight of the curriculum transformation and the key recommendations that this Board will make to the University Executive and Senate Education Committee.

To make key decisions on the scope of work undertaken; resource prioritisation; any significant change requests; manage escalated risks and issues; benefits realisation; and maintain oversight of key decisions made.

**Scope**

The scope of the Curriculum Transformation Programme includes:

- Undergraduate and taught postgraduate curriculum and assessment, including the micro credentials and skill development agenda
- The model of delivery of student support, including the recommendations of the personal tutor and student support review, and administration that underpins the revised curriculum, including programme and course information management systems.
- International (including Trans National Education)
- The marketing, recruitment and admissions implications of proposed changes.
- This spans across colleges, schools and professional service groups.

Number of cross cutting, underpinning themes: Student Experience, Widening Participation, Sustainability, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Digital Education

**Key responsibilities**

- a. Responsible for the recommendations on the outcomes of curriculum transformation programme of work to the Senior Leadership Team, University Executive and Senate Education Committee.
- b. Responsible for providing strategic oversight of the curriculum transformation programme and its constituent parts and the dependencies between these; and between these and other relevant initiatives within the University. Ensure alignment to Strategy 2030.
- c. Responsible for developing and implementing strategies to ensure effective engagement and communication across the University and for standing up and closing down the working groups required to deliver the programme of work.
- d. Approve the prioritised activities within the agreed scope of the curriculum transformation; resource prioritisation; any significant change requests; manage escalated risks and issues; benefits realisation; and maintain oversight of key decisions made.
- e. Responsibility for the development of effective implementation plans once decisions have been made and in partnership with colleges, schools and professional service groups set out plans to effectively implement and deliver the programme outcomes and benefits.
- f. Act as advocates for curriculum transformation and the benefits that will be realised by the programme and help ensure effective implementation.

- g. Reporting into and escalation to Senior Leadership Team, University Executive and Senate Education Committee.
- h. Periodic revision of programme objectives, scope, terms of reference and engagement with Internal Audit.

### Curriculum Transformation Board

#### Membership

Colm Harmon	Vice-Principal Students (Sponsor)
Barry Neilson	Director of Strategic Change
Ellen MacRae	EUSA President
Fizzy Abou Jawad	EUSA VP Education
Conchur O'Bradaigh	Head of School - Engineering
Iain Gordon	Head of School - Mathematics
Holly Brannigan	Head of School – Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
Juan Cruz	Principal of Edinburgh College of Art
Richard Andrews	Head of School – Moray House School of Education and Sport
Mike Shipston	Dean of Biomedical Sciences
Susan Rhind	Chair of Veterinary Education
Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal – Academic Standards & Quality Assurance
Sian Bayne	Assistant Principal – Digital Education Director of Education EFI
Lesley McAra	Director of the Edinburgh Futures Institute
Sarah Cunningham-Burley	University Lead on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Sandy Tudhope	University Lead on Climate Responsibility and Sustainability
James Smith	Vice-Principal International
Gavin Douglas	Deputy Secretary, Student Experience
Jon Turner	Director, Institute for Academic Development
Gavin McLachlan	CIO and University Librarian
Chris Cox	Vice Principal (Philanthropy and Advancement) Development and Alumni
Lisa Kendall	Director of Academic and Student Administration CAHSS
Niall Bradley	Deputy Director Marketing
Alan McKay	Deputy VP International & Director, International Office
Jarmo Eskelinen	Executive Director, The City Region Deal
Amanda Percy	Programme Manager, Curriculum Transformation

We anticipate that the Board membership may need to change as we move through different stages of the programme – for instance the inclusion of Human Resources, Finance and Externals at particular points.

We also expect we will require colleagues in attendance who are supporting the programme activity.

The workstreams which will be set up to deliver specific tasks will be able to draw on a wider range of colleagues.

**Senate Education Committee**

**15 September 2021**

**Curriculum Transformation Board – Governance Links and Reporting Timeline**

The Curriculum Transformation (CT) Board is responsible for running the CT Programme effectively and for:

- Making “recommendations on the outcomes of the Curriculum Transformation programme of work to the Senior Leadership Team, University Executive and Senate Education Committee.”
- “Reporting into and escalation to Senior Leadership Team, University Executive and Senate Education Committee.”

The table below sets out a proposed schedule of reporting from the CT Board to Senate Education Committee and Executive.

Links and opportunities to discuss are also provided for (full) Senate and Academic Strategy Group (whilst noting that these committees do not have formal oversight of the CT work).

MONTH	CT WORKSTREAM DEADLINE	EDUCATION COMMITTEE	UNIVERSITY SENATE	ACADEMIC STRATEGY GROUP	UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE
		<p>Education Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for taught and research student matters, particularly strategy and policy concerning learning, teaching and the development of curriculum.</p> <p>SEC membership comprises academic leadership and professional services leadership, and includes student representation.</p> <p>Note: SEC is convened by the VP Students who also convenes the</p>	<p>The role of Senate is to regulate and superintend teaching and discipline, and to promote research. Senate is the supreme academic body of the University, and the role of Senate is defined in legislation, in the Universities (Scotland) Acts 1858 – 1966.</p> <p>Senate delegates the handling of substantial detailed business to 3 Standing Committees: Senate Education Committee (SEC), Senate Academic Policy and</p>	<p>A confidential forum for the Principal, Heads of School and relevant Senior Officers to informally discuss and contribute to University-wide strategy, initiatives and issues. Any member can suggest an agenda item as long as it has University-wide relevance.</p>	<p>The Executive's Remit is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the University’s strategic objectives and support the Principal in overseeing their implementation and delivery</li> <li>• Agree and oversee the implementation of policies, procedures and plans</li> <li>• Develop and monitor delivery of University business planning objectives</li> <li>• Manage and monitor organisational performance</li> <li>• Facilitate and agree cross-University activity and communications</li> </ul>



## SEC 21/22 1 J

		CT Board. To avoid conflict of interest, the VP Students intends to recuse himself as Convenor from any SEC discussion of CT business. The Vice Convenor of SEC would convene these discussions.	Regulations Committee (APRC), and Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).  Senate has around 300 members, of whom 200 are elected academic staff, 30 are elected student members and up to 80 are ex officio members.		University Executive consists of 25 senior leaders, both academic and professional services. It includes the President of the Students' Association.
Jun 21					
Jul 21					
Aug 21	Digital Ed work completes				
Sep 21		a) Regular written update on CT b) <b>Consideration</b> of DigitalEd report			a) Update on CT b) <b>Note</b> of DigitalEd report
Oct 21			<b>Update</b> from SEC and discussion	<b>Update</b> from VP Students and discussion	
Nov 21	Future skills and "vision of Edinburgh Graduate" work concludes	a) Regular written update on CT b) <b>Approval</b> of "vision of Edinburgh Graduate"			c) Update on CT d) <b>Approval</b> of "vision of Edinburgh Graduate"
Dec 21					
Jan 22	Assessment & Feedback Group reports	a) Regular written update on CT b) <b>Approval</b> of Assessment and Feedback report and recommendations			a) Update on CT b) <b>Note</b> of "Assessment & Feedback Report"
Feb 22			<b>Update</b> from SEC	<b>Update</b> from VP Students and discussion	

Mar 22	Different curriculum models will be identified, evaluated; curriculum principles will be developed	a) Regular written update on CT b) Chance to <b>comment</b> on evolving models and principles			a) Update on CT b) Chance to <b>comment</b> on evolving models and principles
Apr 22					
May 22		a) Regular written update on CT b) Chance to <b>comment</b> on evolving models and principles			a) Update on CT b) Chance to <b>comment</b> on evolving models and principles
Jun 22			<b>Update</b> from SEC	<b>Update</b> from VP Students and discussion	
Jul 22	Edinburgh Curriculum defined	<b>Exceptional additional SEC meeting needed to approve recommendations for Edinburgh Curriculum</b> <i>(Noted that July may not be the best month to do this. See below)</i>			a) Update on CT b) <b>Approval</b> of “recommendations for Edinburgh Curriculum”

Timelines are subject to refinement / consideration depending on progress with the project. It is recommended that major decisions on the project should not be made in July or August due to many staff having other University and personal commitments at that time. A presentation on and discussion of the final recommendations should be made to full Senate –most likely in October 22 – although this could be earlier if an exceptional, single item meeting of Senate were to be called.

**Senate Education Committee**

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**Student Survey Results 2021**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper discusses the results of the national surveys which ran in 2021: the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).
2. Student satisfaction has fallen across the sector this year. This trend has been mirrored at the University of Edinburgh. As the 2020/21 academic year has been anomalous this paper will focus on this year's results rather than longer term trends.
3. Much of the sector wide decline in student satisfaction can be attributed to the Covid 19 pandemic and the challenges students and staff have had in participating in and delivering teaching and learning activities. Whilst this is also true for the University of Edinburgh, examination of student comments indicate that the pandemic has exacerbated issues that were already drivers of student dissatisfaction as well as creating new issues.
4. This paper addresses the broad themes emerging from all three surveys. Full results for all three surveys, student comments and summaries of findings from each survey at School level can all be accessed on the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling SharePoint site<sup>1</sup>.
5. This paper relates to outcome eight – making Edinburgh a 'destination of choice' for students. Listening to, and acting on, student feedback is an essential to improving student experiences at the University of Edinburgh.

**Action requested / recommendation**

6. Education Committee are asked to discuss the feedback presented in this paper and comment on the next steps outlined in the final section.

**Background and context**

7. The NSS runs every year and surveys final year undergraduate students. PTES is also an annual survey and covers taught postgraduate students. PRES runs every other year and surveys all postgraduate research students. The questionnaires for PTES and PRES were amended to take into account changed teaching delivery due to the pandemic. All the questionnaires included a section on institutions' responses to the pandemic. The results of these will be covered in this paper.

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<sup>1</sup> [Insights Hub - your one stop shop for analysis and insights \(sharepoint.com\)](https://insights.sharepoint.com/)

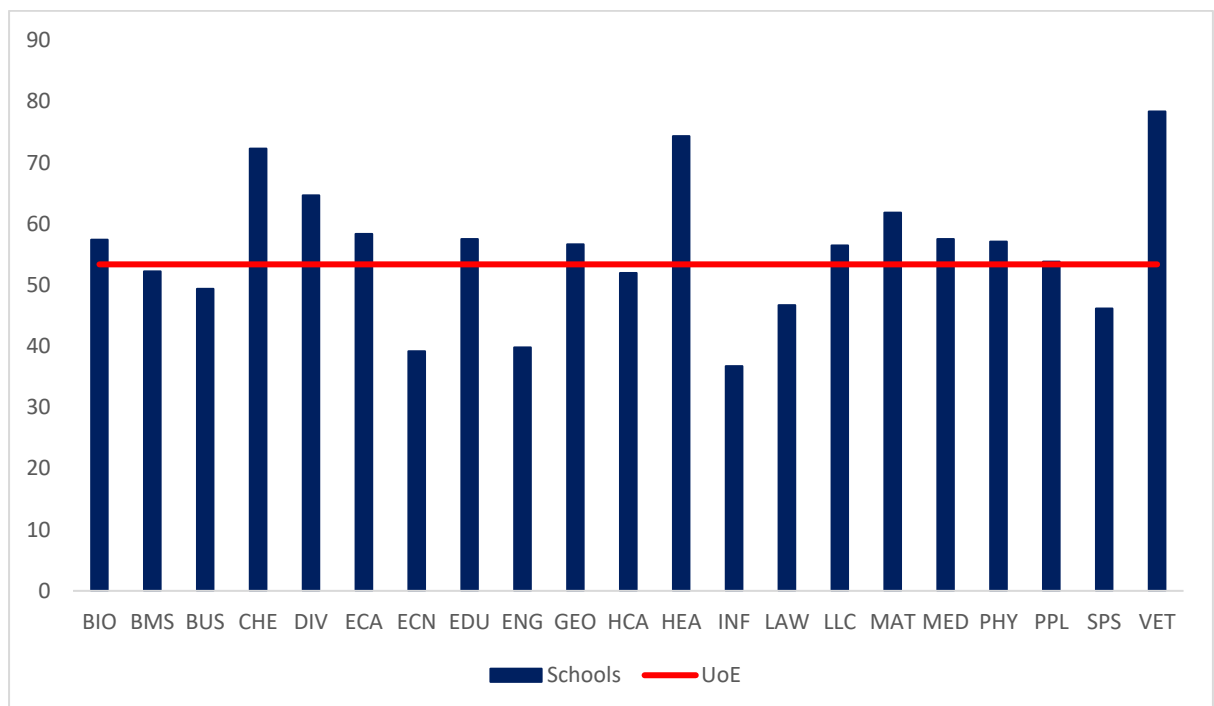
**Discussion**

- Teaching and supervision remain the strongest scoring areas of all three surveys. Where students make positive comments they overwhelmingly relate to the excellence of teaching staff, the challenging content of courses and the quality of supervision teams. The majority of teaching is highly regarded. Unfortunately there are a small number of teachers and supervisors who do not deliver the same quality of teaching and learning and even positive comments are frequently caveated with ‘some of my teachers.’

*Assessment and Feedback*

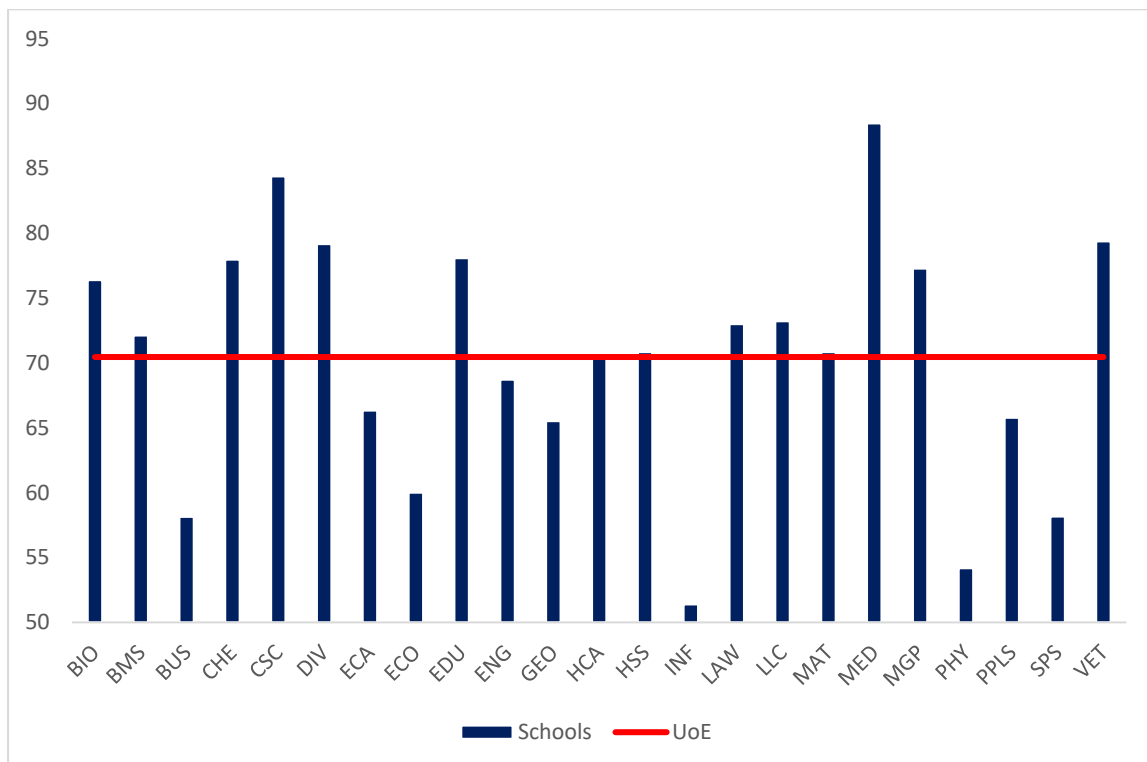
- Only 53% of undergraduate students were satisfied with their experience of assessment and feedback in 2021.

*Figure 1 Satisfaction with Assessment and Feedback - NSS, 2021*



- Taught postgraduate students rate their experience of assessment and feedback more highly (70.5%) but student comments echo those of their undergraduate peers. Common themes indicate that dissatisfaction with this area is caused by a lack of clarity over what it takes to do well in assessments. Students relate discrepancies between comments and marks – where positive comments are made but marks are low – and that feedback is unhelpful. Either because it is ‘generic’ or because it comes too late to support improvements in the next piece of assessed work.

Figure 2 Satisfaction with Assessment and Feedback - PTES, 2021



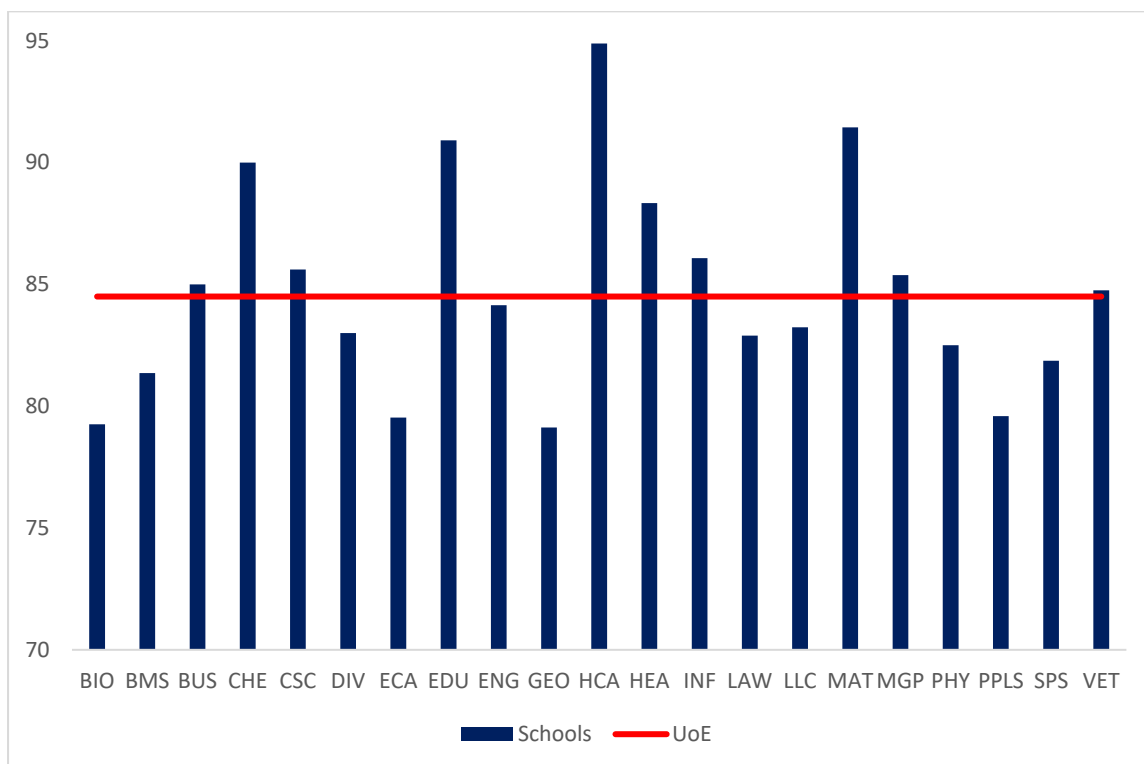
### *Personal Tutor Support*

11. Comments from UG and PGT students highlight the inconsistency in the contact and support provided by personal tutors. Students indicate that the support they get depends on the individual person they are allocated. Whilst the School of Chemistry received positive comments on student support the School is something of an outlier. Comments indicate that tutors or Schools don't reach out to them. This feedback has been received in previous years so can't be attributed to the pandemic although the pandemic may well have exacerbated dissatisfaction with this area.

### *Supervision and Research Culture*

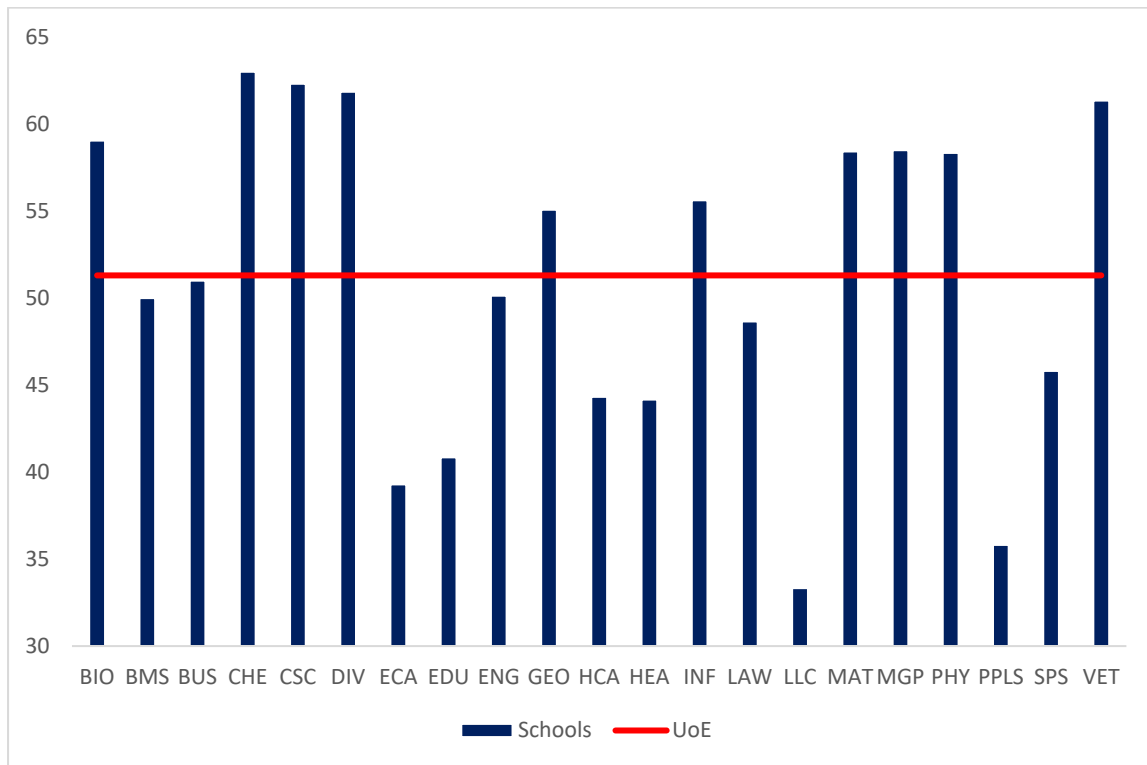
12. Across the University of Edinburgh 85% of PGR students are satisfied with supervision. This places Edinburgh in the lowest quartile of the Russell Group this year. Comments illustrate how central positive relationships between supervisors and students are to PGR student experiences. Whilst the vast majority of these relationships are successful when the small number that break down do go wrong students struggle to find ways of getting support.
13. Satisfaction with Research Culture has decreased by 13 percentage points and student comments indicate that this is, in large part, due to working from home. In the Pulse survey and PGR Covid Survey PGR students fed back the difficulties they have had with lack of access to spaces (be it labs, studio spaces in ECA or desk space in shared offices) and PRES results also reflect this.

Figure 3 Satisfaction with Supervision - PRES, 2021



14. Comments indicate that PGR students have struggled with the lack of informal interaction with their peers and staff as a result of off campus working.

Figure 4 Satisfaction with Research Culture - PRES, 2021



*Covid 19*

15. All three surveys gave students the opportunity to rate how satisfied they were with the support provided during the Covid 19 pandemic. The findings from these questions agree with findings from the in-year Pulse Surveys. Students have scored the University particularly poorly for satisfaction with support for mental well being (22% satisfied). It should be noted that this survey was live before the new mental health strategy was launched but quantitative scores and student comments indicate that increased support in this area is needed.

Table 1 Covid specific questions - NSS, 2021<sup>2</sup>

	COVID1	COVID2	COVID3	COVID4	COVID5	COVID6
UoE	59.93	46.50	22.14	67.73	36.41	71.47
BIO	63.33	56.67	26.67	70.59	41.11	86.67
BMS	58.33	40.96	19.28	72.73	34.94	84.34
BUS	61.22	55.10	34.69	65.96	40.82	71.43
CHE	87.50	84.85	38.71	89.66	60.00	89.29
DIV	70.00	65.00	36.84	65.00	55.00	55.00
ECA	45.36	35.16	16.11	53.18	26.92	45.60
ECN	63.04	45.65	19.57	68.89	39.13	86.96
EDU	73.08	62.75	28.00	78.26	43.14	80.39
ENG	63.64	56.36	27.95	74.03	44.85	81.21
GEO	51.16	44.19	10.59	67.06	34.88	79.07
HCA	52.63	34.21	11.40	56.25	21.93	42.98
HEA	73.68	63.16	36.84	84.21	63.16	73.68
INF	54.90	39.22	22.00	58.33	29.41	88.24
LAW	60.23	47.73	19.32	76.83	31.82	65.52
LLC	46.72	29.20	9.56	60.61	23.36	58.82
MAT	81.82	63.64	28.13	86.67	39.39	93.94
MED	94.44	73.61	58.33	83.33	81.94	92.96
PHY	77.50	61.54	13.16	83.78	35.90	87.18
PPL	61.90	42.86	21.36	68.04	32.38	75.24
SPS	47.50	31.40	8.33	52.14	23.14	61.16
VET	69.49	49.15	48.28	84.75	50.85	91.53

2

COVID1. I have received useful information about changes to my course from my university or college during the covid-19 pandemic.

COVID2. I have received timely information about my course from my university or college during the covid-19 pandemic.

COVID3. My university or college has taken sufficient steps to support my mental wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

COVID4. My university or college has taken sufficient steps to protect my physical safety from the virus during the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g. providing protective equipment such as masks, social distancing on campus, offering distance learning opportunities).

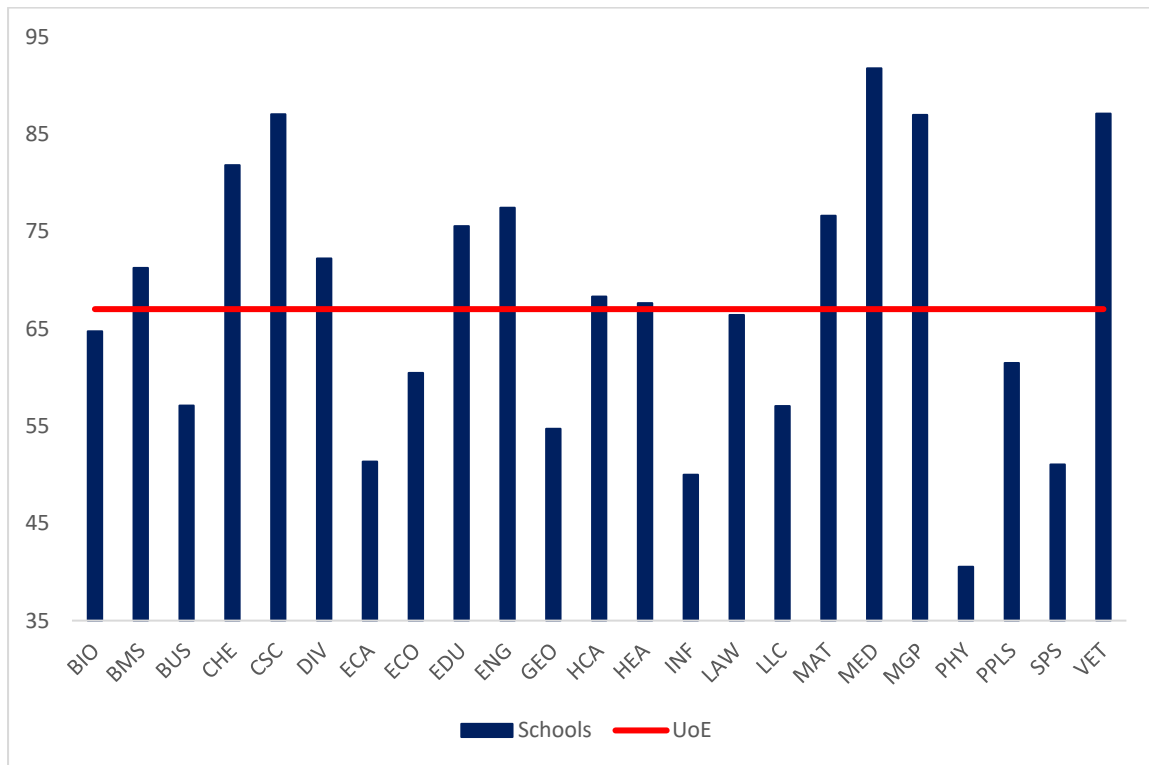
COVID5. I am content with the delivery of learning and teaching of my course during the covid-19 pandemic.

COVID6. I have been able to access the learning resources I need (lecture notes, course materials, journals, Virtual Learning Environment) for my course during the covid-19 pandemic.



16. PGT and PGR students also express dissatisfaction with the University’s support for mental health in comments.

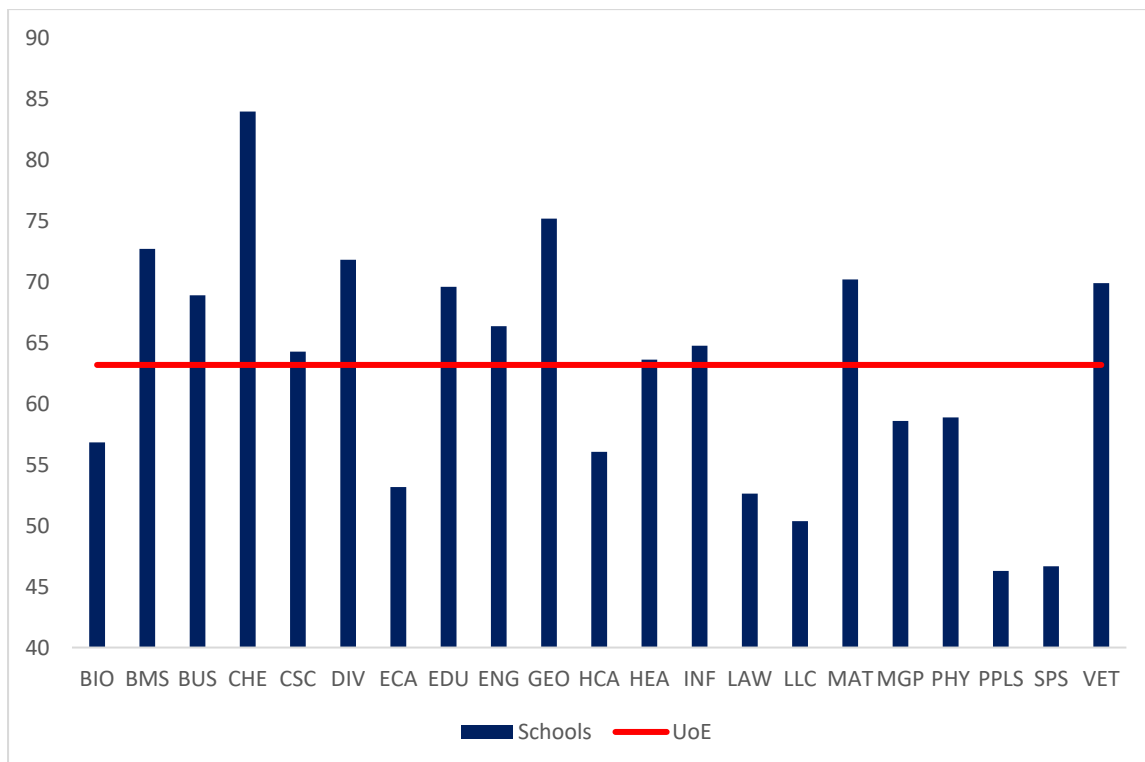
Figure 5 Satisfaction with the Covid response - PTES<sup>3</sup>, 2021



17. Value for money has been a particular issue for PGT students and is a common theme in PTES comments. Lack of face to face teaching and no access to facilities has been an issue for PGT students.

<sup>3</sup> The questions covering COVID 19 in PTES and PRES were the same:  
 Communications from my institution in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic were appropriate and clear  
 I have received the support I need from my institution in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic  
 My institution has worked to ensure the quality of my academic experience during the Covid-19 pandemic

Figure 6 Satisfaction with the Covid response - PRES, 2021



### Conclusions

18. Satisfaction levels have decreased this year and this can only partly be attributed to the Covid 19 pandemic. Themes that emerge from analysis of student comments indicate that the pandemic has exacerbated existing issues.
19. The quality of teaching, supervision and personal tutor support are seen to be very dependent upon the individuals who are delivering the teaching or support. Whilst students can have excellent experiences on some courses this isn't universal and whilst some students will receive exemplary personal tutor support their friends may receive none. There is a lack of clarity around where students can go to address issues.
20. Assessment and feedback practice remains a critical issue for taught students. Students aren't receiving feedback that will help them to progress in their studies. This isn't necessarily an issue of quick turnaround times – instead it appears to be an issue of assessing at the right time and providing feedback that will support future learning.
21. Students report that support for their well-being is inadequate. These surveys were undertaken before the new Mental Health Strategy was approved but the comments overwhelmingly indicate that this is an area the University needs to continue to focus on and invest in.

## Student Experience - Next steps

22. The results of both the NSS and the 2021 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) have been discussed in some depth by the Senior Leadership Team (August 21), University Executive (at its away-day in Aug 21) and the Academic Strategy Group.
23. In all these discussions, it was agreed that the University remained committed to the Strategy 2030 aspiration that “our teaching will match the excellence of our research”. It was noted that many of our peers, both nationally and internationally, struggle to reconcile excellence in research with real excellence in student experience. However there were also many examples of outstanding institutions that delivered to world class standards in both areas, and these should be our benchmark, with more belief in our role as a leader not a follower in this area.
24. It was noted that the ELIR recommendations were broadly helpful and that while the University would need to respond formally and separately to QAA on progress with these recommendations, that work should also align naturally with the University’s wider student-experience plans. Work had already started, led by Assistant Principal Tina Harrison, on the development of a holistic and strategic approach to the design and management of assessment and feedback. Separately it has been agreed that the University will move to implement a new model of student support, (in line with the recommendations previously made to Senate in 2020), in 8 schools from 22/23, with the rest of the University to follow in 23/24. A project team is being set up to take this work forward and in-year funding has been approved for this work.
25. It was noted that even though the Student Experience Action Plan was reaching the end of its agreed funding, the logic model that underpinned the plan remained valid and the issues identified in that model remained pertinent. However there was increased interest in and focus required on:
- Nurturing and relationship-building (staff-student and student-student) as the key enablers of sense of belonging, student engagement, learning and student outcomes once they graduate.
  - The greater use of performance metrics in key areas.
  - The need for sustained, aligned leadership focus on the student experience at all levels.
  - Alignment of student and staff experience.
26. Our work on student experience might therefore:
- Return to the ideas we first shaped in the 2019 Student Experience Action plan;
  - Put Student Belonging at the heart of our vision;
  - Develop both a strategic vision and formal implementation plan, including an emphasis on strategic investment and delivery;
  - The plan should clearly identify and take forward both quick wins and longer term delivery;
  - It should include a focus on a high quality student journey, from school(leaver) to alumnus;
  - It should be clearly aligned with the Curriculum, Estates, Digital, People and EDI programmes.

A revised student experience plan would need wide engagement and discussion and it is unlikely that it would be ready until early 2022.

**Resource implications**

26 N/A

**Risk management**

27 N/A

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

28 N/A

**Equality & diversity**

29 N/A

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

30 N/A

**Author**

*Name Paula Webster*

*Date 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021*

**Presenter**

*Name Paula Webster*

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

Open

**Senate Education Committee**

**15 September 2021**

**Enhancement-led Institutional Review Response Action Plan**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides an overview of the recent Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) outcome and recommendations and presents a high-level initial plan for progressing the recommendations.
2. The ELIR response and proposed Action Plan (Appendix 1) contribute to improving the quality of learning and teaching, the student experience and student satisfaction.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

3. SEC is invited to comment on the proposed approach for responding to the ELIR recommendations and the draft Action Plan. (University Executive has been asked to do the same.)

**Background and context**

4. Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) is the method used by the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) to review and assess the effectiveness of higher education institutions' approaches to securing academic standards and the quality of the student experience.
5. Our review was conducted in a series of online meetings with students and staff in February and March 2021. In advance of the review, we submitted a [Reflective Analysis](#) (and other documentation) approved by Court in September 2020.
6. QAA Scotland published the outcome of the review online in July 2021: [University of Edinburgh \(qaa.ac.uk\)](http://www.qaa.ac.uk). A shorter "outcome report" provides the formal outcome of the review and an overview of the commendations and recommendations; the longer "technical report" provides further information on the background and findings from the review, providing context to the commendations and recommendations.

**Discussion**

Overall judgement

7. Overall, we have been judged to have "effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience." This is a positive judgement and the best possible outcome for an ELIR, the other two outcomes: "limited effectiveness" or "not effective".

Key findings

8. Whilst the overall judgement is positive, and there are several commendations in the report, two key themes run throughout the findings.

8.1 Inconsistency in implementation of policy and practice; variability arising from our decentralised nature:

- a) “Multiple instances where inconsistent implementation of policy and strategic approach across Schools contributed to variable student and staff experience.”
- b) “The decentralised nature of the Schools and Colleges leads to considerable variability in the extent to which many University policies and strategic approaches are implemented...”.

8.2 Speed of change has been slow; projects have not delivered substantial change:

- a) “The University has had longstanding concerns on certain aspects of the student experience, notably assessment and feedback and the personal tutor system....(however) the timeliness with which any appropriate measures are put in place is slow.”
- b) “Many projects which have set out to address these (student experience) concerns over the last five to ten years have not delivered substantial change, more recent projects were paused due to the pandemic and most are now awaiting the outcome of Curriculum Transformation”

### Key recommendations

9.1 We are required to establish a systematic approach to enable effective institutional oversight and evaluation of the implementation of policy and practice:

- a) to increase the range and use of institutionally-determined baseline requirements to ensure consistency and accountability, and
- b) take action when Schools deviate from institutional expectations.

9.2 develop an effective approach to the strategic leadership and management of change that will ensure more immediate and timely implementation of identified solutions to enhance the student experience.

- a) Linked to this, we have been asked to make “demonstrable progress” over the next academic year in two key areas: Assessment and Feedback and Student Support;
- b) and to take action to implement an effective approach for institutional oversight and management of student numbers.

10. The full set of recommendations and planned actions are set out in the attached table.

### Managing our response

11. An ELIR Oversight Group has been established (comprising VP Students, Deputy Secretary Student Experience, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, Director of IAD, Director of Strategic Change, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services) which has had an initial meeting to discuss how we take forward the recommendations.

12. The attached table provides an initial draft of an ELIR Action Plan. The purpose of the action plan is to provide (at a high level) reassurance that there is a plan for progressing the ELIR recommendations and to invite input. Some of the recommendations can be taken forward through existing committees and work streams, whereas others require further discussion. There will be extensive consultation with appropriate stakeholders/groups/committees as we progress work on the recommendations.

13. The Action Plan will be supported by communications to keep the University community updated on progress.

#### Formal Year-on Response

14. We are required to provide a follow-up report on actions taken or in progress to address the outcomes of the review to QAA Scotland one year after the publication of the ELIR reports (by 16 July 2022). Court is required to endorse the follow-up report.

15. The ELIR Action Plan and progress will feed into the year-on response.

16. An update on ELIR actions will be presented to the meeting of Senate on 25 May 2022 ahead of the year-on response.

#### Next ELIR in 5 Years

17. Our next ELIR should be in 5 years; date to be confirmed. Even though we received an overall outcome of “effectiveness”, the tone and seriousness of the recommendations suggest that if we do not demonstrate significant change by the time of the next review (in 5 years), we could run the risk of a “limited effectiveness” judgement. For information: Glasgow School of Art recently received a judgement of “limited effectiveness” with some similar comments about inconsistency and change management.

#### **Resource implications**

18. Oversight of the ELIR response and the Action Plan does not require any resource implications, but some of the recommended actions may have resource implications in staff time.

#### **Risk Management**

19. The approach to responding to ELIR is designed to mitigate the risks associated with a poor outcome in the next review and is monitored as part of the University Risk Register - Strategic Risk 5 “Continued or worsening of NSS or other measures of student experience”

#### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

20. Relates to SDG 4: Quality Education, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education. The overall focus of the recommendations is aimed at improving the quality of education and the student experience. There is a specific recommendation aimed at address equality and diversity in relation to student achievement and attainment gaps.

#### **Equality & Diversity**

21. No new or revised policies are currently being proposed, but some of the recommendations and actions will give rise to new or revised policies and practices. Equality impact assessments will be carried out at the point when a new or revised policy or practice is proposed. Equality and diversity is a key focus of one of the main recommendations.

**Next steps/implications**

22. Following discussion at University Executive, and any proposed changes, a paper will go to Court on 6 October for feedback and then to Senate on 20 October for final approval. Senate will be asked to approve the action plan as its role includes: setting the academic regulatory framework; quality assurance and enhancement; and learning, teaching and curriculum development. Senate Quality Assurance Committee will play a formal role in monitoring progress against the recommendations and, together with the ELIR Oversight Group, will advise University Executive of progress and any concerns.

**Consultation**

23. This is an initial plan of action and further consultation will follow with appropriate stakeholders/groups/committees in taking both the plan and specific actions forward.

**Further information**

24. <u>Author</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
Tina Harrison	Colm Harmon
Assistant Principal, Academic	VP Students
Standards and Quality Assurance	
3 September, 2021	

**Freedom of Information**

25. Open



## University of Edinburgh Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2021 – Action Plan

Theme	Recommendation	Priority	Owner	Planned actions
Strategy, growth and planning	<p><b>1. Oversight and planning for growth of student numbers</b>                      "... implement an approach to facilitate institutional oversight and the effective planning and monitoring of student numbers, in order to ensure that appropriate and timely actions can be taken where increases in student numbers impact on arrangements for learning and teaching and student support."</p>	Establish approach/controls (within 1 year)  Size and shape (2 years)	Vice Principal Students	To be agreed. Currently no strategic oversight group in place. To be discussed further between Director of Planning, VP Students and Admissions to determine a way forward.
	<p><b>2. Strategic approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching</b>                      "... in view of the current transition between the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2017 and future plans, the University should provide institutional oversight, and ensure clarity for staff, on the strategic direction underpinning current learning and teaching developments."</p>	Develop strategy within 1 year and implement from year 2 onwards	Vice Principal Students	Task Group of Senate Education Committee to develop a new Learning and Teaching Strategy
Change management	<p><b>3. Pace of change</b>                      "... develop an effective approach to the strategic leadership and management of change that will ensure more immediate and timely implementation of identified solutions in order to support staff and enhance the student experience."</p>	Within next 2 years	Director of Strategic Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on positives from ART</li> <li>• Consult with internal experts</li> <li>• Articulate an approach</li> </ul>
Monitoring consistency of implementation of strategy, policy and practice	<p><b>4. Oversight and implementation of policy and practice</b>                      "... recognising the decentralised nature of university structures, the institution should establish a systematic approach to enable effective institutional oversight and evaluation of the implementation of policy and practice. As part of this, the University is asked to increase the range and use of institutionally determined baseline requirements to ensure consistency and accountability. The institution should ensure that mechanisms are put in place to adequately evaluate the consistency of implementation of strategic objectives across the institution and act when Schools deviate from institutional expectations.</p>	Develop approach within next 12 months; implementation year 2 onwards	Vice Principal Students  Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance  Deputy Secretary Student Experience  Support from Director of Strategic Change (links to recommendation 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify priority areas of student experience (as associated policies and practices) for consistent implementation</li> <li>• Develop a set of associated indicators from which to measure and evaluate e and evaluation mechanisms</li> <li>• Establish clear approach for monitoring consistency of implementation, either via enhanced quality assurance processes or other.</li> <li>• Policy review as appropriate</li> </ul>
	<p><b>5. Training for postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach</b>                      "... ensure effective implementation of its policy for the training and support of postgraduates who teach and ensure all PGR students are trained before engaging in teaching activities."</p>	Linked to above	Doctoral College leads	Example policy to inform approach to recommendation 4

## University of Edinburgh Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2021 – Action Plan

Theme	Recommendation	Priority	Owner	Planned actions
Student support	<p><b>6. Personal tutor scheme</b>            "...make significant progress in implementing plans to ensure an effective approach to offering personal student support. In doing so, and recognising the extended period of time that the University has been developing its approach to personal tutoring, it is asked to reflect on whether the current timescale for implementation of the institutional Student Support and Personal Tutor Plan in 2023-24, is sufficiently ambitious. The University should make demonstrable progress within the next academic year in respect of ensuring parity of experience for students and effective signposting to support services and delivery of an agreed and consistent baseline level of provision. As part of its approach, the University is asked to develop an effective mechanism to monitor consistency of implementation and allow it to evaluate the impact of these changes on the student experience."</p>	Within next 12 months with further implementation to follow on	Deputy Secretary Student Experience	Personal Tutor System 2021/22: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• School statements updated</li> <li>• Reinstate the Senior Tutor Network</li> <li>• Use pulse surveys to gather feedback</li> <li>• Approach to monitoring to be determined</li> <li>• Links to recommendation 4</li> <li>• Phased implementation of Student Support and Personal Tutor project outcomes</li> </ul>
Assessment and feedback	<p><b>7. Assessment and feedback</b>            "... 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. The University should also progress with proposals for the establishment of a common marking scheme to ensure comparability of student assessment processes across Schools."</p>	Within next 12 months, develop holistic strategy; implementation to follow on.	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment and Feedback working group already established as part of Curriculum Transformation and reporting into the Curriculum Transformation Board.</li> <li>• Taking forward short-term ELIR recommendations and feeding forward into ongoing Curriculum Transformation Programme</li> </ul>
Developing and promoting teaching excellence	<p><b>8. Recognition and support for academic staff development</b>            "... take action to remove barriers which exist that prevent some academic staff from fully engaging with its existing suite of development opportunities for the professionalisation of teaching."</p>	Within 2 years	Vice Principal Students  HR and new Provost  Director of IAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a strategy aligned to workload allocation models</li> <li>• Aligns with recommendation of the Teaching and Academic Careers Task Group –for Schools to develop and implement a Professional Development of Teaching Strategies</li> <li>• Implement School-level Professional Development of Teaching Strategies</li> </ul>

## University of Edinburgh Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2021 – Action Plan

Theme	Recommendation	Priority	Owner	Planned actions
	<p><b>9. Promotion of academic staff based on teaching</b>            "... progress with work to improve the recognition of teaching excellence across all aspects of the University. In particular, the University should ensure that recognition for teaching is embedded in annual review processes, that clarity of roles and titles is established, and that a clear progression pathway providing parity of recognition for education-focused academics is developed. In addition, the institution should ensure that it has the data available to be able to evidence and evaluate the progress made in all of these areas."</p>	Within 2 years	Vice Principal Students  HR and new Provost  Director of IAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline evaluation of current practice to inform future actions.</li> <li>• Titles have been harmonised for Grade 8 &amp; 9 staff</li> <li>• Improve data capture (among balanced role promotions) to evidence the impact of teaching excellence.</li> </ul>
<b>Attainment gaps</b>	<p><b>10. Attainment gap monitoring</b>            "...consider how to address attainment gaps in student performance through the oversight, coordination and monitoring at an institutional level of school-level actions."</p>	Develop approach within next 12 months; implementation from year 2.	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance with  University Lead, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDMARC data reviewed at Equality and Diversity Committee.</li> <li>• Aligns with Senate Quality Assurance Committee Data Task Group and outcomes of Thematic Reviews. Schools now reviewing EDI data and attainment gaps annually, monitoring via Senate Quality Assurance Committee</li> <li>• Identify actions and interventions to reduce attainment gaps, drawing on best practice internally and externally and support schools to implement.</li> <li>• Consult with relevant committees and groups</li> <li>• Pilot projects to test interventions to reduce attainment gaps as part of Enhancement Themes work funded by QAA Scotland.</li> </ul>

**Senate Education Committee**

**15 September 2021**

**Postgraduate Research Admissions Working Group Report**

**Description of paper**

1. The paper in the appendix was discussed at Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group (SRFSG) on 17 May 2021. It is being shared with SEC for information.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. For information

**Background and context**

3. See appendix.

**Discussion**

4. See appendix

**Resource implications**

5. Provided for this Committee for information only.

**Risk management**

6. Provided for this Committee for information only.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

7. Provided for this Committee for information only.

**Equality & diversity**

8. Provided for this Committee for information only.

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

9. Provided for this Committee for information only.

**Author**

Postgraduate Research Admissions  
Working Group

**Presenter**

Stephen Bowd (Dean PG Education,  
CAHSS)

**Freedom of Information *Open***

## Appendix

## STUDENT RECRUITMENT &amp; FEES STRATEGY GROUP

17 May 2021

## Postgraduate Research Admissions Working Group Report

**Description of paper**

1.1 On 12 November 2020, following consideration of a paper on 'PGR Admissions and meeting UKRI requirements' the SRFSG agreed to the establishment of a Working Group (WG) in cooperation with members of the Doctoral College (DC) Management Group to review doctoral student recruitment and selection processes at the University of Edinburgh in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and Widening Participation (WP) strategies and practices and to make recommendations for improvements in consistency, fairness, and transparency.

1.2 In defining the remit of the WG the committee recommended a focus on the following matters:

- How to make PGR admissions processes more consistent with a particular focus on defining core training needs for all individuals involved in reviewing applications
- Use of selection interviews in supporting greater diversity of entrants and scope for enhanced use across the University
- Addressing the opacity of the application process for our applicants with a particular focus on the needs of under-represented groups
- Detailing system changes needed (and associated development resource requirements) to improve EDI data collection and reporting of PGR applications, offers and entrants.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2.1 A group convened by the CAHSS Dean PG Education met online four times during January-March 2021 with membership drawn from Student Recruitment and Admissions, College Offices, Schools/Deaneries, the Doctoral College Management Group, PGR student representatives, Student Systems and other relevant key stakeholders (See **Appendix A** for group membership).

2.2 This group requests that the Committee discuss and support **the following actions** (summarised here with details in sections 4.2-4.3, below):

**Data Collection**

- Collect a wider range of data than at present
- Disaggregate application and data collection processes

- Ask relevant groups (SRA, WP Committee, DC management group, and Student Systems) to develop an online data collection form and establish most effective reporting management process

### Policy and Practice

- Ensure that EDI priorities are addressed through relevant Advertising, Enquiry, Application and Selection policies and practices
- Support the development of a range of 'inreach' and 'outreach' activities and online tools
- Support the development of guidance and an online training module for PGR selectors
- Embed a Widening Access Interview for those applicants with a self-declared disability who meet minimum requirements for the selected programme of study
- Appoint an EDI PGR intern to develop the models for contextual admissions at PGR level
- Ensure that PGR WP funding schemes are piloted as soon as practicable

### Background and context

#### 3.1 UK

It is generally recognised that higher education, including postgraduate study is strongly connected to social mobility (eg. Anton Muscatelli, [Tackling Trends in Inequality and Access to Higher Education in Scotland](#)). It is clear that there are instrumental, intellectual, and moral advantages to widening access to postgraduate study, including the advancement of diversification among higher education professionals.<sup>1</sup>

However, as the [Advance HE Equality in Education Statistical Report](#) (2019) has noted on the basis of HESA data, black, Asian and minority ethnic representation is markedly lower among PGR students (17.2%) than in undergraduate (24.7%) and taught postgraduate (22.6%) students.

A number of researchers have also considered PGR underrepresentation in terms of social class but institutional attempts to widen postgraduate participation and to collect data on socio-economic background and other characteristics have been more

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<sup>1</sup> Adél Pásztor and Paul Wakeling, 'All PhDs are equal but ... Institutional and social stratification in access to the doctorate,' *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 39, no. 7 (2018): 983.

challenging compared to widening access for undergraduate applicants and entrants (eg. by 'self reporting' alongside a basket of other data).<sup>2</sup>

Access to postgraduate funding has been an area of particular concern. [The Leading Routes: The Broken Pipeline](#) report (2019) revealed that just 1.2% of UKRI PhD studentships were awarded to Black students and suggested that the criteria in use to select doctoral candidates were biased against applicants from certain demographics, and thus represented a major barrier.

Accordingly, UKRI recently reminded training grant holders of the importance of diversity monitoring, as well as equitable and inclusive PGR recruitment and selection processes, and it has developed [general policies and guidance](#) on supporting research diverse and inclusive research and innovation. [The Wellcome Trust](#), [BBSRC](#) and many other DTPs are leading work on EDI and graduate access.

In 2019 the UK Council for Graduate Education ran a [workshop](#) to discuss the nature of WP at postgraduate level, as did the [Office for Students](#). At these events student participants discussed the barriers to progression and highlighted the challenges of data collection and problems of recruitment and admissions to PGR study.

### 3.2 Scotland

The Scottish Commission on Widening Access in its [Blueprint for Fair Access](#) 2016 expected Universities to tackle the under representation of talented learners from disadvantaged communities. The Universities Scotland briefing document [Futures not Backgrounds](#) focuses on the under-representation of students from SIMD20 backgrounds and notes obstacles to access to postgraduate studies. Most recently, the Commissioner for Fair Access (COWA) produced a discussion paper: [Access to Postgraduate Education: Representation and Destinations](#) which underlines the links between socio-economic background and variability of access to postgraduate studies in Scotland.

Both the Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences (SGSSS) and the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH) have responded to the UKRI calls to address barriers to WP by recruiting EDI student interns and setting up working groups to consider persistent inequalities among students, including those explicitly mentioned by the Equality Act 2010 as well as other groups highlighted by COWA such as the socio-economically disadvantaged.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Wakeling, *Measuring Doctoral Student Diversity: Socio-economic background* (Swindon: Research Councils UK, 2016); Paul Wakeling, 'A glass half full? Social class and access to postgraduate study', in R. Waller, N. Ingram, and M. Ward (eds.), *Higher Education and Social Inequalities: University Admissions, Experiences, and Outcomes* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 167-89; Paul Wakeling and G. Hampden-Thompson, *Transition to higher degrees across the UK: an analysis of national, international and individual differences* (Higher Education Academy, 2013).

As [work](#) with Scottish students by Al Blackshaw (Strathclyde) and Rowena Piers (Edinburgh) indicates, first-generation students are significantly more likely to be concerned about facing discrimination during postgraduate study compared to students whose parent(s) attended university. First generation students are significantly less likely to have received a scholarship or funding from an employer or encouragement from a family member in relation to applying for postgraduate study, compared to students whose parent(s) attended university. Their work with students confirmed that for many first-generation students the idea of PGR study and a subsequent academic career was ‘just not for them’.

### 3.3 University of Edinburgh

As noted in the [EDMARC Student Report for 2018/19](#) the University of Edinburgh performs below Scottish and Russell Group averages in the recruitment of UK domiciled BME PGR students (10.2% in 2017-18). We have increased the proportion of female PGR students recruited to the University in recent years but the figure is significantly lower than UG and PGT and, at just 7%, we have one of the lowest proportions of PGR students declaring a disability across the Russell Group. The majority of PGR recruitment at University of Edinburgh is devolved to Schools with minimal coordinated oversight except in relation to UKRI and national graduate school scholarship schemes. This lack of coordinated oversight means that practices and processes vary across the Schools and Colleges and the applicant experience is therefore also highly varied.

Edinburgh has been working for some time on widening participation for students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds at undergraduate level by means of recruitment and admissions policy (eg. contextual admissions); School and departmental efforts (eg. Schools liaison and WP officers); and University scholarships and other financial or peer support. Following the launch of the University of Edinburgh’s Widening Participation Strategy the University has encouraged work in the first three strands of the strategy: Aspiration-raising and Early Engagement; Support to Get in; and Support to Succeed.

There have been areas of good practice in relation to PGR EDI and WP. For example, [EASTBIO](#) initiatives to raise student awareness of unconscious bias, and embedding EDI statements and provision across recruitment and training activities. The new Doctoral College is also working with IAD to develop EDI training for PGR students. This committee will also be aware of the work led by Laura Cattell, Head of Widening Participation/Deputy Director, SRA, to address the ‘leaky pipeline’ to PGT study (and onwards to PGR), including specific work packages around funding, information, support, curriculum design, and data collection.

### Discussion



4.1 In his 2016 report to Research Councils UK, Paul Wakeling emphasised the need for individual funders to commit to ameliorating their own EDI issues. As he put it:

It is also important to empower individual research councils, consortia and institutions to address local issues, based on their own diagnoses of the data collected ... The initial focus should be monitoring doctoral student diversity, especially at the application stage. Where appropriate, actions should prioritise outreach.<sup>3</sup>

There is an opportunity for Edinburgh to lead the way in this area at a crucial juncture. The University has been working to strengthen its EDI and WP strategy in partnership with a range of stakeholders including the Doctoral College. The full impact of Covid-19 on recruitment, admissions, and progression to postgraduate study is still under review, but there is some evidence from the University Pulse Survey, and applications to SFC and UKRI studentship extension schemes that those with caring responsibilities, women, as well as members of the BAME community may have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Coupled with the contraction of the academic and non-academic job markets, and the squeeze on University finances there is increased urgency to address chronic inequalities and underrepresentation. Finally, the University is now embarking on a Curriculum Transformation programme which is intended to support the outcomes set out in the University's Strategy 2030, including 'multidisciplinary postgraduate education pathways' to 'support flexible whole-life learning' and a commitment to 'lead Scotland's commitment to widening participation'.

Accordingly, the WG has a series of recommendations grouped under the two broad categories of **Data Collection** and **Policy and Practice** as follows:

#### 4.2 Data Collection

The WG agreed that any WP strategy for PGR recruitment and admissions should be evidence-based and draw on relevant data about those interested in or intending to apply, applicants, offer-holders, decliners, and enrolled students. As has been noted, the collection of data about the protected characteristics of PGR enquirers and applicants can be fragmentary or non-existent. Moreover, the collection of data about non-protected characteristics including socio-economic background is fraught with difficulties relating to definition, 'mutability' and the degrees of 'independence' of graduates from their parents/background – problems which are often less significant for undergraduate EDI data collection.<sup>4</sup> The WG also acknowledges serious GDPR compliance concerns and applicant anxieties about the storage and use of such data.

Therefore, the WG **recommends** that any data collection: should take place separately from, but in parallel with an individual's application process; should

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<sup>3</sup> Wakeling, *Measuring Doctoral Student Diversity*, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Wakeling, *Measuring Doctoral Student Diversity*, pp 1, 8-9.

explicitly be for the purposes of aggregated data analysis; and should be informed by the AdvanceHE [Guidance on collection of diversity monitoring data](#) (March 2021).

At Edinburgh, there is no formal or collated record of enquiries to Schools, Subject Areas, or Supervisors, and not all PGR applications are submitted via EUCLID, posing challenges for data collection, the identification of underrepresented groups at different stages of the journey to and through PGR study, and the formulation of any appropriate and effective WP strategies.

One potential source of data is the PGR Decliners Report, which in 2019/20 noted the relative importance of course (29%), reputation (29%), and other factors, mainly supervisor/academic (21%) in helping responders choose a University. The University webpages, and especially Subject Area pages, were important factors for most responders, but 42% noted the importance of contacting someone at the University (42%), world ranking (41%), and personal recommendation (40%). These findings can help to target proposed interventions but the WG **recommends** that in future CAM include a question (or questions) about EDI as a factor in declining a place at Edinburgh.<sup>5</sup>

The WG consulted Student Systems (Brandi Headon) about the feasibility of a redesign of the PGR application form and development work on EUCLID. The WG acknowledged that EUCLID is not used in all parts of the University nor at all stages of application (eg. early stage versus short-listing) and noted the limited resources available, the consequent prioritisation of statutory work (eg. HESA), and the risks attached to redesign. Furthermore, the application form used in EUCLID currently only gathers data on some of the protected characteristics designated by the Equality Act 2010, and requires manual extraction and collation for the purposes of any aggregated EDI monitoring and benchmarking exercise.

Against these constraints must be weighed the risk: of failing to meet statutory requirements; of failing to fulfil in a robust and consistent way the UKRI-driven (and related DTP, CDT) data-gathering and reporting practices. In fact, the need for better data collection practices is becoming ever more acute. Recently the [PandemicPGRs](#) report included the following action point for UKRI: ‘Review and plan to improve data collected and published on PhD studentships and awardees, including but not limited to full disaggregation by ethnicity groups by research council, more inclusive gender classifications, data on LGBTQI+ awardees and those with caring responsibilities, and data on completion rates disaggregated by protected characteristics’. UKRI responded in April 2021: ‘As mentioned above, most of our funding for doctoral research students is in the form of block grants to research organisations who are responsible for student recruitment and progression. We are working with research

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<sup>5</sup> Note that ‘Inclusive’ is one of the words listed in the survey below Q. 53. ‘Which of the following words would you associate with the University of Edinburgh?’. In 2019 36% of respondents ticked that box (and 34% in 2020).

organisations to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are fully embedded in all our activities.’

Therefore, given this dynamic landscape the WG **recommends** that a case is developed and made to the new Development Board in consultation with the Recruitment and Admissions representative (Rebecca Gaukroger, already contacted) for the development of a separate EDI monitoring form to gather information by self-report and at application stage on the following: protected characteristics, first-degree institution (RG or not), home postcode at the point of entry to first degree (from which POLAR/SIMD data can be extracted), whether or not the applicant has a parent with a higher education qualification and/or parental occupational group, whether they have caring responsibilities, are care-experienced, whether they have spent time out of education, whether they have had any previous funding for education, whether they are/have been an asylum seeker or refugee, whether they are estranged from their family (someone who no longer has the support of their family due to a breakdown in their relationships which has led to ceased contact), and their nationality (with reference to the list of low- and middle-income countries provided by the OECD and utilized by significant funders including the [Wellcome Trust](#)).

This data will provide a basket of indicators in a relatively flexible and adaptable format which can be used in conjunction with the HESA student record (where available) to provide a measure of socio-economic diversity at an aggregate level, again with the purpose of shaping WP strategy and practices.

The WG recognises that there are risks attached to this approach. For example, since applicants already provide information about many protected characteristics on the application form it may be undesirable or confusing or even unsettling to ask for it once again in a separate monitoring form. But in the absence of consistent use of EUCLID application forms and given the difficulties relating to the redesign of EUCLID forms the WG believes that the recommended approach – which can provide an online form for use by each School – can conform to sector-wide best practice and provide a more complete and informative set of EDI data than at present.

In the longer-term the WG **recommends** the redesign of the application form on EUCLID to capture the data outlined in the previous paragraph, as well as the sharing of data collected with EDI teams and Athena Swan teams possibly via incorporation into EDMARC reporting.

At the same time, qualitative data can provide useful insights about inequality and other barriers to WP and so the WG **recommends** that the DC, or other appropriate body, support the appointment of an EDI PG intern to lead focus groups with current and past students to be used to inform WP strategy.

### 4.3 Policy and Practice

The WG agreed that there are a range of barriers to PGR study at Edinburgh which might be addressed by means of changes to policy and practice. In addition to the resources already mentioned in this report discussion was guided by the group membership's own considerable expertise and experience, the SRA's PhD Information Gathering research (2016), and by qualitative comments provided by students to the SGSSS and to the WG's PGR student representative (Brittany Blankinship).

The stages of PGR recruitment and admissions, with reference to opportunities for EDI interventions, are set out in **Appendix B**.

i. Advertising

Evidence suggests that many potential applicants and applicants are unsure about what is involved in doing a PhD and are confused or put off by the information provided by the University. This information can appear in different places and seem to be in conflict (eg. University versus Subject Area/CDT) or couched in [language that is not inclusive](#). The standardisation and co-ordination of advice to those interested in PGR study may be aided by the DC, which now has outward-facing [webpages](#) and a growing social media presence. The WG **recommends** that the DC works with CAM and other relevant parts of the University to review the advertising of PhDs and consider more inclusive placement (eg. [BBSTEM](#)), ensure promotional material is representative of key target groups, and to develop a University of Edinburgh PhD 'shop window' on its main webpage aimed at traditionally underrepresented groups. This should demystify the nature of the PhD, highlight funding opportunities (including UKRI funding), explain the process of developing a proposal (akin to the recent [SGSSS application webinar](#)), and outline the application process in general terms. This work may link to the relevant College or University webpages and tools (including degree finder, currently in redevelopment), but it will also be an opportunity to draw on the membership of the DC and showcase the experiences and successes of selected student case studies.

It is clear that contact with current PhD students and staff is a vital source of information and reassurance for many would-be PGR students and the WG **recommends** the development of features modelled on [current practice in the sector](#) and/or the use of [existing systems](#) which will allow these students to chat with current PGR students, staff, and alumni, or to view video presentations and participate in online workshops on key aspects of the PhD application procedure and experience – including mapping the 'bridge' from PGT to PGR study.

The WG also **recommends** the greater involvement of PGR Student Ambassadors and EUSA Student Mentors in work to provide 'outreach' to the [most ethnically diverse universities](#) and 'inreach' (to current Edinburgh UG and PGT students), as well as work on nurturing supportive communities of enquirers and applicants from underrepresented groups. All of this work can form part of the relevant DC work

streams and may be progressed and co-ordinated most effectively there by the relevant workstream owners.

ii. Enquiry, Application, and Selection

The WG discussed the role of academics and potential supervisors as the first ports of call for many enquirers. It is clear that these contacts can determine whether an individual feels that a PhD is 'for them' or not, and also help determine which PhD individuals might consider or apply for. In these encounters, as well as in interviews (where these are regularly held) there is a danger of 'unconscious bias' on the part of academics, professional services staff (including the Enquiry Management Team), external partners, and others. Accordingly, the WG **recommends** the development of guidance and an online training module for PGR selectors and interviewers modelled on, and complementing the [Fundamentals of PhD Supervision](#) module developed by the IAD. An outline of the topics which might be covered or included in a checklist for staff are noted in **Appendix C**.

Although informal academic and professional services contact with enquirers is quite common, interviews with PhD applicants are less common in parts of the University (especially in CAHSS). Evidence suggests that such personal contact is critical for progress to and through postgraduate study and is considered good practice for many DTPs. The WG **recommends** that in line with the [Disability Confident](#) scheme an online or 'in person' Widening Access Interview be offered to those applicants with a self-declared disability who meet minimum requirements for the selected programme of study.

Mentoring applicants effectively through the process is vital. The WG **recommends** that programmes consider running Q&A sessions throughout the application period to and, where interviews are conducted, to offer an informal opportunity to short-listed candidates to discuss the areas to be covered in interview. More broadly, the WG also **recommends** that work is undertaken to consider the scalability across the University of local and sector-wide pockets of good practice in interview and selection of PhD applicants.

This may be considered a first step towards contextualised admissions for PGR study. A recent review article describes the practice in an undergraduate context:

Contextualised admissions ... is the use of contextual data and information about applicants' context to assess whether there is undeveloped potential that could be nurtured for success at university even when achieved grades are perhaps not as high as those of some other applicants.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Anna Mountford-Zimdars, Joanne Moore and Louise Higham, 'What is the current state of debate around the use of contextualised admissions for undergraduate admissions? A review of the current stakeholder perspective,' *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 25, no. 1 (2021): 14.

The WG **recommends** that work is undertaken – perhaps by an EDI intern – to gather evidence of good practice in relation to contextual admissions so that some consideration can be given in future as to whether potential applicants and their proposed supervisors ought to provide contextual information in their application process. One issue with this approach is that it ‘relies on applicants and those supporting them knowing how to argue the case for contextualising achievements and potential’.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it has also been suggested that some elements, such as details of previous institutions as well as personal details such as age should be omitted and more emphasis given to non-academic skills, academic potential and a ‘whole person’ approach. There are also questions about how to adequately support these students during their studentship and wider doctoral study. A recent study of the undergraduate context notes that ‘[t]he potential risks involved in reducing entry requirements are a modest reduction in rates of degree completion and a more substantial reduction in rates of higher degree classifications awarded, but both of these risks can be ameliorated by providing better support for contextually disadvantaged learners’.<sup>8</sup>

The WG recognised the important role played by Scholarships in supporting students moving to and through PGR study, especially those from underrepresented socio-economic backgrounds, and it supports current WP work with Development and Alumni which is focused on PGT scholarships, as well as the work of the DC Scholarships Committee which is addressing this question. The WG **recommends** that these groups consider the strengths and weaknesses of [local examples](#) of good practice as well as the experience of [ring-fenced awards](#) being introduced by several DTPs. On this basis, the WG **recommends** that PGR WP funding schemes are piloted as soon as practicable.

### **Resource implications**

5. The most significant resource implications are related to the recommendation to develop and manage an online reporting form and the recommendation to appoint a PGR EDI intern to study the feasibility of introducing contextual admissions at PGR level.

### **Risk Management**

6. Failure to ensure robust and reliable admissions processes are in place might risk non-compliance with Equality legislation as well as risking future access to UKRI funding for our students and researchers.

### **Equality & Diversity**

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Vikki Boliver, Stephen Gorard and Nadia Siddiqui, ‘Using contextual data to widen access to higher education,’ *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 25, no. 1 (2021): 12.

7. The working group is making recommendations that will ensure greater compliance and thereby support increased diversity of our student intakes. Any approved recommendations will be subjected to an equality impact assessment before implementation.

**Next steps & Communication**

8. It is suggested that communication and consultations could be managed through the Doctoral College Teams channel.

**Consultation (\*already consulted)**

9. DC Management Group\*, WP Strategy Group, Race equality and Anti-racism Sub-group of University of Edinburgh EDIC, Edinburgh Race Equality Network, Student Systems, SRA.

**Further information**

10. Please contact the author, in the first instance the convenor of the WG.

Author

Presenter

Postgraduate Research Admissions  
Working Group

Stephen Bowd (Dean PG Education, CAHSS)

7 May 2021

**Freedom of Information**

11. This Paper is Open



**Appendix A: Membership of Working Group**

Brittany Blankinship (Doctoral College Student Representative for CAHSS)

Stephen Bowd (Doctoral College Co-lead, CAHSS Dean PG Education, **Convenor**)

Mette Cameron (Student Recruitment and Admissions)

Laura Cattell (Head of WP and Deputy Director for Student Recruitment and Admissions, member of University WP Strategy Group and Racial Equality Group)

Susan M. Farrington (Director MRC DTP Precision Medicine, MVM)

Sharon Maguire (PGR Careers Manager, Careers Service)

Jean O'Donoghue (OPTIMA CDT Project Manager, EDI Co-ordinator in School of Chemistry, CSE)

Caroline Proctor (Graduate School and Staffing Services Manager, BBSRC EASTBIO DTP, CSE)

Emma Rowson (Programme Manager and Lead, Service Excellence Programme: Student Recruitment and Admissions)

Gillian Simmons (Head of Admissions, Student Recruitment and Admissions)

Hilary Snaith (Executive Manager of Edinburgh Infectious Diseases)

Graeme Trousdale (Associate Dean for WP, CAHSS)



# Appendix B

Disproportionate loss of minority PhD students

“Not for me”

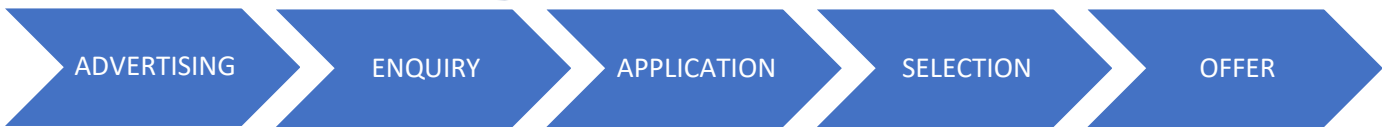
- No response
- Discouraging response
- “not for me”

- Application process discouraging
- Incorrect application

- Biased process
- Poor selection design
- “False negatives”
- @shortlist or @interview

- Better offer elsewhere
- Discouraged by process
- “Not for me”

Opportunities for EDI Interventions



Interventions

Potential action owners of interventions

Appropriate data for evaluation

Mechanism of data collection

PhD ‘shop window’	Guidance and online training for PhD interviewers and selectors	Guidance and online training for PhD interviewers and selectors	Widening Access Interview	
EDI targeted chat with staff and students			Scholarships	
Mentoring and Q&A	Mentoring	Mentoring		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EUSA</li> <li>• Doctoral College</li> <li>• Colleges</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Programmes</li> <li>• Supervisors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IAD</li> <li>• Colleges</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Programmes</li> <li>• Supervisors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IAD</li> <li>• Colleges</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Programmes</li> <li>• Supervisors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;A</li> <li>• Colleges</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Programmes</li> <li>• Supervisors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleges</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Programmes</li> <li>• Supervisors</li> </ul>

Q1: What are the EDI interventions to address losses?

Q2: Who are action owners?

Q3: What data to collect and when?

Q4: What is mechanism for data collection?

Appropriate equality monitoring information to be collected at each stage

Above data to be collected appropriately, securely and accessible to EDI teams

## Appendix C: Guidance/Training for PGR Selectors/Interviewers

Topics to be covered	Existing resources and good practice
EDI and PGRs – overview of some of the data and research on issues / underrepresentation of certain groups	EDMARC data  <a href="#">Measuring doctoral student diversity – socio economic background</a>  <a href="#">Data on doctoral students</a>
Relevant policies	<a href="#">PG admissions policy</a>  <a href="#">admissions, feedback, complaints and appeals policy</a>  other admissions policies (e.g disclosed disability, criminal convictions)
Relevant advice on key legislation	<a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/higher-education-admissions">https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/higher-education-admissions</a>  <a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/positive-action">https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/positive-action</a>
Unconscious bias overview and <a href="#">point to training</a>  Point to <a href="#">Equality and diversity training</a>	<a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/courses/other-courses/elearning">https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/courses/other-courses/elearning</a>

<p>Importance of clarity of information for candidates –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on how selection decisions will be made (criteria)</li> <li>• on what to expect during the interview (e.g. presentation, who is on panel)</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.imagingcdt.com/applications/">https://www.imagingcdt.com/applications/</a></p>
<p>Good practice in the interview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who should be involved in the interview / make-up of panel, if a panel?</li> <li>• Good questioning (what should and possibly should not be asked of candidates with EDI in mind)</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/inclusiverec/">https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/inclusiverec/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/equitable-admissions-underrepresented-groups">https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/equitable-admissions-underrepresented-groups</a></p>
<p>Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What data should be collected on interview candidates and why</li> </ul>	

(GDPR/Data Protection Training)	
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**Senate Education Committee**

**15 September 2021**

**Student Partnership Agreement 2021-22**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper is the proposed University of Edinburgh Student Partnership Agreement for 2021-22. The SPA is negotiated each year between the University and Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), with groups of staff and students consulted about the priority areas focused on each year. This SPA and its priority areas help to promote Strategy 2030's values, in particular fostering a welcoming community and ensuring our teaching and research is relevant to society, diverse, inclusive and accessible to all. The SPA funded projects also explicitly create opportunities for students and staff to co-create work together enhancing the impact of work we do.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. We ask the Education Committee to Approve the Student Partnership Agreement for 2021-22.

**Background and context**

3. Responsibility for leading and administering the SPA has shifted from Academic Services to the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) at the end of academic year 2020-21, due to changes in staffing. A group representing IAD, EUSA, and Academic Services, along with the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, work together to create the SPA and make decisions about related SPA funding.

The SPA is a broad statement of intent for the University and EUSA to work in partnership. The priority areas/themes are negotiated annually but stayed the same during 2020-21 due to disruption caused by Covid-19 and due to the continued relevance of the themes. The priority areas agreed each year become the focus for SPA Funding which is available for small partnership projects of up to £500 each, and these projects enable increased activity to take place across the University focused on the agreed priority areas.

**Discussion**

4. The priority areas have been updated and we particularly seek feedback that these themes are appropriate for the coming academic year 2021-22.

**Resource implications**

5. None for the SPA itself. The SPA funding scheme is funded by the IAD up to a total of £5000 for 2021-22.

**Risk management**

6. There are no significant risks to continuation of the Student Partnership Agreement.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

7. Previous SPA projects have focused on sustainability. The priority areas proposed for 2021-22 are most closely connected to supporting SDG 5 on achieving gender equality, and to some extent SDG 8 on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.

**Equality & diversity**

8. Equality, diversity and inclusion are explicitly proposed as a priority area within the SPA 2021-22 and thus will be likely to be the focus of some of the SPA funded projects this academic year.

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

9. Once agreed, the SPA will be uploaded to new SPA webpages (<https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/student-engagement/student-partnership-agreement>), and the SPA and associated funding will be advertised widely. SPA funded projects will be encouraged in relation to the priority themes, but not excluding other relevant themes.

**Author**

*Name Dr Catherine Bovill  
Senior Lecturer in Student Engagement  
Institute for Academic Development*

*Date 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021*

**Freedom of Information Open**



## STUDENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT 2021-22

### Working together to enhance the student experience

#### Introduction

##### What is a Student Partnership Agreement?

Student Partnership Agreements were first outlined in the Scottish Government's 2011 paper *Putting Learners at the Centre – Delivering our Ambitions for Post-16 Education*, which, amongst many other things, proposed the development of a document setting out how students and their institutions interact. Sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland) subsequently published guidance in 2013 for the development of student partnership agreements for universities. A number of Scottish HEIs have since developed Student Partnership Agreements or are working towards their development.

A Student Partnership Agreement is essentially an explicit statement of the ways in which the institution and the student body are working in partnership. It should be a living document that is reviewed annually and, over time, will enable progress on activities to be documented and communicated.

It is not a contract and has no legal basis. The term 'partnership' reflects a mature relationship, based on mutual trust and respect. Partnership working recognises that members of the partnership have legitimate, though sometimes different, perceptions and experiences. By working together towards a common agreed purpose, we can achieve positive outcomes to the benefit of all concerned. The core emphasis is on common goals and activity rather than separating out staff and student responsibilities.

##### Benefits of a Partnership Agreement

A key benefit of a Student Partnership Agreement is the ability to engage and communicate with the wider student body, beyond the Students' Association. In particular, a Student Partnership Agreement can:

- serve to map and promote student engagement opportunities across the University;
- act as a tool to reflect on the ways in which staff and students interact and highlight any enhancements that can be made;
- be used to monitor and review the effectiveness of student engagement;
- provide tangible evidence of the partnership between students and staff.

##### Why develop a Student Partnership Agreement?

The University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh University Students' Association have enjoyed a long and productive partnership, which has been commended in Enhancement-led

Institutional Review reports from the Quality Assurance Agency for Scotland. We were already working in partnership before Student Partnership Agreements, and in many ways we were ahead of most Scottish HEIs in developing a joint Students' Association and University of Edinburgh Student Engagement Statement in 2013 that set out our explicit commitment to working in partnership with our students and outlined the various ways in which students could engage with the University. This agreement builds on the strength of that established partnership.

The priorities in the Student Partnership Agreement align with the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy and Students' Association own priorities, rather than creating new initiatives. The agreement serves to highlight ways in which the wider University, including all staff and students, can effectively work together to enhance the student experience. It sets out our values, our approach to partnership and the priorities we have agreed to work on.

## Our values

Our partnership is underpinned by the following core values and sets out expectations of both students and staff to enhance the student experience:

**Excellence** – We are committed to excellence in education, expect the highest standards of our teachers and learners, and recognise high quality teaching. We want to be known nationally and internationally for the quality of our teaching and the quality of our graduates.

**Inquiry** – We foster an approach to learning based on research and inquiry. We celebrate and encourage independent, critical thinkers. We provide opportunities for student-led, co-designed learning within and beyond the main discipline. Our excellence in research enhances our teaching and we consider that every student is an active researcher and participant in building knowledge.

**Community** – We are all members of a vibrant community based on collaboration, co-creation and support for one another. Our connectivity extends across different disciplines and outside the University to our alumni and external partnerships. Our community is underpinned by high-quality academic and pastoral support, peer-learning, clubs and societies.

**Inclusion** – We celebrate the diversity of our University community. We value and respect each other. We create a welcoming and supportive environment in which all members of our community have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

**Responsibility** – We promote the highest standards of individual behaviour and personal accountability, ensuring we act ethically and sustainably. We all have a responsibility to develop the student experience, including engaging constructively in giving and receiving feedback to positively enhance the Edinburgh experience for current and future students.

## Partnership at Edinburgh

Our commitment to working in partnership with students is articulated at the highest level in the University's Strategic Plan and the University Learning and Teaching Strategy. Staff at the University of Edinburgh currently work in partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association to ensure that students are central to:

- governance and decision making,
- quality assurance and enhancement,
- providing opportunities for students to become active participants,



- fostering collaboration between students and staff.

Appendix 1 sets out examples of working in partnership

## **Partnership in Practice – Our Priorities**

Our priorities are set out in the following themes, which relate to ongoing work in the Student Experience Action Plan and the University Strategy and have been discussed with the Students' Association, the Directors of Teaching Network and approved by the Senate Education Committee.

### **Community**

- Supporting staff and students to develop, enhance, and support resilient learning communities that promote a sense of wellbeing and belonging.

### **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

- Ensuring that we work in partnership to promote a University community where all are welcome, respected and nurtured. Making intentional efforts to meet the needs of our diverse community of students and staff, recognising intersectionality, and that we may need to change the way we practice to ensure some individuals and groups, who traditionally have been underserved, feel welcome and wish to engage.

### **Transforming learning and teaching**

- Engaging in curriculum enhancement through student-staff co-creation. Recognising the power of learning, teaching, and assessment to transform the student experience. Supporting work on decolonisation of the curriculum and university-wide curriculum transformation.

### **Reviewing the Student Partnership Agreement**

The Partnership Agreement will continue to be reviewed annually to check on progress and to review the themes following the election of student sabbatical officers and outcomes from major student surveys. If the themes remain relevant they may continue for a further academic year to allow for greater continuity and impact.

Appendix 1: Examples of working in partnership

## University level involvement:

- The Student Representation system - [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation)
- Student participation on committees at every level of the University, including
  - Student-Staff Liaison Committees,
  - School and subject area committees,
  - College Committees,
  - Senate, Court and the Senate Committees
- Student participation in Task and Project Groups
- Student participation in the Internal Periodic Review Process, including full membership of review teams – [Information for students on Internal Review Process](#)

## Student-led initiatives, including, but not limited to:

- Peer Learning and Support – <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/peerlearningsupport>
- Student-Led Individually Created Courses (SLICCs) <http://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit/case-studies/sliccs>
- Student Awards (formerly the Activities Awards and Impact Awards, now combined into a single event): <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/whatson/awards/studentawards>
- Student-Led Teaching Awards - [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/teachingawards](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/teachingawards)
- Student Led Activities from Societies to volunteering that enhance student life. – <http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities>
- Student Groups: <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/list> (groups for marginalised and underrepresented students) or <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/yourvoice/yourrepresentatives/liberationofficers> and <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/yourvoice/yourrepresentatives/sectionrepresentatives> (student representatives for marginalised and underrepresented students)

# The University of Edinburgh

## Senate Education Committee Terms of Reference

### 1. Purpose and Role

- 1.1. The Education Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for taught and research student matters, particularly strategy and policy concerning learning, teaching and the development of curriculum.

### 2. Remit

- 2.1. Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners.
- 2.2. Promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment, embrace new teaching methods and consider cross-cutting themes such as research-led and technology-enhanced learning, digital and information literacy, education for employability, internationalisation and lifelong learning. Consider and promote local developments or initiatives with substantial implications for University learning and teaching strategy, policy, services or operations.
- 2.3. Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback.
- 2.4. Give specific consideration to instances in which the experience of one particular cohort of students or learners (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research students, and those involved in non-standard programmes) may diverge from that of others.
- 2.5. Anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in learning and teaching for all cohorts of students and learners.
- 2.6. Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.

### 3. Operation

- 3.1. The Committee reports to Senate, acting with delegated authority to take strategic and high-level policy decisions.
- 3.2. The Committee may bring matters to the attention of the University Executive as required.
- 3.3. The Committee will meet at least four times each academic year and will interact electronically, as necessary.
- 3.4. The Committee will follow a schedule of business set prior to the start of the academic year and which is agreed through consultation with Senate, the Conveners of the other Senate Committees, and other relevant members of the community.
- 3.5. From time to time, the Committee will establish working groups or commission individuals to carry out detailed work under the Committee's oversight.

#### 4. Composition

Role	Term
Vice Principal for Students (Convener)	Ex Officio
Assistant Principal Academic Standards & Quality Assurance	Ex Officio
2 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for learning and teaching	
1 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for postgraduate research	
1 x Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice-President Education	Ex Officio
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Ex Officio
1 x postgraduate research student representative	
1 x Head of School from each College chosen by the Heads of College	
Director of Academic Services, or nominee	Ex Officio
Director of Institute for Academic Development, or nominee	Ex Officio
Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions, or nominee	Ex Officio
Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services, or nominee	Ex Officio
Director for Careers & Employability, or nominee	Ex Officio
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener	Up to 3 years

4.1. The Convener can invite individuals for specific meetings or agenda items.

4.2. Substitution of members (i.e. due to inability to attend) shall be at the discretion of the Convener of the Committee.

#### 5. Responsibilities and Expectations of Committee Members

5.1. Be collegial and constructive in approach.

5.2. Attend regularly and participate fully in the work of the Committee and its task / working groups. This will involve looking ahead and consulting / gathering input in order to provide the broad spectrum of thoughts and opinions which are necessary for proper consideration of the area being discussed.

5.3. Take collective and individual ownership for the issues under the Committee's remit and for the discussion and resolution of these issues. In taking ownership of the work of the Committee, members should take steps to ensure that they are empowered to take decisions on behalf of academic and managerial colleagues.

5.4. Be committed to communicating the work of the Committee to the wider University Community.

Approved by Senate September 2019

## Membership Senate Education Committee

2021/22

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Colm Harmon	Vice-Principal Students (Convener) – Ex Officio
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)
Stephen Bowd	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)
Judy Hardy	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Andrew Dugmore	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)
Jamie Davies	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, UG)
Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, PGT)
Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)
Tara Gold	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice-President Education – Ex Officio
Stuart Lamont	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Permanent Staff Member – Ex Officio
To be filled	Postgraduate Research Student Representative
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
Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services – Ex Officio
Shelagh Green	Director for Careers & Employability – Ex Officio
Sian Bayne	Co-option – Digital Education
Paula Webster	Co-option – Student Analytics and Insights
	Co-option
(Philippa Ward)	(Secretary)



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* EDINBURGH

# **SENATE COMMITTEES' MEMBERS' GUIDANCE**

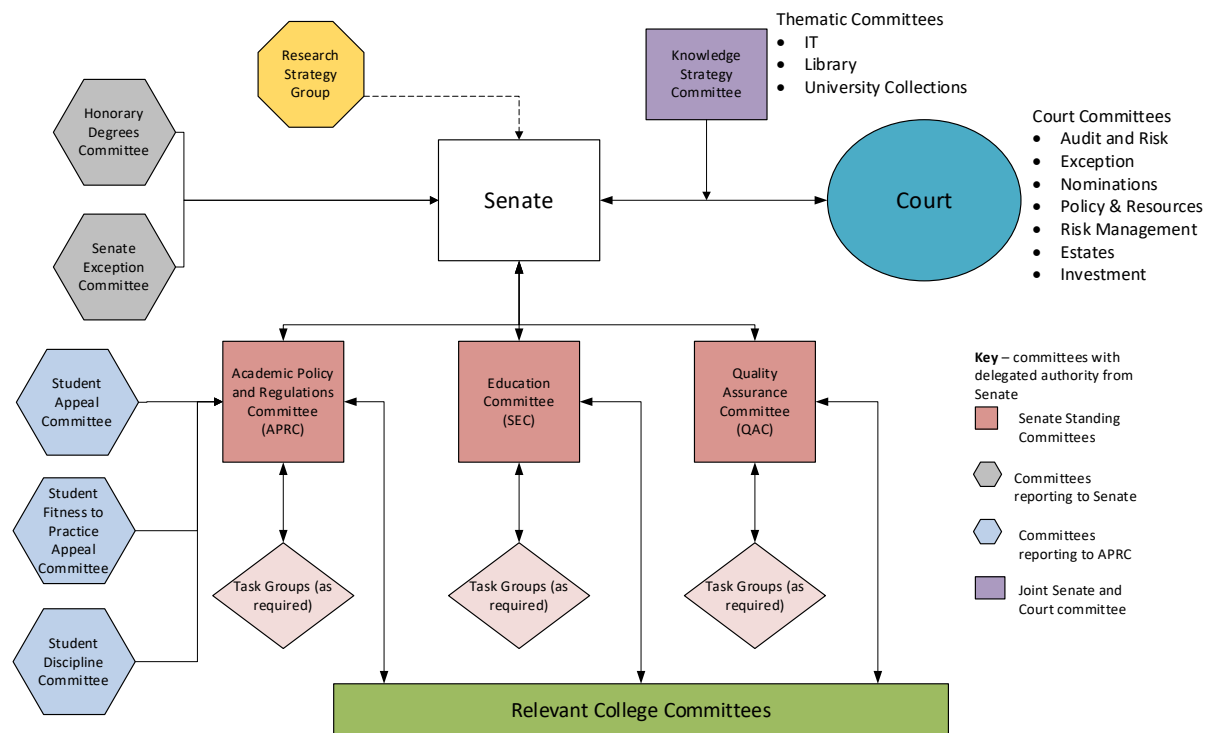
**September 2021**

**Academic Services**

**INTRODUCTION**

This guidance has been developed for members of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Standing Committees. As members of the University’s senior academic governance committees, you play a very important role in supporting and enhancing the academic work of the University, and ultimately the student experience.

**Committee Structure**



**TYPES OF MEMBER**

The membership of each committee is detailed in its terms of reference (*see page 4*). There are different types of committee member:

**Ex officio member:** a member of a committee by virtue of their position.

*For example, the College Deans of Quality (or equivalent) are ex officio members of Quality Assurance Committee; Edinburgh University Students’ Association Vice-President Education is an ex officio member of Education Committee.*

**Member with specific responsibilities:** a member appointed to a committee because they have responsibility for a particular, relevant area.

*For example, the Colleges shall each nominate two senior members of staff within the College with responsibility for learning and teaching.*

**Co-opted member:** a member selected because of their expertise in a particular area. Co-opted members do not usually represent a specific constituency, and normally serve for a fixed term.

*For example, up to two additional members may be co-opted onto the committee by the convener depending on the expertise required (members will normally serve a three year term).*

**External member:** a member appointed from out with the University. These members bring relevant skills and experience to the committee along with an external viewpoint.

*For example, the Committee shall appoint an external member from the Scottish Higher Education system with experience in quality assurance matters to join the membership of Quality Assurance Committee.*

**In attendance:** the convener may invite individuals for specific meetings or agenda items. Individuals who are “in attendance” at a committee meeting are not members of the committee.

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS’ ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### All Members

All members of the committee are expected:

- to be clear about the functions of the committee as prescribed in its terms of reference.
- to uphold the "seven principles of public life" - selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership:  
[www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Governance/CourtMembersCode.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Governance/CourtMembersCode.pdf)
- to be collegial and constructive in approach.
- to attend all meetings and participate fully in the work of the committee and its task groups.
- to take collective and individual ownership for the issues under the committee’s remit and for the discussion and resolution of these issues. (In taking ownership of the work of the committee, members must ensure that they are empowered to take decisions on behalf of academic and managerial colleagues.)
- to be committed to communicating the work of the committee to the wider University community.
- to assess the impact of proposed new or revised policies and practices on the ‘protected characteristic groups’ set out in the Equality Act 2010: [www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/impact-assessment](http://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/impact-assessment)

#### Convener

The convener must ensure the effective conduct of the committee (within the terms of reference). They should ensure that business is being progressed and facilitate meaningful discussion and sound decision-making.

#### Convener’s Action

There are occasions on which non-contentious decisions that cannot wait until the next meeting of the committee are required. These can be dealt with through ‘Convener’s Action’ and reported at the next meeting of the committee. If urgent consideration of more contentious matters is required between meetings, the convener will consult committee members before making a decision.

#### Committee Member



The role of the committee member is to contribute effectively to the business and outcomes of the committee, and to represent their constituency. Full participation by all members is paramount to the success of the committee.

In general, those who are representing a particular constituency are College or Students' Association representatives. As representative members they are a conduit between the committee and their constituency. Two-way communication is extremely important in supporting the work of the committee: it will ensure that the views of staff and students across the University are taken into account and that important developments are disseminated.

Although other committee members may not necessarily represent a particular constituency, all members have a responsibility to disseminate issues appropriately and to bring relevant matters to the attention of the committee.

***(Appendix 1 provides additional guidance on consulting stakeholders on learning, teaching and student experience matters.)***

#### **Students' Association Representative**

The student voice is greatly valued by the University. All Senate committee memberships therefore include student representation through the Students' Association. Students' Association representatives are a link between the committee and the student body and should therefore report back on and discuss committee business in relevant student forums.

Students' Association representatives may be asked by the convener to provide information on the student opinion in relation to a particular issue. If it is not possible to do this at the meeting, representatives should follow this up outside of the meeting by consulting further and reporting back.

#### **Committee Secretary**

The role of the committee secretary is to support the effective operation of the committee (in accordance with the terms of reference). This involves liaising with and guiding the convener and committee members, creating and maintaining committee records and communicating outcomes.

### **NEW MEMBERS' INDUCTION**

New committee members will be invited to meet the convener and committee secretary shortly before the first meeting of the academic year. They may wish to use this opportunity to find out what will be expected of them as a committee member; about the background and recent work of the committee; and about the priorities and strategic direction of the committee. Academic Services staff will be available to provide ongoing advice and guidance on the academic governance framework if required.

Students' Association representatives receive meeting training from the Students' Association during their induction.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of reference describe the purpose and structure of a committee. Typically they contain the purpose and role; the remit; operation; composition; and responsibilities of committee members. The powers and responsibilities of the committee as recorded in the terms of reference are delegated from Senate. It is therefore vital that Senate committees operate within their remit and operational arrangements.

Terms of reference for all Senate committees are available on the Academic Services website: [www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees)

## PREPARATION OF COMMITTEE DOCUMENTATION

### Agendas

These are prepared by the committee secretary, in consultation with the convener. Members will be asked if they have items they would like to add to the agenda.

### Papers

These can be prepared by committee members or by any member of the University community with an issue they would like the committee to discuss. Paper authors are required to:

- liaise with the committee secretary to agree if and when a paper should be brought to the committee.
- use the template at **Appendix 2** to ensure that the paper produced is concise and clear about the action that needs to be taken by the committee.

### Minutes

These are prepared by the committee secretary and include a clear record of action to be taken following the meeting.

## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMITTEE DOCUMENTATION

Committee documentation is circulated electronically by the committee secretary, usually by uploading it to the Academic Services' website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees>. This is in line with sector best practice and ensures transparency of committee business.

**Closed papers** (confidential papers to which Freedom of Information exemptions apply) are emailed separately to committee members. It is good practice to minimise closed business.

**Reserved business** is business which, for reasons of confidentiality, is not discussed by the whole committee. Reserved business papers are emailed separately to those members of the committee who are entitled to receive them. When these papers are discussed at the committee meeting, those who are not entitled to be part of the discussion are asked to leave the meeting.

Further guidance on Freedom of Information, Data Protection and records management is available at [www.ed.ac.uk/records-management](http://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management)

(Please note that Committee Members' notes could be subject to a Freedom of Information request. It is therefore good practice for members to dispose of any notes once actions are complete and to dispose of any papers after the meeting.)

### COMMUNICATION OF DECISIONS

As stated above, committee members have a responsibility to communicate decisions to the constituency represented. Academic Services uses the 'Senate Committees' Newsletter' to communicate developments to stakeholders. The most recent Senate Committees' Newsletter is available at [www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/newsletter](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/newsletter)

At the end of each academic session, Academic Services publishes a list of all significant changes to regulations, policies and codes, and brings them to attention of staff: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/new-policies](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/new-policies). Academic Services is happy to assist with communicating and implementing Senate committee decisions, for example by holding briefing meetings for relevant stakeholders, or introducing items at School or College committee meetings.

The equality impact of any significant changes to regulations, policies and codes must be assessed: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/impact-assessment>

### TASK GROUPS

The work of the Senate committees is supported by limited-life task groups. All task groups have a 'parent' Senate committee through which they formally report. The 'parent' Senate committee assigns each task group a specific body of work which is outlined in a remit and membership document. Task group members need not necessarily be committee members. Since tasks groups are limited-life, members are expected to contribute effectively to support the work of the group, which will likely be fast-paced. All task group reports must include a communication and implementation plan.

*(Further guidance on planning Senate committee task groups is available as Appendix 3.)*

### USEFUL CONTACTS

Academic Services has ultimate responsibility for the operation of the academic governance framework which includes the committee arrangements. Further information about each committee can be found on its webpage:

#### Education Committee

Committee Secretary: Philippa Ward

Ext: 651 6083

Email: [Phillippa.Ward@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Phillippa.Ward@ed.ac.uk)

Website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/education>

**Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**

Committee Secretary: Ailsa Taylor

Ext: 650 2366

Email: [Ailsa.Taylor@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Ailsa.Taylor@ed.ac.uk)

Website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/academic-policy-regulations>

**Quality Assurance Committee**

Committee Secretary: Brian Connolly

Ext: 651 4481

Email: [B.Connolly@ed.ac.uk](mailto:B.Connolly@ed.ac.uk)

Website: [www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/quality-assurance](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/quality-assurance)

In the absence of any of the above named individuals, please direct your query to:  
[academicservices@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academicservices@ed.ac.uk)

## ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING WITH STAKEHOLDERS ON LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE MATTERS

1. Senate and the Senate Committees can adopt the following approach when consulting Schools, Colleges, students and other stakeholders about changes to strategy, policy or procedure on learning, teaching and student experience matters. Central Management Group approved these principles and standard practices at its meeting on 1 March 2017.

### ***Key principles***

- Senate and the Senate Committees should make their decisions on the basis of a proper understanding of the views of relevant stakeholders, while recognising that, given the diversity of the University's academic community, effective consultation processes will not always lead to consensus.
- The nature of consultation activities should be proportionate to the scale of change that is being proposed and the likelihood of it proving contentious.
- Given the scale and diversity of the University, consultation arrangements will always rely predominantly on individuals with leadership or representational roles in Colleges and Schools representing the views of their constituencies and having authority to make decisions on their behalf on task groups and committees.
- All task groups on issues with direct implications for the student experience should include Student Association representatives.
- When consulting on issues which have an impact on staff, Senate Committees and task groups should recognise the University's commitment to working in partnership with its trade unions and its obligations to consult and negotiate as appropriate.
- Once a consultation process has concluded and a decision made, it is important to provide feedback to those stakeholders who have engaged with the consultation processes.

### ***Approaches to consultation***

2. The attached Annex sets out a table with a range of possible approaches that Senate or a Senate Committee could take to consultation on a particular issue. In general, the more significant or contentious the proposal development, the more of the elements further down the table the consultation processes would need to involve. The Annex is indicative, and a degree of judgement will be required regarding the approaches to consultation required for each development. It is unlikely that any consultation process, however significant and contentious the development, would require all the approaches set out in the Annex.

***Practical issues regarding the operation of consultation processes***

3. Consultation processes – and particularly those lower down the table in the Annex – can be very onerous, both for the staff leading and supporting them, and for the stakeholders engaging with them. For some issues, it is not clear how contentious the proposals may be (and therefore how deep the consultation is required to be) until after the event. This uncertainty could lead colleagues to over-engineer consultation processes in order to avoid the risk of being accused of inadequate consultation. Were this to happen, the number of different developments that the Senate Committees could take forward would be unnecessarily constrained. As such, it is important to make a balanced judgement regarding the level of consultation.

4. The Senior College Academic Administrators, in consultation with their Deans, will take responsibility for selecting their Colleges' representatives on task groups.

***Issues with a staffing dimension***


5. Given the University's increased interest in issues such as developing robust evidence on the quality of teaching, and recognising student education as a key element in our staff recruitment, promotion and annual review processes, it is likely that some of the issues that Senate and its Committees address in the coming years will involve close interaction between academic and employment policy. When determining appropriate approaches to consultation on these issues, it will be important to establish at the outset whether advice and guidance is required from People Committee and what input and sign-off is required from Central Management Group and/or other relevant Court Committees with responsibility for employment policy matters.

6. When consulting on issues with a staffing dimension, in addition to general stakeholder consultation it is also important to recognise the University's commitment to working in partnership with its trade unions and its obligations to consult and negotiate as appropriate before decisions are taken by the University which have an impact on staff.


7. When developing stakeholder consultation plans, University HR Services should be consulted on the appropriate way to ensure early sharing of information and meaningful consultation, and where appropriate, negotiation take place with the recognised trade unions.

**Annex – possible approaches for consultation on learning, teaching and student experience matters**

Nature of proposed change	Example	Typical approaches to consultation	Comments
<p><b>Modest change / unlikely to be contentious</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><b>More significant but unlikely to be particularly contentious</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Modest change to existing academic policy or regulation</p>	<p>Discussion and decision at relevant Senate Committee</p>	<p>Relies on representatives of stakeholders having sufficient knowledge of the views of their constituencies to be able to represent them effectively.</p>
		<p>Establish task group with representatives of relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>Allows for a broader range of relevant perspectives, including those of stakeholders who are not represented on the relevant Senate Committee.</p>
	<p>Development of a new policy that appears unlikely to require significant changes to Schools' practices, or development of policy required to address external regulatory requirements</p>	<p>Consult relevant networks of staff (eg Senior Tutors network, Directors of Learning and Teaching network)</p>	<p>Will provide broad impression of Schools' views on the issue, but will not highlight the extent of variation of views between different and may not take account of the views of some Schools (eg since not all colleagues attend network meetings).</p>
		<p>Invite Colleges, Student Association and other stakeholders (eg support services) to consult with their constituencies and provide written submissions</p>	<p>Provides the relevant Senate Committee or task group more robust evidence regarding stakeholders' views. However, College-level submissions may not always allow them to understand fully the variation of views between different Schools.</p>
		<p>Invite relevant office-holders in Schools to consult with their constituencies and to provide their own written School submissions</p>	<p>Provides the relevant Senate Committee or task group with an understanding of the views of individual Schools, and provides assurance that all Schools are aware of and have discussed the proposed change. The relevant office-holders in the Schools would typically be academic leaders such as Director of Quality</p>

<p><b>Relatively significant with the potential to be contentious</b></p> 	<p>Development of a new policy that is likely to require extensive changes to many Schools' practices, or which may raise significant issues of principle.</p>		<p>or Director of Learning and Teaching, but may in some circumstances be Directors of Professional Services.</p>
		<p>Project leader (eg relevant Convener of Senate Committee or Task Group) to offer to attend all Colleges' relevant Committees, and relevant Student Association meetings, to present and seek views on the issue</p>	<p>Provides valuable opportunity to raise awareness, gauge views, and dispel any myths about the proposed development.</p>
		<p>Invite Heads of Colleges and Heads of Schools to consult with their constituencies and to provide their own written submissions</p>	<p>Heads of Colleges and Schools will provide particularly valuable perspectives on proposed developments that are particularly contentious or that raise significant issues regarding management and resources.</p>
		<p>Project leader (eg relevant Convener of Senate Committee or Task Group) to offer to attend all Schools' relevant Committees to present and seek views on the issue</p>	<p>Provides valuable opportunity to reach large number of staff to raise awareness of and dispel any myths about the proposed development, and to gauge views.</p>
		<p>Focus groups of staff and / or students</p>	<p>Allows the Committee / task group to hear directly from staff and students who are not in management or representational roles, eg particular categories of staff or students with a particularly relevant perspective on the issue (eg disabled students when developing policy regarding accessibility).</p>
		<p>Sample-based surveys of samples of relevant categories of staff and / or students</p>	<p>Similar benefits to focus groups, but with the potential to produce more robust evidence.</p>



 <b>Very major institutional change</b>	Proposals for significant changes to the University's academic year, or curriculum structures		
		Create project webpages with information about the proposals and how stakeholders can express their views on them	Makes the consultation process more transparent. Likely to be more relevant where the proposals are of potential interest to a large number of stakeholders and involve complex documentation.
		Open meetings for staff and / or students	Provides a high profile opportunity for all staff and / or students to express their views on the issue, giving a high degree of transparency to the consultation process. Typical approaches would be to hold one meeting per College.
		Surveys of all staff and students	Very transparent approach that will allow all staff and students to express their views.



Senate **XXX** Committee

**Date**

**Title**

**Description of paper**

*(Should also explain how any proposals will contribute to one of more of the Strategy 2030 outcomes)*

1.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2.

**Background and context**

3.

**Discussion**

4.

5.

**Resource implications**

6.

**Risk management**

7.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

8.

**Equality & diversity**

9.

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

10.

**Author**

*Name*

*Date*

**Presenter**

*Name*

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

## **Guidance on Using Senate Committee Paper Template (*Please delete from the final version of the paper*)**

### **Description of paper**

State the purpose of the paper in clear, non-technical terms. (1 or 2 sentences)

This should include a brief explanation of how the proposals in the paper will contribute to one or more of the outcomes set out in Strategy 2030, namely:

- 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 be a global leader in artificial intelligence and the use of data with integrity.
- iv) Improved digital outreach will see us enabling global participation in education.
- v) We will be leading Scotland's commitment to widening participation.
- vi) We will be a destination of choice, based on our clear "Edinburgh Offer". All of our staff and students will develop here, whether they are from Leith, Lisbon, Lahore or Lilongwe.
- vii) We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.
- viii) Edinburgh will become the Data Capital of Europe. We will deliver inclusive growth, provide data skills to at least 100,000 individuals, and create new companies and solutions for global challenges.
- ix) We will have more user-friendly processes and efficient systems to support our work.
- x) We will see integrated reporting of our whole organisational impact against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- xi) We will be on track to be a Carbon-Zero University by 2040.
- xii) Multidisciplinary postgraduate education pathways will support flexible whole-life learning.
- xiii) Our estate will be fit for purpose, sustainable and accessible. We will support learning, research and collaboration with our neighbours, businesses and partners.

If the proposals outlined in the paper will not contribute to Strategy 2030 outcomes, please state: '*This paper does not contribute to the Strategy 2030 outcomes...*' and explain why eg. it is fulfilling an external regulatory requirement, or similar.

### **Action requested/Recommendation**

For discussion / approval / information; to note formally / consider the recommendations etc. (1 – 3 sentences)

### **Background and context**

Committees need to be able to understand quickly what it is they are being asked to consider, and why. This section should cover the reasons for the paper.

### **Discussion**

This is the main part of the paper – please provide sufficient detail for Committee members to understand the issues and for good decision-making. (1 - 3 pages. If there is a substantial amount of additional information to include, consider providing this in the form of appendices.)

### Resource implications

This section should detail any resource implications associated with the paper. If appropriate, costs, and how they will be met should be outlined. The expectation is that costs will be met from within existing budgets, and approval from the relevant budget holder should be sought. If an application for funding will be submitted to the Planning Round, this should be stated here.

### Risk Management

Key risks and mitigating measures associated with the paper should be outlined here. You may wish to reference the [University's Statement of Risk Policy and Risk Appetite](#).

### Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals

This section is provided to allow the articulation of intended contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The most likely appropriate SDGs are listed below, with the full seventeen goals listed here:

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Please state which SDGs are relevant, and then provide supporting information to justify the contribution of the paper towards these.

If the paper does not contribute to the SDGs, please state: '*This paper does not contribute to the SDGs...*' and explain why eg. it is fulfilling an external regulatory requirement, or similar.

If the proposals outlined in the paper would hinder the achievement of any SDG or would exacerbate the Climate Emergency, please state this and set out any mitigating actions that would minimise or counter-balance the effect.



*Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*



*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*



*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*



*Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all*



*Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation*



*Reduce inequality within and among countries*



*Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*



*Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*



*Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*

## **Equality & Diversity**

The University is required by law (Equality Act 2010 and supporting Regulations) to give due consideration to equality and diversity. If proposing new or revised policies or practices, these also require an [Equality Impact Assessment](#) (EIA). Please detail whether equality and diversity has been considered, whether an EIA is required, and any major equality impacts.

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

Please summarise how any action to be taken as a result of the paper will be communicated and implemented eg. who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation? Where possible, please also provide details of the ways in which the impact of any action taken will be evaluated and reported.

## **Freedom of Information**

This section should specify whether the paper is **open** or **closed**. Wherever possible, papers should be open. If closed, please detail which exclusion this falls under. Further guidance is available on the Records Management website: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management-section/freedom-of-information>

- Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research
- Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs
- Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation
- Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court
- Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act
- Other, within the terms of FoI legislation (please give further details)

## GUIDANCE FOR PLANNING SENATE COMMITTEE TASK GROUPS

### 1. Initial scoping

College input should be sought at the initial stage of planning in relation to remit, membership, scope and timescale for delivery to ensure that any similar College activity or College-specific issues are taken into account.

### 2. Membership

The commissioning committee may give an initial steer on membership. However, there is likely to be some work for the administrator to do in discussion with the Senate committee convener, the convener of the task group, College Office and Edinburgh University Students' Association staff. This can take some time, so start early.

Equality and diversity considerations, in line with the University's Equality and Diversity Strategy, should be taken into account when planning task group membership.

All task groups must have student membership. This is an expectation of the QAA and SFC. So that the Students' Association can allocate its resources, it is best to ask for a nomination from among the sabbaticals for task group membership. Ideally, this should be done as a single request to the Students' Association annually following confirmation of the following year's task groups in June.

College Office staff should also be asked via a single, annual request to nominate task group members from their College.

As draft membership emerges, consult with Academic Services colleagues before inviting members so that individuals don't receive several invitations. Invited members should be clear about their role e.g. representing a specific area, with responsibility for consulting with it.

### 2. Remit document

#### 2.1 Outline remit

State reasons/drivers for establishing the task group and how it has been commissioned e.g. a committee of Senate, in response to X national initiative etc.

High level statement of what the task group aims to achieve.

#### 2.2 Activity

Bullet points covering activity towards fulfilling the remit, e.g. 'internal information-gathering', 'horizon-scanning', 'sub-groups to investigate issues X,Y,Z', "desktop research".

Activity must include undertaking an **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)** and **Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)** of the task group's recommendations, highlighting issues raised by the impact assessments, and providing information about the steps taken to address them. The task group

should take account of equality and privacy issues during its discussions, and should not leave EIAs and PIAs as actions to be undertaken by Academic Services once the task group has concluded.

**2.3 Deliverables**

What outputs the task group aims to deliver. Some of these may emerge as the task group’s work progresses, but there should be some intention of a tangible output from the start.

Any deliverables must take account of the relevant chapter of the UK Quality Code and must explicitly reference it. E.g. a task group on ‘Student Engagement in Quality Processes’ might produce a policy for the operation of staff-student liaison committees. Work on drafting the policy will include checking against the precepts of the relevant Quality Code chapter, and the final policy will state ‘this policy complies with the precepts of the UK Quality Code Chapter B5’.

There may be other legislative requirements which need to be addressed according to the scope of the task group.

Deliverables must include an implementation plan proposing responsibility for approval and delivery of each of the task group’s recommendations [see below].

**2.4 Timescales**

Timescale in which the task group will operate, including dates of interim (if any) and final report to relevant Senate Committee. Any significant timescale implications of the implementation plan to be mentioned here.

If implementation will require some task group members to form an implementation or advisory group beyond the end of the task group’s work, this should be stated here. This is particularly the case if the task group recommends follow-on work packages.

**3. Committee approval of membership, remit, scope, deliverables and timescale**

This information should be approved by the Committee at its first meeting in Semester 1, or (for task groups initiated mid-session) at the first available meeting.

**4. Implementation Plan**

An implementation plan must form part of the task group’s final report. This ensures that the task group’s expertise informs how the recommendations are taken forward. The task group is well placed to advise on risks and barriers to successful implementation and how they can be overcome.

Recommendation	Recommendation breakdown ie. steps required for delivery	Communication strategy	Transfer of recommendations to University policy/guidance

Recommendations should be broken down into the steps needed to deliver them. An apparently simple one-line recommendation can conceal a large amount of work to ensure delivery, possibly involving setting up an implementation group to deliver complex work packages, and it is vital that this is planned for at the outset and is feasible within available resource. College input is vital here, either through core task group membership or consultation as part of task group activity.

A strategy for communicating the task group's recommendations to Schools, Colleges and support services should be devised. College input in particular should be sought here: Colleges will advise in particular on issues of timing of requests for action by Schools. In order to streamline communication from the Senate Committees about onward work required to implement recommendations, it is intended that Academic Services will coordinate communication across all task groups.

A plan for the transfer of task group recommendations into University policy or guidance should be developed: task group recommendations can lead to the development of new policy and / or the revision of existing material. There may also be a knock-on impact on other policies and guidance, which may or may not have been signalled in the task group's report. This section should state what action is required e.g. new policy, amendment of existing policy, and who it is proposed will undertake this work.

## **5. Final report**

Identify whether the final report should be sent to any other Senate committees in addition to the task group's 'home' committee. Not all task group members will be members of Senate committees, so task group members should be notified when the final task group report is sent to the Senate committee.

## **6. Post-implementation Review**

All Senate committees will carry out post-implementation reviews at appropriate points to determine the success or potential barriers to full implementation. The reviews will be actioned by Academic Services.



**Senate**

**2 June 2021**

**Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees**

**Description of paper**

1. This is the annual report of the Senate Standing Committees: Education Committee; Academic Policy and Regulations Committee; and Quality Assurance Committee. It reports on the Committees' achievements and use of delegated powers in 2020-21. It also proposes outline plans for 2021-22.

**Action requested**

2. Senate is invited to NOTE the major items of committee business from 2020-21 and to APPROVE the plans of the Senate Committees for the next academic year.

**Background and Context**

3. The Senate Standing Committees provide an annual report setting out progress on activities in the past year and seeking Senate approval for their general strategic direction and priorities for the next academic year.

**Resource implications**

4. The proposed plans for 2021-22 will have some resource implications relating to time spent by members of the Committees and Policy Officers in Academic Services or staff invited to participate in working groups. Some of the resource requirements for wider work of the Committees will be met through existing resources or have agreed funding in place.

**Risk Management**

5. Each individual strand of proposed activity will be subject to risk assessment as appropriate.

**Equality and Diversity**

6. Where required, Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for individual work packages completed next year. It is noted that following discussion of Committee effectiveness in the last academic year, all Senate Standing Committees undertook to place more focus on effective evaluation of E&D dimensions.

**Next steps / implications**

7. The approved report will be highlighted in the Senate Committees' Newsletter. The Senate Committees will progress the agreed strategic approach during 2021-22 as set out in the report. This report will also be shared with the University Court for information.

**Authors**

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**Presenters**

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Education Committee  
Professor Tina Harrison, Convener of Senate  
Quality Assurance Committee  
Professor Alan Murray, Convenor of Academic  
Policy and Regulations Committee

May 2021

**Freedom of Information**  
Open

## Annual Report of the Senate Committees 2020-21

### 1. Executive Summary

This report summarises the achievements of the Senate Committees, and their use of the powers delegated to them by Senate, for academic year 2020-21, along with their proposed plans for 2021-22.

### 2. Introduction

The three Standing Committees of Senate (hereafter referred to as the Senate Committees) are the Senate Education Committee (SEC), Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC), and Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

Senate has delegated to these Committees a range of its powers, and these powers are set out in the Committees' Terms of Reference. Links to the Terms of Reference and memberships of the Senate Standing Committees are below:

- [Education Committee](#)
- [Academic Policy and Regulations Committee](#)
- [Quality Assurance Committee](#)

Sections 3, 4 and 5 below provide information on the Standing Committees' activities in 2020/21.

Section 6 sets out proposals for future work. These proposals have arisen from Committee discussions, and discussion at the Senate Committee Conveners' Forum. The proposals are designed to assist the University in pursuing its Learning and Teaching agenda and wider goals and laid out in the University Strategy 2030:

- [Strategy 2030](#)

### 3. Key Committee and Task Group Activities in 2020-21\*

Name of Committee	No. of meetings
Senate Education Committee	5
Academic Policy & Regulations	4
Senate Quality Assurance Committee	5

Name of Task Group	Task Group of:
Personal Tutor System Oversight Group	SQAC
Student Support Services subcommittee	SQAC
Data Task Group	SQAC
Support for Curriculum Development Group	SEC
Online Remote Examinations and Assessment (OREA)	SEC

\*Includes meetings scheduled for the remainder of the session.

The remits and memberships of any task groups are available within the relevant Committee pages at: [www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees)

## 4. Senate Committees' Progress in 2020/21

Section 4 provides information on progress against the activities proposed in last year's report to Senate. Section 5 provides information on other committee activity in 2020/21.

### 4.1 Education Committee

Progress with activities proposed in last year's report:

#### Activity

#### 1. Drive the curriculum reform agenda in the evolving context

##### November 2020 Meeting

- Presentation on curriculum review by the Vice-Principal Students – the Committee considered a number of key issues, for example the complexity of the University's offer; the way in which prospective applicants view the University; whether the University's curriculum reflects its philosophy; and whether the University currently over-teaches and examines.
- 'Space, Place and Pedagogy: 'Beyond Digital' Learning and Teaching' (Paper B) – the Committee gave 'in principle' support for the proposals outlined in the paper, and agreed that they would be taken forward as part of the curriculum transformation agenda.
- 'Providing an Excellent Learning Experience for our International Students' (Paper D) – the Committee agreed that there were opportunities to look further at this as part of the curriculum transformation agenda. It was agreed that consultation around curriculum reform / transformation should involve a diverse group of students.

##### January 2021 Meeting

- 'Lessons from the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program' (Paper B) – it was recognised that the lessons learned from this Program may help to inform the curriculum transformation agenda.
- 'Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) PGT Model' (Paper D) – it was recognised that the proposed model may benefit not only EFI's PGT programmes, but the University's PGT (and potentially UG) offering as a whole.

##### March 2021 Meeting

- The Committee considered, for information, a paper taken to the 23 February 2021 meeting of University Executive providing a brief update on the work of the Curriculum Transformation Programme and the draft Board's membership and Terms of Reference.

##### May 2021 Meeting

- Presentation on Curriculum Transformation by the Vice-Principal Students

##### Update provided by the Curriculum Transformation team May 2021

The Curriculum Transformation Programme went live to all University staff on Wednesday 21st April with the launch of the Curriculum Transformation Hub, communicated in an email from Professor Colm Harmon. From the inception of the Programme there has been a real commitment to engagement, inclusion, transparency and collaboration and the Hub will be the central tool to help achieve this.

The Hub launched with six briefing papers supported by videos from the authors and individual padlets to allow our communities to feedback and let us know their thoughts. We are also posing wider questions around Curriculum Transformation and encouraging feedback through a number of different means, anonymously via padlet, contact form or by emailing us directly.

Attention is now turning to developing a pipeline of content across a range of formats, for example podcasts, blogs, videos, Q&As. We will continue to build on our briefing papers, delving deeper into themes raised and exploring areas of Curriculum Transformation we haven't yet touched on. This is very much the beginning of our Curriculum Transformation journey and the engagement and feedback from our communities will continually feed into our plans and approach.

## **2. Ensure effective responses to ELIR recommendations**

This will be taken forward in 2021/22 due to the ELIR being delayed until March 2021.

## **3. Oversee the ongoing development of the Doctoral College and monitor its impact upon the experiences of PGR students including discussion and influence of the University approach to PGR scholarships.**

### **November 2020 Meeting**

- The Doctoral College Operational Plan was received by Education Committee
- The Committee noted a change of name from the PGR Steering Group to the Doctoral College Operational Group.

### **January 2021 Meeting**

- The Committee noted that the Doctoral College Operational Group had met for the first time and was prioritizing activities to ensure that it had capacity to deal with issues around COVID mitigation.

### **Update provided by Doctoral College May 2021**

The Doctoral College now consists of around 225 staff across all Schools, Deaneries, Colleges and key services. The Microsoft Teams pages are very active allowing staff to share ideas and problems quickly and get back solutions available for all from the services. It has allowed us to react quickly to current events (especially around the pandemic) as well as to hugely enhance change management in all aspects of research student support and training.

The new Doctoral College Operational Group is running carrying over the business of the former Steering Group. There is also a Management Group set up under the auspices of Research Policy Group (soon to be Research Strategy Group) and functionality has been divided between them. There is a common core membership.

Over the last year the Operational/Steering Group has overseen the creation of our themed plan with seven key themes each led by one of the Deans: Administration, Wellbeing, Communities, Research Strategy, Recruitment and Finance, and Governance and Planning. These have sub-themes also with a lead. Below these we are developing workstreams to action tasks.

We have set up two substantial working groups looking at Scholarships and Diversity in Recruitment. Both report formally to SRFSG but are overseen by the Doctoral College

operational group. The Scholarships group has proposed (and it has been accepted) that Principal's Career Development Scholarship and Edinburgh Global Research Scholarship be stopped and put in place a replacement scheme called the Edinburgh Doctoral College Scholarship. It is also aiming to include a baseline of conditions for such Scholarships which it aims to roll out to all UoE scholarships and beyond. This will include sick pay, family leave and mandatory training in EDI and ethical research. The Recruitment group has just completed its report with recommendation building on good practice in our Doctoral Training Centres and Centres of Doctoral Training across the institution.

**4. Monitor the evolution and implementation of the institutional policy to support the University's Lecture Recording service in the context of Adaptation and Renewal post-Covid-19.**

**September 2020 Meeting**

- The Committee approved a new Virtual Classroom Policy. The Policy clarifies rights and responsibilities when delivering and recording teaching and learning using the Virtual Classroom Service and other online technologies.

The Virtual Classroom Service is used in the regular delivery of fully-online programmes, and during the COVID-19 pandemic has permitted online and hybrid delivery of programmes normally delivered on campus. The Policy helps to manage the potential risks associated with virtual classes. The Policy extends existing principles agreed for lecture recording to this context, amending them or making separate provision where required.

The Policy applies University-wide to staff, students and visiting lecturers involved in running or participating in virtual classroom sessions. The Policy also covers online student pastoral support meetings. The Policy does not cover teaching recorded or live-streamed using the Lecture Recording service, or non-teaching online events, meetings and other activities as these are covered by the Lecture Recording Policy.

**5. Monitor ongoing effectiveness of Student Health & Wellbeing Strategy in the context of overall student learning experience.**

**November 2020 Meeting**

- An update on the Student Mental Health Strategy was provided by the Director of Student Wellbeing. Members noted excellent work by the University's mental health services both to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to continue developing strategically.

**6. Ensure strengthening of the Committee's link to the Space Strategy Group.**

**January 2020 Meeting**

- Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) PGT Model – the Committee discussed the importance to the model of the University having suitable teaching space, and the Space Strategy Group's role in this.

#### 4.2 Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

Progress with activities proposed in last year's report:

Activity
<p><b>1. Work with the relevant work streams of the Adaptation and Renewal Programme to oversee the implementation of any significant policy changes associated with the developing programme of work.</b></p> <p>No action to date.</p>
<p><b>2. Monitor any requirement for longer term regulatory and policy changes as a result of Covid-19 and take appropriate action as required.</b></p> <p>APRC agreed a package of measures to mitigate the ongoing impact of Covid-19 in January 2021. Recent efforts have been focused on producing user-friendly guidance to support Schools with the implementation of these measures, which has now been published on SharePoint. The guidance will be accompanied by a series of case studies to demonstrate the application of the various measures.</p> <p>Following the successful operation of virtual meetings of Boards of Examiners in 2019/20, and following Semester 1 in the current session, APRC agreed in January 2021 to amend the Taught Assessment Regulations to allow Boards of Examiners to meet virtually, wherever this is considered appropriate by the relevant Convener. This not only supports diversity of participation from members, who may not otherwise be able to attend in-person meetings, but also supports the University strategic goals relating to climate impact, by reducing the need for staff to travel to meetings.</p>
<p><b>3. Input as required into Curriculum Transformation project (led by Education Committee).</b></p> <p>This will be taken forward in 2021/22.</p>
<p><b>4. Review of Enhancement-Led Institutional Review outputs and take appropriate action as required.</b></p> <p>This will be taken forward in 2021/22 due to the ELIR being delayed until March 2021.</p>

#### 4.3 Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

Progress with activities proposed in last year's report:

Activity
<p><b>1. Continue to contribute to preparations for the University's next Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) and oversee activities in response to the review.</b></p> <p>The Committee contributed to the preparations for the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) and will oversee activities in response to the University's successful outcome. The University was judged to have "effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience", a positive judgement and the best possible outcome for an ELIR.</p>

The Review Team commended the University for: our commitment to working in close partnership with our students; the work of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) in supporting staff development and sharing good practice; the development and expansion of Peer Support/Peer-Assisted Learning Schemes; our support for student involvement in Internal Periodic Reviews. The Review Team identified a number of areas for further development, the majority of which we were already working towards. There are two areas in particular where we have been asked to make significant progress over the course of the next academic year: personal tutoring/student support and assessment and feedback.

The final report will be published in the middle of July and circulated widely. The University is required to take action on the areas for further development and to report on this to the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (who run the ELIR process) one year after the publication of the report. The Committee oversee the response to the recommendations, ensuring alignment with existing areas of work, including Curriculum Transformation.

**2. Review responses to the coronavirus pandemic gathered via the University's Quality Assurance Framework, gather learning for future developments and share good practice across the institution.**

The Committee considered the annual School quality reports (25 reports from the Schools and Deaneries), annual College quality reports and the outcomes of annual reports from the student support services (16 reports). The reporting process this year was streamlined to focused on the impact of and learning from the Covid-19 pandemic while also allowing for optional reflection on other aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student experience. The Committee identified examples of positive practice and issues for further development at institutional level including: staffing and workload pressures; central communications to students and staff; equality, diversity, and inclusion issues arising due to the impact of the pandemic; the implementation of the new Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) service; the performance of the various online teaching platforms; access to on-campus space and resources and issues with the Assessment and Progression Tools (APT). The Committee has requested a response to each issue from individuals and areas with relevant responsibilities and a progress report on actions will be considered at the April meeting of SQAC. A report on these issues has also been submitted to the University Executive

**3. Review the approach to gathering student feedback across the University from Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs).**

The Committee continues to monitor the implementation of mid-course feedback through annual monitoring, review and reporting processes. The Committee approved a revised Student Voice Policy at the May 2021 meeting. The Policy takes into account the recommendations of the CEQ Review Project Board (approved by University Executive) to decentralise the management of course evaluation feedback, affording greater flexibility to schools in how they may gather and respond to the student voice. In support of this change, the CEQ Review Board is developing a toolkit to support local collection of end of course feedback (e.g. question banks, different methods of collecting feedback) to be available for the start of AY 2021/22. The Board will look at options for a University wide survey once there is more clarity on the future of the NSS.

**4. Examine data and methodological options for the systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data.**



A Data Task Group has been established to exploring data options for a new system of monitoring student retention, progression, and attainment. The Group submitted a progress report to the April meeting of SQAC (the agenda of which focused on QA Data and included the annual Degree Classification Outcomes report). The Committee was presented with a range of analysis on student progression and attainment and noted a number of progression and attainment gaps and asked the Data Task Group to undertake further exploration to help understand possible contributory factors.

## 5 Other Committee Activity in 2020/21

### • Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation Committee

The Committee continues to oversee the accreditation of the SRUC programme, 'Environmental Resource Management (BSc)' and the outgoing 'Environmental Resource Management (BSc)'. The Accreditation Committee met in April 2021 and affirmed continued accreditation of the programmes. A revalidation of the Engineering, Science and Technology suite of programmes and the Environment and Countryside programmes took place in 2019-20.

- The attached Annex sets out any new strategies / regulations / policies / codes that the Committees have approved (the more substantive of which are covered in Section 4 above), along with changes to existing documents.

## 6 Senate Committees' Priorities for 2021/22

### 6.1 Planning Context

Once again, the year will be planned in the context of Covid-related considerations driven by the institutional response to Scottish Government guidelines. This will influence the mode of operation and interaction between the Committees and their stakeholders.

### 6.2 Education Committee

Activity
1. Ensure effective responses to ELIR recommendations. (Carried forward from 2020/21).
2. Input into the Curriculum Transformation project

### 6.3 Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

Activity
1. Input as required into Curriculum Transformation project (led by Education Committee, carried forward from 2019/20).
2. Review of Enhancement-Led Institutional Review outputs and take appropriate action as required. (Carried forward from 2019/20).
3. Monitor any requirement for longer term regulatory and policy changes as a result of Covid-19 and take appropriate action as required. (Continued from 2020/21).

#### 6.4 Quality Assurance Committee

<b>Activity</b>
1. Develop and oversee the implementation of a plan of action in response to the 2021 Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR).
2. Implement the recommendations from the Digital Maturity report and consider how quality processes and the data that they produce can support the Curriculum Transformation programme.
3. Continue to examine data and methodological options for the systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data in response to the recommendations from Thematic Reviews.
4. Engage with quality assurance and enhancement-related aspects of the Scottish Funding Council review of coherent provision and sustainability.
5. Implement the recommendations from the review of Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs).

**Annex – new regulations/policies/codes, and reviews of and amendments to existing regulations/policies/codes, approved by Senate and its Committees during 2020/21**

New and updated policies, regulations and guidance will be published on the Academic Services website in due course: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/new-policies> (currently showing updates for 2020/21).

<b>Senate Committee</b>	<b>Name of document</b>	<b>Type of change (New / Revision / Deletion / Technical Update / Reviewed and no changes made)</b>
SEC	Virtual Classroom Policy	New policy approved at SEC in September 2020. See papers at: <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/virtualclassroompolicy.pdf">virtualclassroompolicy.pdf (ed.ac.uk)</a>
SEC	Academic and Pastoral Support Policy	Amendments to the Senior Tutor role description approved by SEC in March 2021. See papers at: <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/20210303agendapapers.pdf">20210303agendapapers.pdf (ed.ac.uk)</a>
APRC	Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2021/22	Revised and approved at APRC in March 2021. See papers at: <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/20210325agendaandpapers.pdf">20210325agendaandpapers.pdf (ed.ac.uk)</a>
APRC	Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2021/22	Revised and approved at APRC in March 2021. See papers at: <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/20210325agendaandpapers.pdf">20210325agendaandpapers.pdf (ed.ac.uk)</a>
APRC	PhD by Research oral examination by video link	Revised and approved by APRC in March 2021. See papers at: <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/20210325agendaandpapers.pdf">20210325agendaandpapers.pdf (ed.ac.uk)</a>
SQAC	School Director of Quality Role Outline	Minor update approved by SQAC in May 2021. See papers at: <a href="#">Agendas, papers and minutes</a>
SQAC	Student Voice Policy	Revised and approved by SQAC in May 2021. See papers at: <a href="#">Agendas, papers and minutes</a>
SQAC	Student Staff Liaison Committee Operational Guidance	Minor change approved by SQAC in May 2021. See papers at: <a href="#">Agendas, papers and minutes</a>
APRC	Taught Assessment Regulations 2021/22	<b>Forthcoming – to be presented to APRC June 2021</b>
APRC	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations 2021/22	<b>Forthcoming – to be presented to APRC June 2021</b>
APRC	College Progression Board Terms of Reference	<b>Forthcoming – to be presented to APRC June 2021</b>
APRC	Course Organiser Outline of Role	<b>Forthcoming – to be presented to APRC June 2021</b>
APRC	Student Maternity and Family Leave Policy	<b>Forthcoming – to be presented to APRC June 2021</b>
APRC	Programme and Course Handbooks Policy	<b>Forthcoming (minor changes) – to be presented to APRC June 2021</b>
SQAC	Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance	<b>Forthcoming – to be presented to SQAC September 2021</b>

SQAC	Guidance for Schools regarding communication between student representatives and students	<b>Forthcoming – to be presented to SQAC September 2021</b>
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**Senate Education Committee**

**15 September 2021**

**Task Groups – Support for Curriculum Development Group**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides an update on the work of the Support for Curriculum Development Group, which is a formal task group of SEC.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. For information.

**Discussion**

3. At its meeting on 29 July 2021, the Support for Curriculum Development Group (SCDG) agreed to pause its activity because the Assessment and Feedback workstream of the Curriculum Transformation programme will cover the majority of SCDG's remit and membership.
4. SCDG will reconvene in June 2022 to consider implementation activity arising from the Assessment and Feedback group's output.
5. This update also provides the SCDG's annual report to SEC as the Group has not met to consider substantial business since January 2020.

**Risk management**

6. n/a

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

7. n/a

**Equality & diversity**

8. n/a

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

9. This update will be communicated to the University more widely via the next edition of the Senate Committees' Newsletter.

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**Presenter**

*None*

**Freedom of Information *Open***