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The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee

**Meeting to be held on Wednesday 18 November 2015 at 2.00pm in the
Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House**

AGENDA

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1. Welcome and Apologies

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2015   LTC 15/16 2 A

3.	**Matters Arising**

3.1 Matters arising from the meeting held on 28 September 2015 (and not elsewhere on the agenda)

    3.1.1 Innovative Learning Week (Item 5.8)
    3.1.2 Annual Planning Round Guidance (Item 5.9)

4.	**Convener's Communications**

4.1 Outcome of Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR)   Verbal

4.2 Update on Work on Student Experience, Teaching and Learning   LTC 15/16 2 P

5.	**For Discussion**

5.1 Use of Student Data to Help Enhance Learning and Teaching, the Student Experience and Operational Effectiveness   Presentation

5.2 Grade Point Averages (GPA) – Proposal for Minimalist Adoption   LTC 15/16 2 B

5.3 Assessment and Feedback:
- Measures of Quality and Approaches to Assessment   Verbal
- Turnaround Times Systems Analysis   LTC 15/16 2 C
- Opt Outs   Verbal

5.4 Student Survey Unit Priorities   LTC 15/16 2 D

5.5 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)   LTC 15/16 2 E

5.6 Information Services Group Strategy to Support Learning and Teaching   LTC 15/16 2 F

5.7 Student Recruitment Strategy – What is Our Offer?   Verbal

6.	**For Approval**

6.1 Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – Proposal for Change to Categories of Wider Achievement   LTC 15/16 2 G

6.2 Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes Task Group Report and Proposals   LTC 15/16 2 H

7.	**For Noting / Information**

7.1 Piloting Learning Analytics (LA) with Fully Online Masters Programmes   LTC 15/16 2 I CLOSED

7.2 Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice   LTC 15/16 2 J

7.3 Report from LTC Distance Education Task Group   LTC 15/16 2 K

7.4 Enhancement Themes – Update   LTC 15/16 2 L

Philippa Ward, Secretary to the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee 11 November 2015

7.5	Knowledge Strategy Committee Report	LTC 15/16 2 M
7.6	Interdisciplinary Teaching (remitted to LTC by QAC)	LTC 15/16 2 N
7.7	Consultation on Changes to the National Student Survey, Unistats and Information Provided by Institutions	LTC 15/16 2 O
7.8	Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy	Verbal

8. Any Other Business

9. Date of Next Meeting
2.00pm on Wednesday 27 January 2016 in the Board Room, Chancellor's Building, Little France

Philippa Ward, Secretary to the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee 11 November 2015

LTC 15/16 2 A

Minutes of the Meeting of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) held at 9am on Monday 28 September 2015 in the Board Room, Evolution House

1. Attendance

Present:

Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley	Assistant Principal (Research-Led Learning)
Ms Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (ex officio)
Ms Shelagh Green	Director, Careers Service (co-opted member)
Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)
Dr Elaine Haycock-Stuart	Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Health in Social Science (co-opted member)
Professor Peter Higgins	Representative of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Ms Melissa Highton	Convener of Learning Technologies Advisory Group (ex officio)
Ms Erin Jackson	Distance Learning Manager, School of Law, CHSS (co-opted member)
Professor Charlie Jeffery (Convener)	Senior Vice-Principal
Ms Nichola Kett	Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services
Mr John Lowrey	Dean of Undergraduate Studies, CHSS
Ms Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka	EUSA Academic Engagement Co-ordinator (ex officio)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Senior Lecturer, School of Mathematics, CSE (co-opted member)
Dr Gale Macleod	Dean of Postgraduate (Taught), CHSS
Dr Velda McCune	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's Nominee) (ex officio)
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching, CSE
Professor Neil Turner	Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, CMVM
Mrs Philippa Ward (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	University Secretary's Nominee, Director of Academic Services (ex officio)
Professor Wyn Williams	Director of Teaching, School of GeoSciences, CSE
Ms Imogen Wilson	EUSA Vice President (Academic Affairs) (ex officio)

In Attendance:

Ms Pauline Jones	Governance and Strategic Planning
Mr Barry Neilson	Director Student Systems

Apologies:

Mr Gavin Douglas	Deputy Secretary – Student Experience
Dr Margaret MacDougall	Medical Statistician and Researcher in Education (co-opted member)
Professor Ian Pirie	Assistant Principal (Learning and Development) (ex officio)
Professor David Weller	Director for Postgraduate Taught, CMVM

The Committee thanked Professor Sue Rigby for all her work in the area of learning and teaching at the University of Edinburgh, and wished her well in her new role.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2015 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

All matters arising were covered later in the agenda.

4. Convener's Communications

The Convener reported that the Principal's unambiguous priority going forward was the student experience, teaching and learning. As such, the Senior Vice-Principal would be devoting two thirds of his time to these areas.

5. For Discussion

5.1 Developing the Strategic Plan 2016-21

Ms Pauline Jones, Governance and Strategic Planning, advised members that she was seeking views on ways in which the student experience, learning and teaching might feature in the next iteration of the Strategic Plan. It was noted that the Plan had both internal and external audiences and that the final product would need to speak to both. The University Court had agreed that the Plan should reflect that which was distinctive about the University of Edinburgh. Members identified the following distinctive aspects of our teaching and learning provision:

- the flexibility offered by a four-year Scottish degree programme;
- the fact that Edinburgh offers more programmes and courses than any other UK institution;
- sector-leading online, distance learning provision;
- and excellence in research, leading to the potential for excellent, research-led teaching.

Members highlighted the importance of co-creation and community engagement, and discussed framing the student experience in terms of the graduate attributes it develops.

5.2 Student Experience, Teaching and Learning at the University of Edinburgh

The Senior Vice-Principal advised the Committee that the paper was the product of a series of conversations he had held since taking responsibility for learning and teaching. Members recognised that, whilst the National Student Survey 2015 results showed some improvement as compared with the 2014 results, the pace of change was too slow. Additional, faster improvement would be necessary to avoid potential reputational risk.

4 issues were considered to be contributing to the University's ongoing weaknesses in the areas of the student experience, teaching and learning:

1. The absence of clarity of leadership – a disconnect had developed between line management and learning and teaching structures.
2. The institutional priority attached to learning and teaching - the perception that the institution prioritises research over teaching.
3. A 'cycle of negatives' – poor performance in the NSS year on year had resulted in a negative message around learning and teaching, with insufficient focus on the positive work being done.
4. Complexity – the perception that our regulations, Quality Assurance processes and approaches to assessment are over-complicated.

The following actions would be taken to address these issues:

1. Greater clarity would be brought to leadership structures. As such, regular meetings of the Principal, Senior Vice-Principal, Heads of College and the University Secretary dedicated to learning and teaching would take place to give overall direction. In addition, a 'Learning and Teaching Policy Group', building on the existing Senate Committees' Conveners' Forum, would be established to give clear strategic leadership across the University on learning and teaching issues. The pivotal

leadership role of Heads of School would also be recognised through a periodic programme of School-level discussions led by the Senior Vice-Principal, and through additional Academic Strategy Group meetings dedicated to learning and teaching.

2. Better ways of measuring performance in the area of learning and teaching would be developed. Outstanding teaching would be rewarded, and poor performance addressed.
3. The best learning and teaching practice would be identified, celebrated and disseminated.
4. Wherever possible, the regulation and organisation of teaching and assessment would be simplified.

Members discussed:

- whether it would be possible to find all the additional time required to improve teaching through simplification of processes;
- the importance of finding reliable metrics to monitor teaching performance;
- the essential role played by 'those on the ground', for example, first year course organisers;
- the need to consider workload models;
- the fact that the University uses a number of different platforms to support learning and teaching, which adds to complexity. However, it was noted that, in the short-term, attempting to address this would add to and not reduce complexity;
- the importance of a successful Personal Tutor experience to raising students' perceptions of what we offer; and
- the crucial role played by Heads of Schools.

5.3 National Student Survey 2015

The Committee noted that, as compared with 2014, the National Student Survey 2015 showed overall improvement and increased response rate. However, the University was still performing poorly as compared with other Russell Group comparators and the sector as a whole. There was wide variation across Schools, and our weakest performing measures, 'Assessment and Feedback' and 'Academic Support' were those that correlated most strongly with overall student satisfaction.

It was agreed that the University still had significant work to do in this area and that the pace of change needed to increase. Leadership, community and communication were considered to be key. The Convener advised members that he would be working with Communications and Marketing on the University's communications around learning and teaching.

Members also discussed:

- concerns that some of our graduates lack confidence, possibly on account of assessment and feedback practices;
- the need to make better use of the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey to identify and address key student issues; and
- the need to improve NSS performance if we are to continue to attract the best students.

5.4 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2015

It was noted that there was little longitudinal data available for PTES as the survey had changed significantly in 2014. Results for 2015 were almost identical to those achieved in 2014, relative performance was broadly in line with the UK and Russell Group averages, and participation rate was good. However, as with the NSS, there was significant variation across

Schools, and it was felt that the University was not yet using the Survey's data to full advantage.

Members discussed:

- improvements in performance in the dissertation question. It was noted that this may have been the result of changing the timing of the survey for 2015. Members therefore agreed to continue with this timing going forward.
- the benefits of separating the responses of on-campus and distance education students;
- the potential benefit of holding an Academic Strategy Group meeting early in the new year to discuss postgraduate taught provision, and PTES in particular;
- the potential benefit of looking at correlations between PTES and other available data sets.

Action: Secretary to:
- discuss timing of future PTES surveys with Student Survey Unit
- add PTES to the agenda for the November 2015 meeting of LTC, with a view to this discussion forming the basis of an Academic Strategy Goup meeting in the new year. (Dean of Postgraduate (Taught), CHSS, to take the lead on this item.)

5.5 Use of Student Data to Help Enhance Learning and Teaching, the Student Experience and Operational Effectiveness

Members agreed that dashboards of student data of the type described would be extremely beneficial, and fundamental for Heads of Schools if they were being asked to bring about real change in the area of learning and teaching. The importance of using a consistent data set, minimising flexibility, and aligning with key performance indicators in the Strategic Plan were highlighted. It was recognised that any Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) introduced might require the University to publish a different set of metrics.

Learning and Teaching Committee endorsed this as a high-priority project, noting that it would have significant resource implications. The Director of Student Systems was asked to continue developing prototypes and to give further consideration to resource issues.

Action: Director of Student Systems to continue developing prototypes and to give further consideration to the resource implications of this project.

5.6 Feedback on Assessment: Measures of Quality and Turnaround Times

Members were advised that the paper summarized the findings of internal benchmarking of approaches to measuring the quality of feedback. It had been found that some Schools were monitoring the quality of feedback, but not in a consistent or systematic manner. The Committee noted that external benchmarking would be carried out in due course, and that the newly appointed Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback would be involved in all future work.

The Committee discussed:

- the purpose of measuring the quality of feedback, namely to address cases where students were receiving no or poor quality feedback;
- the possibility of introducing peer observation of feedback;
- the importance of providing strong mentorship in feedback for new staff and those taking on additional teaching responsibilities; and

- managing student expectations of feedback.

Members agreed that it was essential to measure both feedback turnaround times and quality of feedback. Some systems development and business process change would be desirable to facilitate this. The Directors of Student Systems and Academic Services were asked to take this work forward with the Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback. They would bring recommendations on next steps and information on Planning Round implications to the November meeting of the Committee.

Action: Directors of Student Systems and Academic Services to take work forward with the Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback, and to bring recommendations on next steps and information on Planning Round implications to the November meeting of the Committee.

5.7 Grade Point Average (GPA) Briefing Paper

The Committee was advised that, in practice, the University was already providing students with GPAs when requested. It was therefore agreed that the University should seek to develop an on-demand GPA service, based on a minimal adoption model. Proposals to take this forward would be developed and costed, taking into account implications for associated work on EUCLID Assessment and Progression Tools.

Those involved were confident that it would not be difficult to agree the algorithm for calculating GPA. The way in which special circumstances were treated would need to be considered, and this would be taken forward by the Director of Academic Services and Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

The importance of ensuring that the introduction of GPA did not discourage students from being experimental in their curricular choices was discussed. The Committee registered its thanks to Dr Maciocia for developing the GPA scale that had been adopted by the HEA.

Action: Directors of Student Systems and Academic Services and Dr Maciocia to develop and cost proposals for introducing an on-demand GPA service, based on a minimal adoption model. Director of Academic Services and Curriculum and Student Progression Committee to consider the treatment of Special Circumstances under GPA.

5.8 Innovative Learning Week

Members were reminded that at the May 2015 meeting of LTC, it had been agreed that Innovative Learning Week would continue for 2015/16, and that the 'ILW + Pop Up' model would be used. The paper invited the Committee to discuss the future of Innovative Learning Week (ILW) and future mechanisms for encouraging innovation in learning and teaching beyond 2015/16.

The Committee agreed that an additional week should be retained in Semester 2 between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 in 2016/17. The purpose of the week would be discussed by a sub-group and agreed in due course.

Action: Director of Academic Services to establish a sub-group to discuss the purpose of the week between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 in 2016/17.

The Committee also discussed:

- long-term concern about the asymmetry of Semesters 1 and 2;

- the value of innovation and innovators. It was agreed that, regardless of the future of ILW, space should be made for innovation, and innovators should be supported and rewarded for their efforts.

5.9 Annual Planning Round Guidance

Committee members discussed the supplementary guidance that it had previously issued to Schools on the learning and teaching-related content of their Annual Plans. It was agreed that it would be issued again for the forthcoming Planning Round and that Schools would also be asked to consider the Student Experience through the Thematic Vice-Principals planning process.

> **Action:** Secretary to ensure that the 'Guidance on the Learning and Teaching Content of School Annual Plans' is circulated for use in the forthcoming Planning Round.

6. For Approval

6.1 Higher Education Achievement Record – Procedures for Making Changes to Section 6 Categories of Achievement

Learning and Teaching Committee approved the proposed procedures for making changes to HEAR Section 6 Categories of Achievement.

7. For Noting / Information

7.1 EUSA Priorities 2015/16

The Committee noted the paper and the key objectives of the EUSA Vice-Principal (Academic Affairs), particularly assessment issues, enhancement of the Personal Tutor System and equality and diversity issues.

7.2 Report from the LTC Distance Education Task Group

It was reported that the Task Group was in an intensive phase of activity. It was working closely with the Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services division on early-life support for distance education programmes. The Task Group was also discussing marketing and improving support for those staff involved in distance education.

7.3 Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) Project Stage Review Report

Members noted that the Project's Research Assistant would be employed until the end of 2016. A large number of programmes had been recruited for the academic year 2015/16, and the project team was well ahead with planning. Themes were emerging, and a key Project output would be LEAF events, allowing staff who had participated in the process to feed back and share best practice. The Committee was extremely satisfied with the progress that was being made with this Project.

7.4 Enhancing Student Support Post Project Review Report

It was reported that all Project Deliverables were now complete. Further work would now be done to embed consistency and enhance the Personal Tutor System. This would include measuring performance. Going forward, oversight of the System would be the responsibility of a sub-group of Quality Assurance Committee.

7.5 Enhancement Themes – Update

Members noted that an email update would follow.

Action: Ms Kett to send Enhancement Themes update email.

7.6 Teaching Excellence Framework

The Committee was advised that a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was likely to be introduced in England. It was unclear at this stage which metrics would be included, but the pace of change was very fast. The introduction of a Framework would have implications for Scottish institutions.

7.7 Student Recruitment Strategy

The Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions advised members that the University did not currently have a Student Recruitment Strategy and was therefore aiming to develop one by February 2016. A Steering Group, convened by the Senior Vice-Principal, had been established. Four separate work streams would feed into the work of the Steering Group.

7.8 Annual Report of the Senate Committees

The Report was noted.

7.9 Guidance for Senate Committee Members on Authoring Papers and Other Aspects of Committee Business

The Guidance was noted.

8.   Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 18 November 2015 at 2.00pm in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services
1 October 2015

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee

18 November 2015

Grade Point Averages – Proposal for Minimalist Adoption

Executive Summary

At its 28 September 2015 meeting, the Committee agreed that the University should seek to develop an on-demand GPA service, based on a minimal adoption model, and asked Student Systems and Academic Services to develop and cost proposals.

This paper sets out proposals for adopting GPA on a minimalist 'on demand' basis. As long as the University adopts the model in a consistent matter, without flexibility in relation to particular disciplines or individual students, it could be implemented with relatively modest cost.

The recent Green Paper 'Teaching Excellence, Student Mobility and Student Choice' states that the UK Government will be encouraging institutions to adopt GPA, and that it proposes that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) panel ask institutions to state whether they have adopted GPA and that it would take this into account when making assessments. It is very likely that the focus on GPA in the Green Paper will stimulate further discussion across the sector regarding GPA in the current session. This paper advises the Committee to wait until the approach of comparator institutions to GPA is clearer, before having further discussion of the idea of introducing GPA on a mandatory basis. The introduction of a minimalist approach to GPA at this stage would however assist the University to move to a mandatory approach at a later stage should it decide to do so.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Excellence in Teaching, Outstanding Student Experience.

Action requested

For discussion and approval.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The paper sets out how Student Systems and Student Administration would implement and communicate regarding the approach to GPA.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   As long as the University does not deviate from the simple and uniform model set out in the paper, the resources involved in developing and testing BI Suite report and online self-service functionality would be relatively modest and manageable. Modest Student Administration work would be involved in providing GPA letters on request, until the online self-service form is available.

2. **Risk assessment**

The paper considered on 28 September 2015 set out the risks associated with the adoption of GPA.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

The paper considered by the Committee on 28 September 2015 indicated that Prof Antony Maciocia had already carried out an equality and diversity audit of the proposed GPA scale using very sensitive tests of bias. This considered gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity and disability and the tests were normalized against the degree performances of the 2012 cohort. The tests did not reveal any bias as a result of adopting the maximal GPA scheme in any of the 4 areas. Since that earlier modelling was not based on the precise algorithm set out in this paper, the introduction of GPA would be subject to some further modelling, along with a formal Equality Impact Assessment.

4. **Freedom of information**

Open

Key words

Grade Point Averages, Honours Degree Classification, Student Assessment

Originator of the paper

Dr Antony Maciocia
Barry Neilson and Chris Giles, Student Systems
Tom Ward, Academic Services
Craig Shearer, Student Administration
6 November 2015

Grade Point Averages – proposal for minimalist adoption

This paper invites the Committee to approve proposals for a minimal adoption 'on demand' model of GPA.

Background

In June 2015, the Higher Education Academy launched its report into the adoption of a Grade Point Average system across UK HEIs. The precise recommendations are:

- Recommendation one: a single GPA scale for UK higher education should be adopted by all UK providers.
- Recommendation two: 'dual running', during which both GPA and HDC outcomes will be reported, should be introduced in the first instance. This should be followed by a national review of the adoption of GPA after a period of no more than five years. Institutions may opt to switch to GPA alone when and if they judge it appropriate.
- Recommendation three: degree awarding bodies will need to exercise institutional discretion on a range of regulatory and policy matters associated with their GPA award system.

At its 28 September 2015 meeting, the Committee agreed that the University should respond to these recommendations by seeking to develop an on-demand GPA service, based on a minimal adoption model, and asked Student Systems and Academic Services to develop and cost proposals.

The recent Green Paper 'Teaching Excellence, Student Mobility and Student Choice' states that the UK Government will be encouraging institutions to adopt GPA and that it proposes that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) panel ask institutions to state whether they have adopted GPA and that it would take this into account when making assessments. This paper advises the Committee to wait until the approach of comparator institutions to GPA is clearer, before having further discussion of the idea of introducing GPA on a mandatory basis. The introduction of a minimalist approach to GPA at this stage would however assist the University to move to a mandatory approach at a later stage should it decide to do so.

The 6 November 2015 Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Green Paper 'Teaching Excellence, Student Mobility and Student Choice' states that the UK Government will be encouraging institutions to adopt GPA. It also it proposes that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) panel ask institutions to state whether they have adopted GPA and that it would take this into account when making assessments.

Proposed minimalist 'on demand' model

In its report, the HEA set out broad principles for GPA and recommended a scale for converting percentages to a GPA scale, but otherwise gave higher education institutions discretion on a range of regulatory and policy matters associated with their GPA award system.

The Committee is invited to agree to implement GPA in the University on the following basis:

Method of calculating GPA	Rationale

3

Make the GPA available to any student on completing or withdrawing from their undergraduate programme (with the exception of undergraduate Veterinary and Clinical Medicine programmes – see below), as long, as long as they have passed a minimum of 80 credits.	Equity of treatment irrespective of students' pathway and exit point.
Do not issue a GPA automatically but only 'on demand'.	'On demand' approach can be delivered with relatively modest resources. An 'on demand' approach could be introduced more quickly than an approach based on issuing the GPA automatically. It would be necessary to phase in an approach based on issuing a GPA to all students automatically (eg on their transcript), so that students know at the start of their studies that any courses they attempt will affect their GPA. In contrast, it is reasonable to bring in an 'on demand' approach without phasing, since students would have the choice of whether to ask for their GPA or not.
Do not issue GPA to students on Clinical Medicine and Veterinary Medicine programmes	Simplicity and transparency – Since Clinical Medicine and Veterinary Medicine use different mark scales, it would be necessary to operate different versions of the HEA scale (see Annex) for converting % marks to GPA. This would lead to greater complexity in developing an algorithm for calculating GPA, and would also make it more difficult to explain the algorithm to students and employers. Veterinary Medicine already issues GPAs to its students, based on a different model.
Use EUCLID / BI Suite to generate GPA on the basis of the course results previously agreed by Boards of Examiners. Boards of Examiners would have no direct role in calculating or confirming the GPA.	Simplicity In line with HEA report, which makes it clear that GPA scores should be generated automatically (from confirmed course results) and involve no professional academic judgement.
Convert course marks from percentage to grade number (presented to two decimal points) using HEA scale (see Annex)	Approach recommended by HEA
Use a flat weighted average of all courses taken in all years of study (for courses that assign a mark under the	Simplicity and consistency with most common approach internationally (eg North America) to calculating GPA. However, the HEA report suggested that not all UK

University's Extended Common Mark Scheme), using the final results recorded in EUCLID	institutions are likely to take this approach to GPA.
Do not take account of courses that do not assign a mark under the University's Extended Common Mark Scheme, for example pass / fail courses, credits from study abroad.	Simplicity and transparency.
When calculating GPA include the results of failed courses as well as passed courses	Provides a fair summation of a student's achievement. This approach does however have the disadvantage of reduced transparency; since failed courses are not recorded on the transcript, it will not be possible to understand how the GPA has been calculated with reference to the transcript.
Where a student has attempted a course multiple times, use the result of the final attempt to calculate the GPA	Reflect a student's ultimate achievement on the course.
Do not adjust the GPA to take full account of individual students' special circumstances	Transparency – adjusting the GPA while leaving final course results unchanged would further reduce the transparent relationship between the transcript and the GPA. The changes in business processes and systems required to allow the University to adjust the GPA to take full account of students' special circumstances would be considerable and not consistent with a minimalist approach, and would lead to implementation on GPA on a much longer timescale. Since implementation will be on an 'on demand' basis, students would have the option of not using their GPA if they felt it did not fully reflect their special circumstances. For further information see below.

Implications for academic regulations and appeals

It would be advisable for the University to add a regulation to the Taught Assessment Regulations summarising its approach to GPA. Since this minimalist model of GPA will not affect the assessment, marking and Board of Examination practices for individual courses, or the arrangements for awarding degrees or issuing Honours Degree Classification, implementation will not require any other change to the Degree Regulations, Taught Assessment Regulations or other academic regulations and policies.

Since the calculation of the GPA is entirely automatic on the basis of an agreed algorithm, and involves no academic judgement, students would not be able to appeal directly against their GPA (they would of course continue to be able to appeal against the course results on which the GPA is based).

Special circumstances

In many cases, the University's policy on Special Circumstances allows Boards of Examiners to take full account of special circumstances when confirming course results. In these cases, GPA will take full account of special circumstances. However, in some cases, Boards of Examiners are not able to take full account of special circumstances at the course level, and will therefore consider adjusting progression or award decisions to take account of special circumstances. A minimalist approach to GPA based on a weighted average of course marks would not take account of this category of special circumstances. To do so, it would be necessary for EUCLID to hold information on whether special circumstances have been fully taken account of or not for each individual courses (which it does not currently hold), and to develop an algorithm which would take account of that information. The changes in business processes and systems required to support this would be considerable. In addition, the model would need to be phased in for new entrants, since it would be necessary to have information in EUCLID regarding relevant special circumstances for each course the student has taken, and it would not be practical to input this information into EUCLID retrospectively.

The Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) has established a task group to review the University's policy and practices regarding special circumstances. In parallel, the EUCLID Assessment and Progression project is considering developing functionality to support business processes for special circumstances. It is likely that these two strands of work will together develop the University's business processes and systems in a way that would enable the University to take full account of special circumstances when calculating a GPA in the future.

Practical arrangements and timescales for implementation

Student Systems and Student Administration would implement this minimalist approach by making a GPA letter available to graduating / exiting students on request from the Student Information Points in 2015/16 and then extending this to self-service in 2016/17.   The letter would state the student's GPA, indicate the award they exited with and provide a brief explanation regarding how the University calculates GPA.

This could be delivered by c. May 2016, in time for students exiting in June / July 2016.

Proposed approach to communication

Since this proposal is designed to meet current demand for GPAs in a consistent and systematic way, rather than generate new demand, communication activity will be limited to the following actions:

- Student Administration would advertise the availability of GPA letters on its website (www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/order-documents); and

- Student Administration will inform Schools of these new arrangements.

Resources

As long as the University does not deviate from the simple and uniform model set out above, the resources involved in developing and testing BI Suite report and online self-service functionality would be relatively modest and manageable. Modest Student Administration work would be involved in providing GPA letters on request, until the online self-service form is available. Student Systems and Student Administration would be able to deliver this model of GPA within current resources. However, it is unlikely that a more complex model (for example, one which allowed for variation in how the GPA is calculated for different programmes, or to allow discretion in calculating GPA for individual students) could be delivered with existing resources without an adverse impact on other projects (eg the EUCLID Assessment and Progression Tools project).

This approach to GPA does not have any resource implications for Schools or Colleges, since it does not involve Boards of Examiners undertaking any new activities.

The HEA report indicates that there are grounds for expecting the introduction of GPA to lead to an increased number of appeals against course results, although this has not been all institutions' experience. While it is unlikely that a minimalist 'on demand' approach to GPA will contribute to a significant increase in demands, Academic Services should keep this under review.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to agree to implement GPA on this minimalist 'on demand' basis, in addition to continuing with Honours Degree Classification.

Longer-term position on GPA

The introduction of a minimalist 'on demand' model of GPA would enable the University to meet current demand for GPAs in a consistent and systematic way, while developing its understanding of the practical implications of GPA. It would not however have the same scale of impact as implementing GPA on a mandatory basis.

The Committee had previously recommended (May 2014) that the University should only adopt GPA if comparator institutions did so. Anecdotal evidence suggests that to date few if any of the University's comparator institutions have decided to adopt GPA following the publication of the HEA report. It is however very likely that, over the current session, there will be further discussion across the sector regarding the issue, given that the recent Green Paper. It is therefore advisable that the University waits until the approach of comparator institutions is clearer before considering moving beyond a minimalist 'on demand' model toward a mandatory adoption of GPA. In addition, given that the consequences of a mandatory adoption of GPA would have implications for all students, and could have broader implications for marking practices and student curriculum choice and motivation, the University would need to undertake much broader consultation before considering implementing this model on a mandatory, rather than 'on demand', basis. The introduction of a minimalist approach to GPA at this stage would however assist the University to move to a mandatory approach at a later stage should it decide to do so.

If the Committee agrees to implement GPA on a minimalist basis, to inform future debate regarding GPA:

- Dr Maciocia will carry out further modelling based on the 2015/16 graduating cohort.
- Student Systems / Student Administration will consider possible approaches to asking how students that asked for a GPA subsequently used it.

Appendix

HEA Proposed Scale

Grade	Mark	Grade Point
A+	≥75	4.25
A	71-74	4.0
A-	67-70	3.75
B+	64-66	3.50
B	61- 63	3.25
B-	57- 60	3.0
C+	54-56	2.75
C	50-53	2.50
C-	48-49	2.25
D+	43-47	2.0
D	40-42	1. 50
D-	38-39	1.0
F+	35-37	0.75
F	30 -34	0.50
F-	≤29	0.0

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee

18 November 2015

Assessment & Feedback: Turnaround Times Systems Analysis

Executive Summary

This paper provides Learning & Teaching Committee with a high level update on the systems analysis which is being undertaken to help Schools measure assessment and feedback turnaround times more effectively and the planned next steps which were endorsed by Principal's Strategy Group (PSG) on 30 October 2015.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

This work is being developed to support the delivery of an outstanding student experience.

Action requested

*The committee is asked to **comment** on the paper and identify issues to take account of when taking forward the planned actions.*

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

A communication plan will be developed as part of the next steps.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   The analysis is being delivered from existing resources. Resource requirements are being finalised as part of the next steps.

2. **Risk assessment**

   Not applicable since the paper is not asking the committee to take any decisions at this stage.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   Not applicable since the paper is not asking the committee to take any decisions at this stage.

4. **Freedom of information**

   Paper is open.

Key words

Assessment, Feedback, Student Data

Originator of the paper

Barry Neilson
Director of Student Systems
18 November 2015

Senate Learning & Teaching Committee

18 November 2015

Assessment & Feedback: Turnaround Times Systems Analysis

Introduction

1. This paper provides Learning & Teaching Committee with a high level update on the systems analysis which is being undertaken to help Schools measure assessment and feedback turnaround times more effectively and the planned next steps which were endorsed by PSG on 30 October 2015.

2. The committee is asked to **comment** on the paper.

Background

3. An internal audit report on student assessment & feedback reported in February 2015. A high priority finding reported: "It was evident through the School visits that the effective use of IT systems to track student assessment and feedback is important in terms of tracking turnaround times, identifying red-flags and effective communication with students. However Schools are at different stages of adopting IT system and there is currently a mixed approach on development and use of a range of different systems."

4. The audit recommended: 'Although it is recognized that there will be School-specific requirements there is an opportunity to develop appropriate IT systems across the University, ideally leveraging existing student systems. It is recommended that a systems needs assessment be completed and then current systems be reviewed for suitability of development.'

Key messages

5. This analysis is nearing completion, focused on summative assessment. The following key messages are emerging:

   a. There is variation in the data available currently through the different IT systems. This means that in some cases key data at the level of the assignment and the individual are not available, or available only through time-consuming and error-prone manual processes. As a result rigorous reporting on turnaround times is not possible in all parts of the university.
   b. Within that context a university-wide move to online submission of assessment and return of feedback and marks would greatly facilitate the collection and use

of the data and reduce the need to manually create and record it. Online submission also aligns with some of the stated EUSA sabbatical priorities.

c. Some assessment types are not suitable for electronic submission and feedback. Alternative solutions could be developed and delivered to support assessment processes not suitable for the online tools.

d. New business processes will need to be developed and implemented particularly around the set-up of assessment data in our systems and the release of this information to students and staff.

e. Because of the variety of different electronic tools being used to manage submission and feedback processes, a 'one size fits all' solution would not be sensible. We would need instead to use the capability of existing systems and business intelligence tools to develop common reporting capabilities from diverse online platforms.

f. Any solution is likely to be complex – and it is important to understand the pace and scale of change.

Next steps

6. The following next steps have been endorsed by PSG on 30 October 2015:

a. Move in principle to a position, where pedagogically appropriate, of moving as quickly as possible to university-wide online submission of assessment and return of feedback and marks

b. Completion of analysis and peer review with a small number of colleagues in ISG and Schools.

c. Testing scenarios, outputs and definitions with senior colleagues to clarify if the outputs meet the business requirements and fit within the wider context of work with assessment and feedback and performance management.

d. Development of options for implementation, including resource implications, timescales, impact on planned work, business processes and systems with colleagues in Schools.

e. Related activity is taking place in Student Systems, ISG and CHSS and it will be important to align across all area.

Recommendation

7. The committee is asked to **comment** on the paper and identify issues to take account of when taking forward the planned actions.

Barry Neilson
Director of Student Systems
18 November 2015

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee

18 November 2015

Student Survey Unit Priorities

Executive Summary

This paper provides L&TC with a high level summary of the Student Survey Unit priorities for the next 12-18 months.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

This work is being developed to support the delivery of an outstanding student experience.

Action requested

*The committee is asked to **comment on** the paper.*

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The actions will be taken forward by the Student Survey Unit and communications will be issued through Student Systems to relevant stakeholders.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   This paper does not reflect any resource implications of the priorities, this will be dealt with separately.

2. **Risk assessment**

   This work falls under the 'Education & Student Experience' heading on the University of Edinburgh Risk Policy and Risk Appetite. There will be issues in relation to ethics and privacy which are considered as part of the usual function of the Unit.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   Not applicable.

4. **Freedom of information**

   Paper is open.

Key words

Student Surveys, Student Data, Student Experience.

Originator of the paper

Barry Neilson
Director of Student Systems
18 November 2015

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

18 November 2015

Student Survey Unit Priorities

Introduction

1. This paper provides L&TC with a high level summary of the Student Survey Unit priorities for the next 12-18 months.

2. The committee is asked to **comment on** the paper and the presentation.

Background

3. The Student Survey Unit moved into Student Systems on 1 August 2015 from the Student Experience Project primarily to help align and enhance the use we make of student data across the institution. The Student Survey Unit is in the process of finalising its priorities for the next 18 months.

Priorities

4. The table below provides a high level summary of priorities for discussion.

Support EvaSys roll out to Schools and changes required to make this successful.
Increase response rates in all surveys, with a particular focus on NSS and EvaSys.
Extract maximum value and insights from survey (and other student) data.
Review purpose and outputs of ESES and iSB Surveys.
Prepare for changes to NSS in January 2017.
Review approach for surveying Distance Education students.
Implement communication plan and link with other internal activity.
Review service provision to and engagement with School and College Office.

Action requested

5. The committee is asked to **comment on** the paper and the presentation.

<div align="right">

Barry Neilson
Director of Student Systems
18 November 2015

</div>

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee

18 November 2015

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

Executive Summary

The PTES is a service made available by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to all higher education institutions across the UK which have postgraduate taught students. The survey is designed to help institutions enhance the quality of taught postgraduate degree provision by collecting feedback from current PGT students in a systematic and user-friendly way.

This paper presents some options for the PTES forming the basis of an Academic Strategy Group meeting in the New Year.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

This work is being developed to support the delivery of an outstanding student experience.

Action requested

*The committee is asked to **discuss** the paper.*

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Following on from discussion at L&TC a small group of colleagues will help develop a session for the Academic Strategy Group in the New Year.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   The current work is being delivered from existing resources.

2. **Risk assessment**

   This work falls under the 'Education & Student Experience' heading on the University of Edinburgh Risk Policy and Risk Appetite. The committee may want to consider whether the University is making effective use of survey comments and data to help Schools enhance the Postgraduate Taught student experience.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   No impact.

4. Freedom of information

Paper is open.

Key words

Postgraduate Taught Student Experience, Survey, Student Data

Originator of the paper

Dr Gale MacLeod
Dean (Postgraduate Taught Students),
CHSS

Barry Neilson
Director of Student Systems

18 November 2015

Senate Learning & Teaching Committee

Wednesday 18 November 2015

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey - 2015

Introduction

1. This paper presents some options for the PTES forming the basis of an Academic Strategy Group meeting in the New Year. The committee is asked to **discuss** the paper.

Background

2. The PTES is a service made available by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to all higher education institutions across the UK which have postgraduate taught students. The survey is designed to help institutions enhance the quality of taught postgraduate degree provision by collecting feedback from current PGT students in a systematic and user-friendly way.

3. 100 institutions undertook the survey in 2015, including 15 from the Russell Group; 45 pre-1992 institutions and 11 from Scotland. The overall results were published on the Survey Unit wiki at the end of July 2015 and an email issued to key contacts, with College and School level reports, along with School level comments added over the last month.

Key points – 2015 Survey

4. Over the last year the overall University level performance for each of the Primary Themes has remained flat or fallen slightly (by 1% for Teaching & Learning and Assessment & Feedback). The response rate also remains flat at 45% which is higher than our internal surveys, but lower than the NSS. In line with other surveys, there is an opportunity to enhance response rates for this survey.

5. Our relative performance is broadly in line with the UK (100 institutions took part) and the Russell Group (15 of the group took part) average. The results at the sector level remain broadly flat between 2014 and 2015. The information from the PTES cannot be displayed against quartiles or ranking against other Universities as the data is not made available in this way.

6. The survey results reveal significant variation at School level within the primary themes. In a number of Schools the survey reveals significant change between academic years within a primary theme (both increases and decreases).

7. Even within the Schools who perform favourably when compared internally, tend to have at least one primary theme where they rank in the lower half. There are a small number of Schools who rank in the lower half across all primary themes in 2015.

8. The statistical relationship of scores on the primary themes to one another and to overall satisfaction have been explored. If we focus on Overall Satisfaction, then our highest performance measure, Teaching & Learning has the strongest correlation with Overall Satisfaction, followed by Organisation & Management and Skills Development.

9. Anecdotally, at least, feedback suggests that the PTES results are not as well communicated and disseminated as other external and internal surveys and there is an opportunity for the University to engage more effectively with the feedback/comments from students and the data we receive as a result of these surveys.

10. For PTES, like other survey and student data activity, we need to ensure we consider the environmental issues internally and externally, including:
*   Any impact of Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF);
*   Consultation on Unistats/NSS changes which currently includes a proposal considering collecting feedback for publication from taught postgraduate students about their experiences;
*   Changes internally to roll out the EvaSys course evaluation system to all UG and PGT courses.

Options with data

11. Along with the data that is presented on the wiki, the Survey Unit are exploring options to present the data in the following ways which may help gain insights from the feedback received.

12. Demographic data. The University provides demographic data on students to the HEA as part of the survey set up. This data covers programme, School and College details but also nationality, gender, age on entry, and disability for example. Initially plan to test the use of this data (in line with data protection policy and expectations set with students) at an aggregate level within 2 or 3 Schools to see if this starts to generate useful insights.

13. Comparison between surveys at School and if possible Subject level to identify if the good practice and areas for development are unique to PGT or are a common theme across taught programmes. The Survey Unit have looked at the questions in PTES-ESES-NSS for 4 key themes (assessment and feedback, academic support,

organisation and management, and teaching on my course). There is not a high degree of consistency between surveys and in some cases comparison at theme level is not possible. However there may be some value (with caveats attached) to do an initial comparison between questions under these themes that the surveys have in common.

14. Benchmarking. There is an opportunity to present colleagues with some benchmarking data from the PTES survey (initially where there are clear JACS codes links with Schools) against the Russell Group and the sector as a whole.

Academic Policy Group

15. The September 2015 Learning & Teaching Committee identified an opportunity for PTES to form the basis of an Academic Policy Group meeting in the New Year.

16. The November 2015 Academic Strategy Group meeting which will consider Student Data Dashboards and the roll out of EvaSys course evaluation system. A verbal update can be provided to L&TC regarding the benefits of that discussion, which in relation to EvaSys will ask colleagues to consider a number of points, including:
    - What is needed to make this achievable by September 2016 at the School level and support provided centrally?
    - What are the key issues that need to be considered when developing more consistency in our questions (while having some School specific ones)?
    - What is needed to help improve response rates?
    - If we are to use the data more at a course and potentially individual level, what needs to be considered internally and in setting expectations with students completing surveys?

17. Colleagues are asked to consider the information in this paper and the feedback provided at the meeting to help identify key points that could be considered by the Academic Strategy Group in relation to PTES.

Dr Gale MacLeod   Barry Neilson
Dean (Postgraduate Taught Students),   Director of Student Systems
CHSS

                                                                        18 November 2015

Learning & Teaching Committee
18th November 2015

ISG strategy to support learning and teaching

Executive Summary

This paper is an introduction to presentations or papers that set out the draft 10 year roadmap for IS services. The roadmap will be part of IS planning submission in for the 2016-19 planning round.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

ISG have been considering the landscape of services against the University's 2025 vision.

Action requested

Consider and comment. Feedback into the plan is sought.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

IS has identified 4 major themes
- Digital Transformation of Core Services and Systems
- Learning, Teaching & Student Experience
- Research and Innovation
- Library National and International Leadership

These themes will be supported by a change programme to ensure that IS have the necessary capabilities to support the themes. We are presenting on the first three at ITC, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience at LTC, and we will present the Library Leadership theme at the Library Committee.

The roadmap, incorporating feedback from ITC, LTC and Library committee will be taken to the Knowledge Strategy Committee for further consideration/refinement in January.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

The ISG 10 year plan will require funding. There will be a request for additional resources from IS in the 2016-19 planning round.

2. **Risk assessment**

Failure to invest in this roadmap would mean that the services needed to underpin the University's 2025 strategy would not be available leading to failure to deliver on the strategy.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

There are no EqIA impacts at this stage. At implementation stages there will be a need to review impacts again.

4. **Freedom of information**

Open

Originator of the paper

Melissa Highton. Director, Learning, Teaching and Web Services

ISG strategy to support learning and teaching

(draft for comment)

The ISG plan for the next 5-10 years will enable learning and teaching in the following ways:

- To support the 'unique Edinburgh offer' for all of our students, Information Services will provide the IT support and systems needed to enable the pathways from UG through to Masters and PHDs, ensuring ease of accessibility for course materials and information about courses.
- We will transform learning and teaching spaces by investing in innovative technologies and design. These spaces, both physical and digital, will provide opportunities for enhancing staff and student interactions and offer attractive workplaces in which to teach.
- We will provide leadership, funding, and innovation for digital on-campus, online and distance learning including MOOCs and flexible PhDs.
- We will work with partners from across the University community to establish a framework for digital literacy supported through a comprehensive set of courses and IT skills training for all students and staff.
- We will remove barriers to learning opportunities by releasing educational resources in formats to be used freely by teachers, learners and health and welfare organisations.
- We will use online platforms to disseminate knowledge and engage with the public at scale.
- We will work in partnership with other cultural institutions to be world-leading in learning and teaching online.
- We will provide opportunities for academic colleagues to engage in and evidence, excellent teaching using technology.

Key ISG projects and initiatives for learning, teaching and student experience 2015-17

- Significant investment to mainstream MOOCs, ODL and DEI in anticipation of growth.
- Digital Skills framework for news ways of working.
- Transforming learning and teaching spaces.
- Innovation to support mobile, wearable, geo-location, making and co-creation.
- Improving tools and data for feedback, learning analytics and assessment.
- Simplified and sustainable platforms for re-usable content and delivery.

Specific support for the University Learning and Teaching Strategy

ISG will work to offer targeted support to areas of the UG learning and teaching strategy vision outlined by VP Sue Rigby.

1. **A portfolio approach for a complicated and unpredictable future** - Develop a curriculum that maximizes the value of the breadth offered by a four year degree to

enable students to learn widely and develop an individual academic pathway towards a degree.

- Consolidate the multiple existing VLE platforms to be fit for purpose, sustainable and flexible.
- Develop the university website and MyEd to leverage the powerful tools for personalization, choice and tailoring of a digital student experience for applicants, and on-course students.
- Ensure that content and designs created in support of a flexible curriculum are themselves flexible, re-usable, sustainable and portable.

2. Giving students agency to create their own learning - put active and engaged students at the heart of their own journey through a degree.

- Develop new services designed specifically to put students at the centre of their learning journey such as 'Domain of one's own' in conjunction with a blogging service, social learning, and adaptive learning tools.
- Develop new learning analytic tools to give students useful feedback gathered from user data in our systems to support their decision-making.
- Ensure that new platforms and tools for content creation are available for staff and students.

3. Extend learning beyond the traditional knowledge-centred course - to facilitate time spent developing graduate attributes through, for example, credit bearing self-directed study, international or service experience, interaction with employers, entrepreneurship.

- Digital skills training for students to learn best practice in creating and sharing digital learning materials and engaging as active in the global communities which support open knowledge.
- Provide student placement, internships, accredited learning opportunities and work experience in ISG.
- Support schools and colleges in designing and developing online learning by providing professional expert advice in course design, open badges, distance delivery and innovative teaching and assessment methods.

4. Every student a researcher/practitioner – students are linked to research or practice groups and activities from year 1.

- Review our current learning technology tool set to identify tools needed for research-based teaching and groupwork which could be made available to all users of our VLE.
- Explore and pilot where appropriate in conjunction with schools, new tools and services to support the process of 'learning to be a researcher' such as digital lab books, open science methods, research blogging, re-use of datasets and RDM.

- Provide services in support of data visualization, online publishing, poster and presentation design, alt-metrics and managing an online research profile.

5. Course design for 21ˢᵗ Century learners - develop all courses within the curriculum towards the appropriate use of technology and student-centred pedagogy and away from passive learning styles.

- Provide clear roadmaps and costings for the infrastructure, platforms and tools needed for new ways for teaching which incorporate a greater use of technology in the classroom, flexible spaces, lecture capture, increased use and sharing of media.
- Consider new projects and services to support emerging technologies which facilitate active learning approaches e.g. 3d printing, mobile, wearable, geo-location and maker spaces.
- Work with distributed learning technologists to ensure that the capacity to support use of technology is available to colleagues locally and centrally.

6. **Focus on multiple learning approaches and learning for life** - expect all of our students to take at least one online course for credit within their degree, and help prepare them for lifelong learning.

- Provide, and promote to Schools and Colleges, professional expert advice for online course design, quality assurance, distance learning, massive online open courses (MOOCs), learning at scale and re-use of open educational resources (OER) to internationalize and diversify the curriculum.
- Lead discussion and practice at an international level through our partnerships in digital learning consortia (U21, LERU, Coursera, Futurelearn, EdX etc.).

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

18 November 2015

Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – Proposal for Change to Categories of Wider Achievement

Executive Summary

This paper comprises:

- a proposal to add 'EUSA Peer Support' to the categories of wider achievement included in the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)
- recommendations of LTC's Recommendation Panel concerning this proposal.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Excellence in Education; Outstanding Student Experience

Action requested

LTC is invited to discuss and approve the Recommendation Panel's recommendations concerning the proposal.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

If the proposed category is approved, it will be publicised via the University's HEAR website: http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/order-documents/hear

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   Student Systems' staff time to make required systems changes if category is approved.

2. **Risk assessment**
   The paper does not include a risk assessment.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   No impact.

4. **Freedom of information**
   The paper is **open**.

Originator of the paper

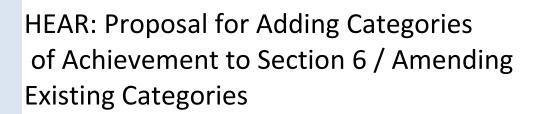Philippa Ward, Academic Services, 11 November 2015

Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – Proposal for Change to Categories of Wider Achievement

LTC's Recommendation Panel considered a proposal to add 'EUSA Peer Support' to the categories of wider achievement included in the HEAR.

LTC is asked to consider and approve the following recommendations:

1. It is recommended that LTC has a broader discussion about the role of the HEAR and its relationship with the Edinburgh Award at its January 2016 meeting.

2. In relation to the EUSA Peer Support proposal, it is recommended:

    a. that LTC approves the addition of 'PALS Student Leader' to the categories of wider achievement included in the HEAR, subject to the Peer Support Project Coordinator providing further information about specific threshold requirements and their monitoring and evaluation.

    b. that LTC does not approve the addition of 'Peer Support Leader' at this time due to the significant variability that can exist in the volume, level and quality of engagement involved. If the Peer Support Leader is able to provide the Recommendation Panel with more information and greater clarity around thresholds and validation, this decision could be revisited.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services
11 November 2015

HEAR: Proposal for Adding Categories of Achievement to Section 6 / Amending Existing Categories

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

This form should be completed if you wish to propose an additional category of achievement for Section 6 (or amend an existing category). The proposal will be considered by Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), which will ensure that the category is:

- equitable;
- available to a broad range of students;
- scaleable;
- and results in robust and validated data.

Categories that have already been approved for inclusion in HEAR section 6 by LTC are:

1. Academic prizes and awards
2. The Edinburgh Award
3. Student Representative
4. EUSA Activities Position
5. EUSA Elected Office Bearer
6. EUSU Representative or Office Bearer
7. EUSU Sports Clubs – Official Positions
8. Edinburgh Students' Charities Appeal Executive Committee Member
9. Student membership of internal University review teams (TPR, PPR)
10. Sports prizes awarded by EUSU

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

*Mandatory fields

HEAR: Proposal for Adding Categories of Achievement to Section 6 / Amending Existing Categories

1. What is the proposed category of achievement?*

EUSA Peer Support:

- PALS Student Leader
- Peer Support Leader

2. Please give a brief description of the category of achievement*
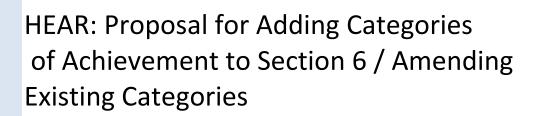
We are hoping to become a new category:
Background:
Peer Support started at Edinburgh as a joint venture between EUSA and the University of Edinburgh in September 2012 and is an established strand of the Student Experience Project. The project is 'owned' by EUSA, as it was agreed from the outset that it must be run by students for students. Peer Support in the context of the University means a student with more experience sharing their knowledge, skills, abilities and expertise with a new or less experienced student. This is a reciprocal relationship, based on mutual respect and understanding and is usually goal focused and time limited. Peer Support is now available across all 22 Schools of the University; it is delivered by 503 Peer Leaders and reaches over 7253 students. We run 6 main models of Peer Support Project: Peer-Assisted Learning Scheme (by far our most structured and popular model), Academic Mentoring, Befriending or Buddies, House System, Autonomous Learning Groups and Academic Families.

3. Which students are eligible for this achievement?*
   (For example, is it open to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, or restricted to a specific group?)

All students who are Peer Leaders (PAL or general) (they may be undergraduate or postgraduate)

*Mandatory fields

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

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

We feel the duties and commitment of these Peer Leaders fall into 2 main categories:

PALS Leader (Peer Assisted-Learning Scheme):

To be eligible to be a PALS Leader you must formally apply, pass the interview stage, attend 3 full days of training and sign a PALS Code of Practice agreeing to work within the defined role. During the semester time, students are expected to commit around **2-3** hours a week on average. This 2-3 hours might include a 1 hour long academic session, half an hour of preparation for this session, half an hour of follow-up and feedback, and a half-hour debrief or supervision. Leaders might also spend time undertaking promotional activities: poster design, web updates, lecture shout-outs, flyering, or writing social media or blog posts. These Projects are closely supervised and evaluated through the University QAC processes.

Peer Support Leaders (other)

This is likely to include Mentoring, Families, Buddies, Befriending and House activities

These Projects tend to focus more on the social and pastoral needs of the students therefore their roles are a little more flexible but still involve extensive support structures. These students are again recruited and comprehensively trained and sign a Code of Practice, as well as being offered continued professional development and support from the Counselling Service. These groups may hold bi-weekly sessions or have more informal one to one meetings. Therefore it is likely that the Peer Support Leaders will volunteer between 4 and 6 hours a month. These Projects are also continually supervised and evaluated. Please see attached for further information.

*Mandatory fields

5. **Verification***

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

PALS Leaders:

PALS Leaders go through a formal recruitment process including application and interview. They then must then attend a compulsory 14-hour training programme. Once taking up their position they must run regular PALS Sessions throughout the Semester, usually lasting 1 hour and involving around half an hour of planning for each session (these can be verified through LEARN, the web calendar and the Events Booking System). They also attend weekly Debriefs with their Key Contact/Supervisor (a member of School staff) usually lasting around an hour discussing what is going well with their sessions, any problems and plans for going forward. We ensure every Leader is observed at least once per Semester and given feedback on their performance. The Leaders are also encouraged to attend regular CPD Sessions covering topics such as facilitation skills, resilience, emotional intelligence, leadership, public speaking and employability, which run monthly. They also attend the Peer Support Network meetings which run 4 times a year and are University-wide. Many of our Leaders also take part in the Edinburgh Award. An entry on the HEAR would be requested for those Leaders whose participation was not being recognised via the Edinburgh Award.

Peer Support Leader:

Peer Support Leaders also go through a semi-formal recruitment process; they then must complete a pre-training module and attend a compulsory 4 hour training programme. Once taking up their position they run regular peer support activities throughout the Semester. These may be academic, social or pastoral in focus. The time commitment of these vary, but we ask they run a minimum of 4 events per Semester and many run much more frequently. These usually last at least a few hours and can involve a great deal of planning, preparation and managing budgets. Many of these Leaders have created their own Peer Support Committees and take on additional roles such as Communications Officer, Treasurer or Learning Practices Officer. These Leaders must also remain in regular communication with their Key Contact (a member of School staff) and the central team discussing what is going well with their project, any problems and plans for going forward.

The Leaders are again offered regular CPD Sessions covering topics such as facilitation skills, leadership, resilience, emotional intelligence, public speaking and employability which run monthly. They also attend the Peer Support Network meetings which run 4 times a year and are University-wide. They are not however currently eligible for the Edinburgh Award which is why we would be very keen for them to receive the HEAR recognition.
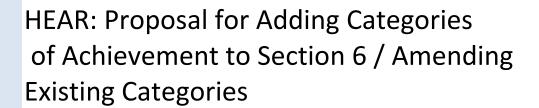
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*Mandatory fields

HEAR: Proposal for Adding Categories of Achievement to Section 6 / Amending Existing Categories

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

Semester 1 data will be made available for upload by December, and Semester 2 data by April at the latest.

7. Is there any other information you wish to supply in support of adding this achievement to Section 6 of the HEAR?

See supporting documents

CONTACT INFORMATION

8. Name of proposer*

Katie Scott

9. Email address of proposer*

Katie.scott@eusa.ed.ac.uk

10. Proposing School / Department*

EUSA (Department of Peer Learning and Support)

11. Date*

20 July 2015

*Mandatory fields

HEAR: Proposal for Adding Categories of Achievement to Section 6 / Amending Existing Categories

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

Once received, the form will be passed to Student Systems who will ensure that the proposing School or Department holds appropriate, robust data in a suitable format for uploading to the Student Record. Further information on the way in which data should be supplied for upload is available here:

http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/staff/Data_Uploads/HEAR_data.htm

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

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

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

For Student Systems use only:

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

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Role: _____

*Mandatory fields

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee
18 November 2015

Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes Task Group Report and proposals

Executive Summary

The Task Group proposes that there is no longer a need for the Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes or for a new document to replace it. The proposal is consistent with current discussions taking place about the simplification of policy, regulation and processes.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper is consistent with the University's Strategic Goal of Excellence in Education.

Action requested

The committee is invited to consider the proposals on page 3 for approval.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Academic Services will communicate the change and remove the publication as part of the annual policy and regulations review and communication.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)** None

2. **Risk assessment** N/A

3. **Equality and Diversity**
    N/A – equality impact assessment has been undertaken on policy proposed to supersede the Code

4. **Freedom of information**
    *The paper is **open***

Key words
postgraduate taught

Originator of the paper
Dr Gale Macleod, Task Group Convener
Dean of Postgraduate Studies (Taught), College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS)
Susan Hunter, Task Group Administrator, Academic Services
4 November 2015

Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes Task Group

Report and proposals

Summary

The Task Group proposes that there is no longer a need for the Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes or for a new document to replace it. The proposal is consistent with current discussions taking place about the simplification of policy, regulation and processes.

In November 2014, LTC agreed that the Task Group would look at substantial revisions to the Code of Practice. Since then, the Programme and Course Handbooks Policy has come into effect. This new policy covers much of the content that was intended for the revised Code of Practice. The University has also redeveloped the Student website, which now includes more information, and content that was previous contained in the Code of Practice.

Task Group report

The Task Group has met four times since it reported to LTC in November 2014. Membership includes representation from all three Colleges and Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), with input from Academic Services.

The Task Group considered the content of the current Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes, the Programme and Course Handbooks Policy, and the University Student website.

These developments in policy and the website have achieved much of what the Task Group had considered as potential replacement content for the Code of Practice. The Task Group has identified some missing content in the areas of Health and Safety, guidance for dissertation supervision, and information on data protection. However, it considers that this content can be effectively included in existing publications.

The Task Group will be able to advise Academic Services on this additional core content and guidance for inclusion in handbooks.

Proposals

1. To discontinue publication of the Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes from 2016/17.
2. No new document to replace it as core content is now or will be accessible elsewhere.
3. That the Task Group will continue as an advisory group on core content for the Programme and Course Handbooks Policy development until April 2016.

Dr Gale Macleod, Task Group Convener

Dean of Postgraduate Studies (Taught), College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS)

Susan Hunter, Task Group Administrator

Academic Services

4 November 2015

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee
18 November 2015

Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice

Brief description of the paper, including a statement of relevance to the University's strategic plans and priorities
The UK Government Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) recently published the Green Paper 'Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice'. This paper outlines a number of significant proposals for change in regulatory and funding mechanisms for higher education, including the introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework. While some of the proposals have direct implications only for institutions in England, others have direct or indirect implications for institutions elsewhere in the UK. It is therefore possible that some of these changes would have material consequences for Scottish HE, depending on the details of implementation and the response of the Scottish Government and agencies.

Action requested
Members are asked to **note** the paper.

Communication and Implementation
Committee members are encouraged to communicate to relevant colleagues in their Schools and Colleges regarding the key themes from the Green Paper.

Resource implications
Does the paper have resource implications? Potentially. However, since this is a consultation paper and its implications for Scottish HE are not yet clear, it is not yet possible to quantify the resources implications.

Risk Assessment
Does the paper include a risk analysis? No

Equality and Diversity
Has due consideration been given to the equality impact of this paper? No, the University has not conducted an equality impact regarding the proposals. If the University was required to change any of its policies or practices as a result of the proposals in the paper, it would undertake an equality review at that stage.

Freedom of information
Can this paper be included in open business? Yes

Originator of the paper

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, 11 November 2015

Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice

On 6 November 2015, The UK Government Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published the Green Paper 'Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice'. The consultation document is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice

The consultation document signals some quite radical shifts with significant implications for the future of the sector and its supporting infrastructure. Since the documentation is for consultation, it is not yet clear what the UK government will ultimately implement. While some of the proposals have direct implications only for English institutions, others have direct or indirect implications for institutions elsewhere in the UK. It is therefore possible that some of these changes would have material consequences for Scottish HE, depending on the details of implementation and the response of the Scottish Government and agencies.

Key proposals

Teaching Quality

A Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

- The Green Paper sets out a rationale for the TEF based on a concern for value for money (with reference to graduate earnings), the need for better information for prospective students regarding the quality of teaching they can expect at different institutions, and the need to ensure that all institutions give teaching the same significance as research.

- The Green Paper proposes that the TEF should cover all types of delivery (full time, part time work based and distance learning). It says that "In time" it should be open to all levels of study, undergraduate and taught postgraduate qualifications. The proposed scope for the TEF would however be more limited in the first two years of operation.

- In year one, those institutions that have passed their most recent QA review would progress to Level 1 of the TEF. They would be able to charge higher tuition fees in 2017/18.

- In year two, institutions can apply to be assessed for higher levels of the TEF. Those who are successful can charge higher fees from 2018/19, and the level of fees will depend on the TEF level awarded – the higher level achieved, the higher fee can be charged.

- Institutions would be assessed for the higher levels of the TEF (eg levels 2 to 4) in relation to three key aspects of teaching excellence: teaching quality; learning environment; and student outcomes and learning gain. Under this model institutions would be assessed against a core set of quantitative data, and would also be allowed to offer additional qualitative and quantitative information (for example, information about the institution's mission and context, levels of teaching contact time). The Core metrics would initially be:
    o Employment/destination – from the DLHE and from early 2017 from the results of the HMRC/HESA data match on graduate earnings.
    o Retention/continuation - From the UK Performance indicators published by HESA.
    o Student satisfaction - From the National Student Survey.

- The paper envisages a three to five year rolling TEF cycle.

- TEF assessments would be independent of Government, and would be the responsibility of a "panel of independent experts" using an agreed assessment framework. The proposed panels would include academics, students and employers / professional representatives. Initially the panels would reach views at institutional level only, but in time the Green Paper envisages moving to having separate panels for each discipline (subject). If/when institutions are assessed at the discipline level at some point in the future the intention would be for the institution's overall TEF level to be an aggregate of the individual discipline scores.

- The paper does not propose routine visits as part of the TEF assessment.

- A technical consultation will be held in 2016 to cover the operational details of the TEF metrics and the assessment criteria, process and outcomes.

<u>**A new system of degree classifications**</u>

- The Green Paper contends that the current system of Honours Degree Classification (1st, 2:1 etc.) is no longer capable of providing students and employers with the information they require and therefore encourages institutions to move to using the Grade Point Average (GPA) system alongside their existing classification system.

- The paper also proposes that universities making a submission to achieve a higher level of TEF award would have to say whether they propose to move to using the GPA system and this will be a factor in deciding their TEF level award. The paper also indicates that institutions would also have to demonstrate that they are taking steps to tackle perceived grade inflation.

Social Mobility and widening participation

- The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) will be further asked to focus specifically on the degree attainment and progression to employment and further study of those particular groups where there is evidence that more needs to be done, for example white males from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- The Green Paper says that a precondition of applying for a TEF assessment should be that universities are "fulfilling widening participation expectations in recruiting and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds", and proposes that the TEF metrics be broken down and reported by disadvantaged group.

- The paper notes that the Prime Minister recently announced an initiative for higher education institutions to recruit on a 'name blind' basis (UCAS is currently consulting with the sector on this). The Green Paper suggests also that the Government explore introducing legal powers to require that bodies (eg UCAS) release data on the outcomes of the admissions process, to promote trust in the admissions system and to help policy makers and researchers better understand how students' background, prior attainment and course choices lead to an offer of a place.

Regulation of the higher education sector

Simplified regulation of new HE providers

- The paper proposes to remove barriers for new/private providers to offer higher education, for example by shortening the timescales for applying for degree awarding powers and University title.

Consumer protection

- The paper proposes that there should be a requirement for all providers to have contingency arrangements in place to provide academic continuity for students in the event of provider exit, course or campus closure.

Simplifying the higher education architecture

- The Green Paper proposes to merge HEFCE (the Higher Education Funding Council for England) and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) to create a new arms-length public body with a duty to promote student interest – the Office for Students (OfS). The Government proposes that the OfS would have overall responsibility for the quality assurance functions (currently managed by HEFCE and delivered by QAA), the new TEF functions, the widening access function (currently undertaken by OFFA) and for collecting and providing information. The creation of the OfS will require primary legislation. Until legislation creating the OfS is enacted, the roles of HEFCE and OFFA will continue as now.

- The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), which are both sector-owned, will continue to operate as now. The Student Loans Company (SLC) will also continue unchanged.

- The future of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) are unclear, since the Green Paper seeks views on whether and to what extent the OfS should have power to contract out its functions (e.g. to HESA or QAA).

- The Green Paper proposes that the Government "deregulate and modernise the constitutional arrangements governing Higher Education Corporations with a view to placing them on a more equitable footing with other institutions incorporated under different and more flexible constitutional arrangements." Among other things, the paper proposes simplifying the role of the Privy Council in approving higher education institutions' governing documents.

- The Green Paper recognises that treating universities as "public bodies" is anomalous, now that their main source of income (for teaching) is student fees, not teaching grant, and that alternative providers are not treated as public providers. In this context, it notes the cost to higher education institutions of being within the scope of the Freedom of Information Act. However, while the Green Paper says that the Government wishes to reduce burdens and deregulate and to see all higher education providers as subject to the same requirements, it does not make a specific proposal in this area.

Funding

A new mechanism for the allocation of teaching grant, without HEFCE

- The paper considers future options for determining the allocation of teaching grant and the financial sustainability function (currently undertaken by HEFCE), including the option of BIS taking on responsibility for allocating teaching grant with support from an independent advisory committee.

A new framework for dual funding of research, without HEFCE

- The stated intention is to reduce complexity and bureacracy, while maintaining the dual support system.

- The allocation of institutional quality-related research funding (QR) will continue, although it will no longer be administered by HEFCE. The consultation suggests various options, for example a separate body could take on HEFCE's research role, or an overarching body could bring together Research Council functions with management of QR funding for England.

- The Research Excellence Framework (REF) will continue on a peer review basis and will be held again before 2021.

Tom Ward
11 November 2015

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee
18 November 2015

Report from LTC distance education task group

Executive Summary

This paper outlines a number of initiatives to be implemented during 2015-16 to provide early life support to distance education programmes – through a new model for learning design; opportunities for colleagues and teams to receive funding for learning and teaching projects in the area of distance education; and staff development for learning technologists and for colleagues in distance education marketing roles.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University's / Committee's strategic goal of Excellence in Education and the strategic theme of Outstanding Student Experience.

Action requested

For information

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Via future task group meetings and subsequent reports to LTC.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   The paper refers to funding which has been secured by Information Services as early life support for distance education programmes. The task group is providing strategic advice on priorities for this funding.

2. **Risk assessment**
   No risks are associated with this paper.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   No major equality impacts are associated with this paper.

4. **Freedom of information**
   The paper is open.

Originator of the paper

Erin Jackson, task group convenor, 4 November 2015

Distance Education Task Group Update - October 2015

The task group has advised Melissa Highton, task group member and Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web services division (LTW) in Information Services, on the development and targeting of ODL early life support, resourced with funding allocated to Information Services for this purpose. The following four initiatives have been proposed for implementation during 2015-16:

1. Learning design for distance education

A specialist Information Services (IS) team will work intensively with a number of ODL programme teams to develop the programme and/or courses on the basis of a new 'Edinburgh model' for learning design. The model is currently in development, and will be ready to pilot from semester 2. Delivery of the model to distance education programmes in the latter half of 2015-16 will encompass c.50 days of staff development/engagement by programme teams, with the selective involvement of external experts alongside IS colleagues. In addition, to ensure the new model can provide mainstreamed support to future distance education programmes, evaluation and training activities will be carried out.

2. Distance education learning & teaching projects

The task group proposes that funds are made available to support projects related to learning and teaching in a distance education context. The task group recognises the high profile and effectiveness of the Principal's Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) in stimulating and sharing innovative developments and practice. Consequently, an approach has been made to IAD to explore whether synergies can be developed with PTAS, to stimulate and help fund the development, implementation and dissemination of a strand of distance education learning and teaching projects in 2015-16.

3. Staff development for learning technologists

This proposal is for the development and delivery of a new IS-led training programme during 2015-16, which will support learning technologists based in Schools and Colleges. Even as these colleagues fulfil their specific local roles, the new programme will ensure they also develop their knowledge and understanding of IS tools, systems and processes. The programme will enable them to develop towards CMALT accreditation.

4. Distance education marketing

The Institute for Academic Development will take the lead on organising a range of activities and development options for staff working in marketing roles. These could involve, for example, access to online marketing modules, targeted/bespoke training, and a series of webinar and/or on-campus events with external expert speakers, to run in 2015-16.

Other task group developments

Mark Wilkinson has left the task group, handing over to Jan Gardiner, Assistant Director of the Student Disability Service. We are grateful to Mark for his valuable contribution to the

task group's work to date, and we look forward to welcoming Jan to the next task group meeting in December 2015.

A member of the task group will join the Student Recruitment & Communications working group involved in developing the new Recruitment Strategy and will aim to co-ordinate with colleagues in the other working groups who also have a distance education remit.

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Learning and Teaching Committee
18 November 2015

Enhancement Themes – Update

Executive Summary

This paper provides the Committee with an update on Enhancement Theme (Student Transitions) activity, specifically identifying the Institutional Team's priorities.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Theme of 'Outstanding Student Experience'.

Action requested

Members are asked to **note** the paper.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Information is posted on a wiki and website. Monthly Enhancement Themes email updates are sent out to Institutional Team members and a distribution list of contacts (to be added to this, please email Nichola.Kett@ed.ac.uk). Institutional Team members are responsible for communicating about Enhancement Theme developments within the constituency they are representing and acting as key Enhancement Theme contact. There is a confirmed reporting structure. Communication and implementation will also operate at individual activity level.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   The paper does not have resource implications.

2. **Risk assessment**
   The paper does not require a risk assessment.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   This will be considered through individual areas of activity. Where relevant, individual activities would be required to undertake Equality Impact Assessments.

4. **Freedom of information**

   The paper is **open**.

Key words

Student transitions, enhancement theme

Originator of the paper

Nichola Kett, Head of Enhancement Team, Academic Services
10 November 2015

Institutional Team Meeting – 8 October 2015

- For the forthcoming session the Team will focus on receiving updates on areas of work relating to the theme of **resilience** and exploring how they can support them as they develop. It is likely that the Team will seek to provide information on initiatives in "signpost" form and raise awareness through, for example, the annual Gearing up for Transitions event in March 2016.
- The Team agreed that by the end of the Enhancement Theme (summer 2017) they would produce a resource which helps Schools to understand students' transitions and the major characteristics of positive transitions.
- This year's funding will be used for: the International Graduate Departure Conference; the annual event (Gearing up for Transitions); creating an interactive student transitions map; and supporting individual projects.
- The agenda, papers and minutes of the meeting can be found on the wiki.

Individual Projects

Seven applications for funding for individual projects have been received. They will be considered by a panel on 24 November 2015.

Forthcoming Meetings

| 1 December | Sector-wide Theme Leaders' Group and Institutional Team meetings |
| 4 December | Institutional Team meeting followed by annual visit from Quality Assurance Agency Scotland Enhancement Team representative |

Contacts

| Professor Ian Pirie | Assistant Principal Learning and Development | Institutional Lead and member of Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC) |
| Nichola Kett | Head of Enhancement Team, Academic Services | Institutional Coordinator and member of the Student Transitions Theme Leaders' Group (TLG) |

SENATE LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

18 November 2015

Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

Committee Name
1. Knowledge Strategy Committee.

Date of Meeting
2. The Committee met on 29 September 2015.

Action Required
3. Senate Learning and Teaching Committee is invited to note the key points discussed at the meeting.

Key points
4. *Student Data Project*
A project investigating the use of student data to support the enhancement of learning and teaching, the student experience and operational effectiveness was presented. The likely prioritisation of six broad areas identified were discussed – with understanding of applications and admissions, understanding the student cohort and analytics/predictive work linked to learning & teaching (benchmarking, survey data) highlighted. Connecting the project to existing work on learning analytics, consistent dashboards that can work with different data sources and using student data to identify areas for improvement were all suggested.

5. *Information Security Audit*
Summary results of an external information security assessment were considered. Top level challenges identified as priorities were discussed and the intention to establish an information security team to respond to the assessment, strongly supported.

6. *Data Architecture Review*
An external scoping study of the University's Enterprise Architecture capability was reviewed. Links with the student data project, e.g. avoiding creating dashboards that sit above an old data architecture of disparate systems, were discussed and the intention to establish a data architecture practice and a data dictionary noted.

7. *Other Issues*
The Committee discussed the development of the 2016-21 Strategic Plan, received reports on the activities of its three Thematic Committees (IT Committee, Library Committee and University Collections Advisory Committee) and granted delegated authority to the Chief Information Officer to progress with planned IT and Library expenditure in excess of £200,000.

Equality & Diversity
8. There are no specific equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

Further information
9.   _Author_
        Dr Lewis Allan
        Head of Court Services
        October 2015

Freedom of Information
10. This paper is open.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee

18 November 2015

Interdisciplinary Teaching

- At its meeting on 3 September 2015, Senatus Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) considered themes arising from 2014 /15 Internal Reviews.

- QAC remitted the following item to LTC:

  Several Teaching Programme Reviews identified potential to develop interdisciplinary teaching, both within the University in terms of interdisciplinary provision and joint degrees at undergraduate level and at postgraduate level through PhD studentships in areas of overlap, and through exploring appropriate external links.

- LTC is asked to note that this will be addressed through the Student Recruitment Strategy 'Portfolio, Development, Innovation and Review' workstream.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee

18 November 2015

Consultation on changes to the National Student Survey, Unistats and information provided by institutions

Executive Summary

The four higher education funding bodies in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have launched a consultation on proposals for changes to the National Student Survey (NSS), the Unistats website and the Key Information Set (KIS).

The key changes proposed are attached in the appendix to this paper, with the full consultation available at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2015/201524/ Deadlines are tight, with submission required by noon on Friday 4 December 2015.

Barry Neilson, Director of Student Systems, is preparing a response on behalf of the University and members are invited to contact Barry with any feedback by Friday 27 November 2015.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

This is work being undertaken by the funding bodies that links is intended to support the delivery of an outstanding student experience.

Action requested

*The committee is asked to **note** the paper.*

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

A draft response will be circulated to a group of colleagues during the week beginning 30 November 2015 prior to final sign off prior to Friday 4 December 2015.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   The consultation itself has a limited impact on resource, however the outcomes of the consultation may have impact on a number of our activities – including collection and publication on information on our courses and programmes, statutory returns and student surveys.

2. Risk assessment

Not applicable at this stage.

3. Equality and Diversity

Not applicable at this stage.

4. Freedom of information

Paper is open.

Key words

National Student Survey, Key Information Set, Unistats

Originator of the paper

Barry Neilson
Director of Student Systems
18 November 2015

NSS and Unistats/KIS Consultation
Summary Table

Changes for 2017	Summary	Short comment
Unistats and KIS	- Maintain and develop a UK website of authoritative national data for students, their advisers and other stakeholders (currently Unistats). - Redesign Unistats to reflect diverse student information needs. - Transfer publication of learning, teaching and assessment information to institutions. - Provide more help for students to navigate information during their decision-making journey.	This looks like a reduced KIS return which is welcome (but the information published by institutions may have a larger impact). There is a still an issue with the volume of use of the site which they did not identify ways of addressing. Talking a little along the lines of the PG Steps to Study: http://postgradsteps.hefce.ac.uk/
Information published by institutions	- Ask institutions to publish detailed course information in line with Competitions and Markets Authority guidance. - Provide good practice developed with sector experts to support consistent but nuanced presentation of information.	Potentially significant. The key change is a lot of the data, such as assessment, contact hours, lecture/independent study splits will be required at institutional level, plus some additional information. They are looking at linking with CMA guidelines but also achieving some consistency through the presentation and type of data and information supplied.
NSS	- Apply criteria for questions in main survey. - Include new questions on student engagement. - Amend questions on Learning Resources and on Assessment and Feedback. - Merge duplicative questions. - Transfer personal development and student	Detailed information on changes in the paper. Increase in overall questions to around 27, engagement being introduced (although opportunity to engage); some small amendments around assessment & feedback and removal of some questions. Most controversial area may be the student unions question.

	union questions to optional banks. • Bring optional questions up to date.

Potential changes after 2017	Summary	Short comment
Methods for capturing qualitative data from students for publication.	Consider options for publishing qualitative information including National Student Survey comments.	This provoked some strong feedback – the use of NSS free text comments as way of providing balanced first-hand accounts from an independent and authoritative source.
Feedback from undergraduate students not included in the NSS	• Consider priority groups for whom we should collect data. • Consider options for capturing and publishing feedback.	Widening the survey to students who are currently excluded. Some questions around the actual mechanics of this (i.e. students who withdrew).
Information for taught postgraduate students	Consider approaches to capturing and publishing feedback from taught postgraduates.	Concerns here that another survey would be introduced on top of the PTES survey that already exists.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee

18 November 2015

Update on Work on Student Experience, Teaching and Learning

Executive Summary

This paper updates the Committee on SVP Prof Charlie Jeffery's work on student experience, teaching and learning.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

This aligns with the University's strategic goal of 'Excellence in Education' and strategic theme of 'Outstanding Student Experience'.

Action requested

*The committee is asked to **note** the paper.*

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Since the paper is not seeking agreement to any specific actions, it is not necessary for the Committee to undertake any specific communication or implementation activities.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   The paper highlights themes that are likely to have resource implications. However, since the paper is for information only and does not seek approval for specific proposals, it does not have any direct resource implications.

2. **Risk assessment**

   Not applicable – see comments on resource implications.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   Not applicable since the paper does not seek approval for any changes to policy or practice.

4. **Freedom of information**

   Paper is open.

1

Key words

Student Experience, Learning, Teaching

Originator of the paper

SVP Prof Charlie Jeffery
17 November 2015

2

Update on Work on Student Experience, Teaching and Learning

Following initial consultations over the summer the emphasis has been on conveying a sense of unambiguous priority around learning and teaching, and developing an approach to realising that priority under four headings: Leadership; teaching performance; celebrating success; and simplification. This paper provides an update organised under these headings, and also notes supplementary work on curriculum innovation; values; and teaching facilities.

<u>Leadership</u>
We have modified our organisational structures for L&T. A **sub-group of Principal's Strategy Group** including the Principal, the Senior Vice Principal, the Heads of College and the University Secretary now meets alongside the regular PSG meeting to offer overall guidance on L&T strategy. The Senate Committee Convenor's Forum has been superceded by a **Learning and Teaching Policy Group** (LTPG) designed to integrate strategic leadership in L&T across the Senate Committees, the Colleges (via College L&T Deans), thematic areas of priority (via existing and new Vice and Assistant Principals), and key professional services. LTPG has now established working groups to coordinate work on teaching performance, communications, and simplification. The remit of LTPG is attached. It may be worth considering LTPG, in light of its integrative function, reporting on its work both to LTC and to Central Management Group.

A central aim has been to communicate a clear and consistent message about the unambiguous priority we need to give to L&T. A number of **open meetings** have been held at different university locations to raise awareness of the approach we are taking, along with meetings with professional services teams, student representatives, School forums and Senate.

Engagement with Schools has come through a programme of individual meetings with Heads of School and their L&T teams and collectively through Academic Strategy Group. Responses have generally been positive, though it will be important to move from a declaratory expression of unambiguous priority to visible and enduring changes in practice (some scepticism remains that 'we've heard it all before' and that the unambiguous priority will not survive the onset of preparations for the next REF). In some Schools there remain deep-rooted cultural problems with regard to the prioritisation of L&T. The level of centrality of Directors of Teaching to School leadership varies considerably. The work of Student Systems in prototyping management information dashboards has met with enthusiasm.

A central focus in discussions with Heads of School and their L&T teams has been on how we can **understand performance better** in L&T so as to be able better to reward outstanding performance, provide opportunities to enhance performance, and address weak performance through supportive and, in extremis, disciplinary measures. We have encountered many examples of good practice and some where a more systematic approach to performance issues needs to be taken. Once the full series of meetings we will produce an analysis for discussion with Heads of School in order to promote exchange of good practice and support schools in strengthening their approach to enhancing performance.

The **National Student Survey** is an important driver behind the approach to L&T we are taking, not least because of the prominent debate about NSS results this year and the likely effects of the proposed TEF in focusing attention on NSS metrics. A change this year is that we are focusing on institution-wide responses to the issues NSS raises rather than through individual School action plans. One part of this has been to establish Assistant Principal positions in **Assessment and Feedback** (Prof Susan Rhind) and **Academic Support** (Prof

3

Alan Murray) which address areas of institution-wide weakness in NSS outcomes. APs Rhind and Murray are now developing programmes of work focused on: enhancing the quality of feedback and personal tutor support; building strong communities of practice across the University which can identify good practice and build opportunities, with IAD, for peer-to-peer professional development; and aligning better academic and student expectations in both fields, including a focus on the student's own responsibilities in getting the best from feedback and personal support.

Performance Management

There has been a strong emphasis in discussions with Heads of School on moving towards the **more systematic use of data to understand performance** alongside other, more qualitative insights into performance. PSG's recent decision to require the use of the **EvaSys** platform for course evaluation by students for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses from the start of the academic year 2016-17 will bring more systematic ways of understanding performance (assuming response rates are high enough to produce reliable results). Schools already fully integrated into the EvaSys platform report real impacts, especially where evaluation data are made transparent to all staff and, in one case, all students. Further work needs to be done to establish whether evaluation of the **quality of personal tutoring support** can be usefully be provided through EvaSys or other existing survey platforms. There is general recognition that EvaSys results need to be interpreted with nuance.

Other areas where data could be improved and/or made transparent are on the speed of **turnaround of feedback** and workload allocation. PSG's decision that all Schools should move to an online system for submission and return of feedback will enhance our capacity to understand individual-level performance on turnaround (though should be used to supplement rather than replace face-to-face feedback). There is continuing debate on the current 15-day standard (some Schools are committed to quicker turnaround; some see the 15-day standard as pedagogically inappropriate; some see 'timeliness' more as a matter of sequencing assessment deadlines so that feedback on early semester assessed work can better feed forward into the next wave of assessed work). Student engagement with feedback, no matter how quickly delivered, has been flagged as a challenge in some schools. AP Rhind will be taking forward discussion on these issues.

A number of different approaches to **workload allocation** are used across the University, including the level of transparency of staff workloads. There is clearly scope for better exchange of practice, for example in allocating time for teaching innovation or in practices of recognition of **time committed to personal tutor activity**.

Schools have been asked to ensure there is systematic discussion of L&T performance in **Annual Review** in the current round, and VP People and Culture Jane Norman will explore how this can be formalised for next year's round. Some Schools already use Annual Review to have purposeful conversations about teaching performance. This year all Schools have been encouraged to make available to reviewer and reviewee relevant sources of information (EvaSys or other course evaluation data, EUSA award nominations, peer observation reports) and to reflect on professional development and enhancement opportunities offered through IAD or elsewhere. There appears to be general appetite for more School-level, peer-to-peer **CPD opportunities facilitated by IAD**, rather than centrally provided courses, to promote the enhancement of teaching skills.

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Annual **Recognition and Reward** processes are now recognised as rewarding promotion cases with strong teaching elements, though 'rank and file' awareness of this is still patchy. There is a clear appetite to modify the Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education to recognise more directly '4*' teaching (in addition to the current focus on innovation, leadership and external recognition).

There is also appetite for **review of our recruitment materials and processes** so that we already convey at that stage our unambiguous priority around learning and teaching.

Heads of School are often wary of taking a capability approach to cases of sustained underperformance in L&T given their perception that our **capability procedures** are unwieldy, extremely time-consuming and too risk-averse. Initial conversations with University and College-level HR services are under way to address these perceptions and ensure Heads receive the support they need.

All these are issues which will be considered further in the teaching performance working group of LTPG, led by Jane Norman, with any proposals for change presented as appropriate for discussion and decision to People Committee and/or LTC.

Communications
We do not have a tradition or a platform for celebrating L&T achievement that is equivalent to our routinized ways of celebrating research achievement. Yet we have many outstanding and inspirational teachers and many examples where our practices have helped to set sector standards nationally and internationally. So that we do not run the risk of framing L&T negatively – for example around our relative performance in NSS – we need to find ways of celebrating our positives. The communications working group of LTPG, led by Charlie Jeffery, will work to develop appropriate platforms for the celebration of L&T success, likely including: short videos **showcasing the work of inspirational teachers** (already under way via CAM); giving additional **voice to students** in identifying outstanding teaching (perhaps using appropriate social media platforms); and a set of **webpages** on the University website designed to present news on good teaching and student achievement and to open up discussion on good teaching practice. A reception for those involved in L&T leadership across the University will be held on 3 December which will launch the work of the communications working group.

Simplification
'Simplification' does not have a uniform meaning. In CSE **reducing the amount of assessment** is seen as a key area for simplification (one School had 33,000 items of assessment last year!). The College is also keen to see a maximum number of three assessments per exam diet – and to see all semester 1 courses examined in semester 1. This may have implications for the number of shorter (10 credit) courses that are offered, and raise questions about the timings of our current semester pattern. Volume of assessment appears less problematic in CHSS, where concerns are more about **QA processes** and a perceived mismatch between effort expended and value obtained. It has been fairly common so far to hear requests for **greater standardisation** in some areas, eg arrangements for exam boards, local rules on progression, or course handbooks. We have heard concerns from CHSS about **'ghost regulations'** – rules that the College or Senate Committees are understood to impose, but which do not actually exist. These can add additional, unnecessary stages to QA or curriculum modification processes or slow down action (and prompt complaint about over-regulation) because of what is perceived to be required. Approaches to mitigating these and other issues will be developed by the simplification working group of LTPG, led by Gavin Douglas.

Curriculum Innovation

The 'emerging vision' for teaching and learning was widely debated last year, opening up a creative conversation about the future-proofing of our curriculum, but also encountering considerable resistance. I am not minded to move from 'emerging' to 'realised' vision at least in the short term. The key emphasis at the moment is to refocus the University on the priority of teaching. However, it is clear that some aspects of the vision were moving with the grain of wider practice, and I have asked a small group (Jeff Haywood on **digital education**, Sarah Cunningham-Burley on **research-led learning** and Lesley McAra on **experiential learning**) to explore further some of the themes in the emerging vision. A first focus is to explore the potential for (largely online) university-wide courses that might develop skills and experiences relevant across a range of disciplines. There may also be opportunities for this group – and others – to engage with: the debate about how we encourage **innovative learning** (but likely without the IL *Week*); work under way as part of the development of a recruitment strategy on the 'portfolio' we offer led by Tina Harrison; and other work on industry engagement and opportunities for entrepreneurship education led by AP Kevin Collins. There may be value in the group developing a holding statement on curriculum innovation to address any uncertainties on the status of the 'emerging vision'.

Values

One of the issues raised at Academic Strategy Group, Senate and the open meetings has been whether we can produce a **succinct statement** which expresses a powerful set of values around our commitment to teaching. There is an opportunity to embed such a values statement in the next Strategic Plan. There is also some scepticism that such statements easily end up as bland 'corporate-speak' and do not engage academic staff. Nonetheless a number of promising ideas have been put forward, which cluster into the two categories below (the various ideas are not necessarily consistent with one another). The first Academic Strategy Group in the new year is set to discuss our teaching values in more depth. LTC's advice on how best to take the conversation on values further in the interim would be welcome?

- **Distinctive features of L&T at this university**: (the potential for) truly rich research-teaching linkages; our expertise in online education; the opportunities for diverse educational experiences offered by the four-year degree; the context of city and community around us; the opportunities that arise from the internationalisation of our student body; the powerful reputation of our graduates among employers (but do we know well enough why?)
- **Pedagogical aspirations**: students as engaged partners in their learning, including the benefit to be won from research-teaching linkages; flexibility, diversity and personalisation of learning experiences; commitment to professionalism in our teaching; nurturing resilient and independent learners; more facetime with teaching staff; the opportunities of online L&T (see https://onlineteachingmanifesto.wordpress.com/the-text/).

Teaching Facilities

There were significant difficulties at the start of this semester in allocating sufficient and appropriate rooms for teaching both at KB and the central area. After initial firefighting a formal review was established by the University Secretary, led by Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer, and scheduled to report in January. In the interim Gavin Douglas is closely monitoring the process of allocating appropriate accommodation to semester two classes with the overriding priority of avoiding in-semester changes.

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Learning and Teaching Policy Group - Terms of Reference

1   Remit

- Provide strategic leadership and monitor progress on learning and teaching issues.
- Coordinate and prioritise the work of the four Senate standing committees and the Vice- and Assistant-Principals with responsibilities for learning and teaching, including coordinating submissions to the University's planning round.
- Connect Heads of Colleges' and Heads of Schools' priorities with institutional strategic priorities on learning and teaching.
- Advise the Senate Committees, and Central Management on how to approach strategic issues regarding learning and teaching, particularly on multi-dimensional issues with implications for multiple Committees and Vice- or Assistant- Principals.
- Engage in horizon scanning to anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments which may impact on the University and its strategic priorities.

2   Membership

*Core member*s

The following Senior Vice-, Vice- and Assistant Principals:

- Senior Vice-Principal (Convener)
- Vice-Principal (People and Culture)
- Vice-Principal (Digital Education
- Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)
- Assistant Principal (Researcher Experience)
- Assistant Principal (Academic Support)
- Assistant Principal (Community Relations)
- Assistant Principal (Assessment and Feedback)
- Assistant Principal (Research-led Learning)

The following College Deans:

- Dean of Undergraduate Studies (CHSS)
- Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning (CMVM)
- Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)

In attendance

- Director of Institute of Academic Development
- Deputy Secretary – Student Experience
- Director of Academic Services
- Academic Services Senior Team

3   Support

Academic Services will provide administrative support and will be responsible for taking summary minutes, circulating papers, and coordinating and monitoring actions.

4   Frequency of meetings

The meetings will be approximately every six weeks during semester time.

Ad-hoc electronic meetings may take place where necessary.

Approved by Learning and Teaching Policy Group, 6 November 2015