

**Minutes of the Meeting of Senate Education Committee
held via Microsoft Teams at 2.00pm on Wednesday 17 November 2021**

1. Attendance

Present	Position
Colm Harmon	Vice-Principal Students (Convener) – Ex Officio
Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (Vice-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)
Andy Dugmore	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Judy Hardy	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)
Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, PGT)
Jamie Davies	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, UG)
Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)
Mike Shipston	Head of Deanery, CMVM
Richard Andrews	Head of School, CAHSS
Iain Gordon	Head of School, CSE
Stuart Lamont	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Permanent Staff Member
Tara Gold	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice President Education
Marie-Louise Wohrle	Postgraduate Research Student Representative
Velda McCune	Representing Director of Institute for Academic Development – Ex Officio
Shelagh Green	Director for Careers & Employability – Ex Officio
Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Division of Information Services – Ex Officio; Assistant Principal (Online and Open Learning)
Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions – Ex Officio
Sue Macgregor	Director of Academic Services – Ex Officio
Sian Bayne	Assistant Principal Digital Education
Philippa Ward	Academic Services (Secretary)
In Attendance	
Jon Turner	Digital Strategy
Stephen Roy	Digital Strategy
Russell Bartlett	Market Insight
Teresa Ironside	Director of Data Science Education

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 15 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising from Meeting Held on 15 September 2021

3.1 University's Involvement in the Delivery of Microcredentials

The Assistant Principal (Online and Open Learning) advised members that a business case for a new CPD platform had been taken to the Capital Planning Group in October and would be considered in the Planning Round. A copy of the business case would be circulated to members for information.

Members agreed that it was important not to take a 'platform-first' approach to the issue of the University's involvement in microcredentials. The broader strategy around microcredentials would be discussed at a future meeting of the Committee. It was also recognised that, regardless of future developments, a new platform was required to support existing CPD activity.

Action:

- Secretary to circulate business case to members.
- Convener and Secretary to identify a future meeting for discussion of the University's broader strategy around microcredentials.

3.2 Proposal to Establish a Student Voice Sub-Committee

Members were advised that this issue would be returned to when the new Deputy Secretary, Student Experience was in post.

4. Convener's Communications

4.1 Update on Planning for Semester 2 2021/22

The Convener reported that the University was continuing to plan cautiously but optimistically for Semester 2. It was hoped that it would be possible to raise the class size cap from 50 to 120 students and to bring additional teaching space on stream. The University was working closely with the Scottish Government to strike a balance between civic responsibility and programme needs. Members recognised that it would be important to continue encouraging all students to test regularly for COVID.

4.2 Membership of Senate Standing Committees

The Convener advised members that there were ongoing discussions within Senate about the membership of the Standing Committees, Senate Education Committee included. Members were reminded that the current memberships of the Committees reflected the outcome of Senate decisions taken in June 2019. The next formal review point would be in academic year 2023/24, but a commitment had been made to ongoing audit and improvement of processes and practices. As such, the conveners of the three Standing Committees would produce a proposal for the February meeting of Senate which aimed to

meet the demands of Senate members, whilst also taking into account the fact that the Standing Committees were already large and brought together subject and area-level expertise for the benefit of Senate. The existing members of the Standing Committees would be involved in developing the proposal.

5. For Discussion

5.1 Curriculum Demands of Prospective Students and Recent Graduates

The Head of Market Insight reported that the paper drew on four sources of information:

- The Decliners Survey - the University receives around 3000 responses to this Survey each year. Decliners are those students who meet the University's entry requirements and are offered a place, but choose not to come to Edinburgh.
- Recent Graduate Survey – this had been conducted as part of the Curriculum Transformation project. Participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which they were skilled in the University's previously stated graduate attributes, and to comment on the attractiveness of the proposed graduate attributes. Around 200 responses were received.
- Brand Tracker – this tested the extent to which the University is aligned with the values laid out in Strategy 2030 with its main stakeholder groups.
- Enquiry Management System – enquiries from applicants routed through a Student Recruitment and Admissions' enquiry management system.

Members noted that at undergraduate level, students come to university as a natural step in their education and to further their prospects. Postgraduate students come to improve their skills.

For on-campus programmes, the key considerations for prospective students are price, programme, location and reputation. For online programmes there is a fifth consideration: how the programme is taught.

Reputation is the single, biggest influencer. Potential students are interested in teaching quality, academics, facilities and the practical experiences offered by a university. Information about these aspects of our provision needs to be readily available in the material we publish.

There is room for improvement in the University's web communications: only 15% of people think that our website is 'very good'.

It was noted that what Edinburgh does is not offered in isolation: the University needs to remain aware of what its close competitors are offering.

Members discussed:

- the relationship between the time taken by a university to offer a place and the likelihood of the offer being accepted. It was noted that there was no real evidence to suggest a correlation between the two.
- concern that a significant proportion of those asked (11%) did not consider the University to be aligned with any of the values laid out in Strategy 2030.

- the potential value of gathering more data about the University’s international competitors.
- the value of gathering information from more cohorts eg. widening participation students about the Curriculum Transformation proposals.
- whether the University should be focussing on converting decliners to acceptors, or whether its focus should be more on targeting and attracting the right kinds of students and on widening participation.

It was agreed that additional analysis would be brought back to the Committee in due course, including information about the views of additional cohorts (particularly on the Curriculum Transformation proposals); College-level analysis where this was possible; and more information about the differences between decliners and acceptors.

Action:

Head of Market Insight to bring additional analysis back to the Committee in due course.

5.2 Digital Strategy – Summary of Work so far Focussing on Student / Educator Theme

Members were advised that this was a University-wide initiative with a number of different work-streams. Consultation was being undertaken with key, informed stakeholders and with University committees. The output from the consultation would be used to develop the Strategy at the start of 2022, but the Strategy would evolve over time with annual review to take account of new developments.

The paper focussed particularly on the Student / Educator theme of the Strategy. The Director of the Institute for Academic Development was keen to receive the Committee’s input on the identified thematic priorities: community and belonging; coherence, consistency and continuity; assessment and feedback; hybridity; building capability, confidence and capacity; and cultural considerations.

Members discussed:

- the close relationship between the Digital Strategy and Curriculum Transformation.
- the importance of coherence and consistency to the University’s response to the ELIR outcomes.
- the importance to community of strong staff to staff relationships.
- making it clear that the Strategy was relevant to all University staff, not just to educators.
- the need for the Strategy to reference both open book and online exams, which are not one and the same thing.
- the importance of ensuring that the document set future direction and was not steady-state focussed. It was felt that that the document could be more ambitious and serve as a sector-leading vision.
- the potential for the ‘hybridity’ section of the paper to say more about the benefits for the student experience eg. flexibility and choice.
- the importance of sustainability considerations being upfront in the document.
- the importance of learning analytics to the University’s work in this area.

- the complexities of terminology, particularly around hybridity.
- whether or not the document should be described as a 'Strategy'.

Members were asked to continue providing feedback via the padlet: [Senate Education Committee \(November 2021\) - Digital Strategy: Our Students & Educators \(padlet.com\)](https://padlet.com/SENATE/SENATE-EDUCATION-COMMITTEE-NOVEMBER-2021-DIGITAL-STRATEGY-OUR-STUDENTS-AND-EDUCATORS)

6. Standing Items

6.1 Curriculum Transformation

The Convener advised members that the project was progressing well and that an encouraging set of observations and perspectives was being gathered. Important discussions about the place of climate change within the Curriculum Transformation agenda were underway.

6.2 Student Experience

Members noted the paper and particularly that external companies were being asked to quote for assistance with the development of a refreshed student experience strategy plan and associated roadmap of actions.

6.3 Doctoral College

The Committee was advised that significant work was being done by the Doctoral College to improve the governance arrangements for the University's Tutors and Demonstrators.

Further to the Postgraduate Research Admissions Working Group Report discussed at the previous meeting, the agreed EDI intern post would shortly be advertised.

7. For Approval

7.1 National Student Survey (NSS) 2022 Optional Questions

The Committee approved the proposed NSS 2022 optional questions.

Members also discussed the potential benefit of making greater use of information obtained through 'pulse surveys'.

8. Approved by Convener's Action Since Previous Meeting

8.1 Update Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators

The Committee was advised that small but significant changes, affecting the way in which Schools might pay their Tutors and Demonstrators, had been made to the Policy.

8.2 Summer 2022 Exam Diet – Practical Implementation

Members were satisfied with the arrangements that had been put in place, but noted that the University needed to give further, detailed thought to issues around academic integrity. It was agreed that the Convener and Secretary would consider the way in which this work

would be taken forward. The Convener would also circulate to members a copy of a report on academic integrity produced by the University of Sydney.

Action:

- Convener and Secretary to consider how work on academic integrity will be taken forward.
- Convener to provide members with a copy of the University of Sydney's academic integrity report.

9. Electronic Business Conducted Since Previous Meeting

9.1 Student Experience: Delivering a New Model of Student Support

Members noted the paper.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services
20 December 2021