

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
held at 2pm on Wednesday 23 January 2019
in the Board Room, Chancellor's Building, Little France**

1. Attendance

Present:

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| Professor Rowena Arshad | Head of Moray House School of Education (Co-opted member) |
| Professor Sian Bayne | Director of Centre for Research in Digital Education (Co-opted member) |
| Professor Stephen Bowd | Dean of Postgraduate Studies (CAHSS) |
| Ms Megan Brown | Edinburgh University Students' Association, Academic Engagement Co-ordinator (Ex officio) |
| Ms Rebecca Gaukroger | Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (Ex officio) |
| Professor Iain Gordon | Head of School of Mathematics (Co-opted member) |
| Ms Shelagh Green | Director for Careers and Employability (Ex officio) |
| Professor Judy Hardy | Director of Teaching, School of Physics and Astronomy (CSE) |
| Professor Tina Harrison | Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance) |
| Dr Sarah Henderson | Acting Director for Postgraduate Taught (CMVM) |
| Ms Melissa Highton | Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division (Ex officio) |
| Professor Charlie Jeffery (Convener) | Senior Vice-Principal |
| Dr Velda McCune | Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's nominee) (Ex officio) |
| Ms Diva Mukherji | Vice President (Education), Edinburgh University Students' Association (Ex officio) |
| Professor Graeme Reid | Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE) |
| Dr Sabine Rolle | Dean of Undergraduate Studies (CAHSS) |
| Professor Mike Shipston | Dean of Biomedical Sciences (Co-opted member) |
| Professor Neil Turner | Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, (CMVM) |
| Mrs Philippa Ward (Secretary) | Academic Services |
| Mr Tom Ward | University Secretary's Nominee, Director of Academic Services (Ex officio) |

Apologies:

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| Ms Nichola Kett | Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services |
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In attendance:

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| Ms Sarah-Jane Brown | Student Surveys Unit |
| Ms Charlotte Matheson | Academic Services |
| Professor Judy Robertson | Moray House School of Education |

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

LTC approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2018.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 National Student Survey (NSS) 2019: Bank and Institutional Questions

The Committee noted that after the 14 November meeting, members had agreed to include the bank of employability-related questions and an institutional question about the Personal Tutor System in the 2019 NSS. They had also agreed to omit students' union and learning community-related questions.

3.2 Senate Committee Input into the 2019-22 Planning Round

Following the 14 November meeting of LTC, members were given the opportunity to comment by correspondence on issues for the 2019-22 Planning Round. The following priorities were highlighted by members:

- work around Teaching and Academic Careers (TACs)
- the Student Experience Action Plan
- employability and support for personal, professional and career development, both centrally and at School-level.

4. Convener's Business

4.1 Senate Committee Governance Activities

The Convener advised members that an external review of the effectiveness of Senate and its Committees would be undertaken in the current academic year by Jennifer Barnes, a consultant from Saxton Bampfylde. Concurrently, an internal review of the structure of the Senate Committees would be carried out. This would be convened by the Senior Vice-Principal, and LTC would be given an opportunity to comment on a set of proposals at its March meeting.

4.2 Vice-Principal Students Post

Members were advised that the closing date for applications for the post had now passed and a long-list would be received from the recruitment agency the following week.

5. For Discussion

5.1 Student and Staff Experience Action Plan

The Convener advised the Committee that the version of the Plan being considered had been produced in November 2018. Whilst significant progress had been made since then, a more recent iteration of the paper was not yet available.

Progress made since November 2018 included:

- agreeing that a holistic approach would be adopted, with both the staff and student experience being integral to the Plan;
- further developing the 'Communications' section of the Plan;
- and developing the 'Leadership' section of the paper (the Convener advised members that expectations for those in leadership positions were likely to change as a result of the Plan).

The overall aim of the Plan was to ensure that students felt cherished and staff energised by their contributions. Prioritisation going forwards would be through logic modelling and financial cost-benefit analysis.

In discussing the Plan, members agreed that expectation management would be important when communicating about the Plan. There would be value in identifying 'quick wins' for those students who would not benefit from longer-term changes. The Committee also discussed the relationship between the Action Plan and Service Excellence, and noted that projects that were already underway would not stop, but would instead be understood in the broader context provided by the Plan: the Plan would align with, not duplicate existing activity.

5.2 Curriculum Issues

5.2.1 Near Future Teaching – Co-Designing a Values-Based Vision for Digital Education at the University of Edinburgh

LTC was advised that the Near Future Teaching project was entering its final phase. Members noted that the co-design approach to the project had been time-consuming but highly effective, and had engaged large numbers of staff and students. A number of short to medium-term actions had arisen from the project. In addition, the project lead was discussing ways in which the outputs of the project would feed into the longer-term trajectory by informing other areas of work, including the Student and Staff Action Plan.

Members discussed:

- The impressive creativity of the project
- The fact that the project aligned well with both Service Excellence and the Student and Staff Experience Action Plan
- The fact that, up to this point, the scope of the project had been limited to digital education. However, LTC held the view that the outputs of the project could influence all aspects of learning and teaching
- The value of developing the paper to:
 - Highlight the technology and staff resource that would be needed to take the project forward over the next 5 to 10 years (this would be discussed with the Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services)
 - highlight concrete actions;
 - make linkages with other areas of work clear;
 - build more about reach and significance into the document;
 - and to provide more information about outcomes eg. how the work described mapped to graduate attributes and employability.

Action: Assistant Principal Digital Education to amend the paper as discussed and to consider the technology and staff resource needed to deliver the project's outputs with the Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services.

5.2.2 Curriculum Conversations

The paper was presented by Professor Judy Robertson, Moray House School of Education. She advised members that the proposed publication, 'Teaching Bite', aimed to provide a resource in book format that gathered together the University's collective wisdom on learning and teaching. Input from staff and students would be essential, and it was hoped that the forthcoming University Learning and Teaching Conference would generate useful material for inclusion. Members discussed possible themes for the book. Suggestions included:

- curriculum for the 21st century
- curriculum review
- use of lecture recording
- use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- decolonising the curriculum
- blended learning
- transition from University to career
- teaching staff workload (which could include discussion around pedagogy and assessment which may allow staff to use their time more effectively)

Members also discussed:

- the format of the publication, noting that it would be important to offer the material in more than just book format;
- the relationship of 'Teaching Bite' and the 'Teaching Matters' website, and the importance of avoiding duplication;
- the potential for outputs from the Student and Staff Experience Plan to inform the publication's content.

Members were asked to contact Professor Robertson or the Director of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) if they were interested in joining the Steering Group for the publication, or had suggestions of others who might be interested.

Action: Members to contact Professor Robertson or the Director of IAD to express interest in joining the Steering Group.

5.3 Update on Task Group on Using the Curriculum to Promote Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

The Director of Academic Services advised members that this was an interim report from the Group. The Group had developed a set of draft principles to guide its work and initial ideas about institutional actions. Members discussed:

- the importance of the project having 'teeth' - the need to ensure that action was taken by Schools as a result of the Task Group's work without it becoming a box ticking

exercise. Clear and visible leadership across all Schools, without being overly prescriptive, would be required.

- the need to ensure that members of staff were clear about the purpose of the work
- the benefit of providing examples of what change might look like, particularly for Schools within the College of Science and Engineering;
- the importance of managing expectations among current and prospective students when promoting the Principles.

5.4 Update on Research into Undergraduate Non-Continuation

The Director of Academic Services reminded members that research into undergraduate non-continuation had been discussed at the Committee's November 2018 meeting. Since that meeting, potential areas for additional research had been identified, and work had been undertaken by Governance and Strategic Planning (GASP) to scope and cost this additional activity. GASP had concluded that further research into prior attainment or entry qualifications and engagement with societies or extra-curricular activities were most likely to prove beneficial.

Members supported undertaking additional research in these areas, but noted that using aggregate UCAS tariff scores (priority 1 in the paper) and highest qualification on entry for Scottish students (priority 3) as an indicator of prior attainment may not give clean data.

The Department of Peer Learning and Support was keen to undertake further research into the impact of Peer Support. The Director of Academic Services would discuss this further with Peer Learning and Support.

Action:

- 1) Director of Academic Services to meet with Peer Learning and Support to discuss areas for further research.
- 2) GASP to take forward the proposed research on prior attainment and engagement with societies or extra-curricular activities, subject to securing resources.

5.5 Teaching and Academic Careers

5.5.1 Teaching and Academic Careers (TACs) Project - Update

The Committee noted that this was a strand of the Student and Staff Experience Action Plan. A set of guiding principles had been developed by the group leading the work following widespread consultation, and the project was now moving into phase 2. This phase was expected to involve 3 main strands of activity:

- A technical review of HR policies and procedures to identify whether changes would be required to ensure alignment with the principles
- A technical review of support and expectations for professional development in teaching to identify whether changes would be required to ensure alignment with the principles
- A technical review of the way in which the University evidenced excellence in teaching

The task group was aiming to complete most of the work by the end of the semester, but some areas of work, particularly the review of HR policies, would take longer.

Members agreed that communication and culture change would be key to the success of the project: staff members needed to believe that excellent teaching would be recognised and rewarded.

5.5.2 Update on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Learning and Teaching

The Deputy Director of the Institute for Academic Development advised LTC that good progress was being made with the Framework, with participation increasing steadily, and positive feedback being received from participants. The impact of academic workloads on possibilities for participation in professional development for learning and teaching was discussed.

5.6 Resource Lists Framework – Update

LTC formally supported the introduction of the Resource Lists Framework. It discussed ways in which use of the Framework might be encouraged including:

- producing more information about use of the Framework in different disciplines;
- raising awareness of the Framework amongst Course Organisers and Programme Directors;
- reassuring staff members that a resource list does not need to be comprehensive (this would involve making students aware that resource lists were only a starting point, and that wider reading was expected);
- and making systems changes to allow a resource list to be set up as part of the course creation process.

5.7 Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2020 – Update and Discussion of Contextualised Themes

The Committee noted that the next ELIR would take place in October and November 2020. The Contextualised Themes were the priorities the institution wished to focus on. LTC was broadly supportive of the 4 Themes proposed, but noted that it would be important to ensure that Postgraduate Research provision was given appropriate attention in the context of those Themes. Members noted that the way in which the Themes were described and presented would develop over time.

5.8 MOOC Programme Summary 2018

LTC approved a proposal that the MOOCs Strategy Group develop a strategic approach to expanding the University's MOOC portfolio in line with priorities around Distance Learning at Scale, City Deal, the Learning and Teaching Strategy and student recruitment. This would include a targeted call for the development of new MOOCs.

Members discussed:

- The need to ensure that any strategic review of MOOCs also closed MOOCs where appropriate;
- The changing nature of MOOCs, including reduced use of MOOCs terminology within the sector; and

- The opportunity provided by MOOCs for the University to learn more about serving large numbers of students online.

6. For Approval

6.1 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

6.1.1 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2019: Institutional Questions

Members approved the proposed institutional questions on academic community, Personal Tutor, employability and a free text question. They also agreed that questions on the dissertation and free text comments should remain in the questionnaire and not be hidden.

6.1.2 Update on Potential Future PGT Survey

Members noted the update and that there had been limited progress since the previous year.

6.2 Establishment of a Task Group to Review the Operation of the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)

The Committee approved the establishment of a short-life task group to review the operation of Section 6.1 of the HEAR.

7. For Information and Noting

The following items were noted:

7.1 University of Edinburgh Learning and Teaching Conference 2019 – Update

7.2 Careers and Employability Update

7.3 Report from Learning and Teaching Policy Group

7.4 Lecture Recording Opt-Outs

LTC was advised that as compared with January 2018, 62% more lectures were being recorded, and viewings had increased by 98%.

The Lecture Recording Policy had come into operation on 1 January 2019. Since this time, only around 15% of those courses with lectures that could have been recorded had opted out, resulting in a higher than sector average proportion of lectures being recorded. Opt-out was not evenly distributed across the University. Heads of Schools had been provided with information about courses that had opted out in their Schools, and the University Executive would receive data for all Schools. Members agreed that Information Services Group should provide Heads of Schools with opt-out data for all Schools to allow them to see how their School compared.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services
27 January 2018