

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23 May 2019
at 2pm in the Raeburn Room, Old College**

Present:

Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Dr Shereen Benjamin	Associate Dean (Quality Assurance) College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Megan Brown	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association
Brian Connolly	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Dr Gail Duursma	School Representative (Engineering), College of Science and Engineering
Dr Katherine Inglis	School Representative (Literatures, Languages and Cultures), College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Nichola Kett	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Dr Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, College of Science and Engineering
Sarah McAllister	Head of Operations & Projects & Assistant Director, Institute for Academic Development
Diva Mukherji	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
Dr Claire Phillips	Dean of Quality Assurance, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Present:

Dr Andrew Horrell	Deputy Director for Undergraduate Studies, The Moray House School of Education
Ros Claase	Design Lead, Student Support and Personal Tutor Review, Service Excellence Programme
Gillian Mackintosh	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

Apologies:

Brian Green	Deputy Associate Principal (Learning & Teaching), University of Strathclyde
Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems and Administration

Dr Jeni Harden

School Representative (School of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Convenor welcomed Dr Andrew Horrell attending to present on Paper D and Ros Claise attending to present on item 12.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 April 2019

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting with the following amendments:

- The minute relating to the External Examiner Taught Policy Review: conflicts of interest section should also refer to Colleges reporting on exceptions to qualifications and expertise.
- Megan Brown's title should read Academic Engagement Coordinator

3. Conveners Communications

The Convener updated the Committee following a recent meeting Professor Dorothy Miell, Head of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) on streamlining Internal Periodic Reviews within the College. Academic Services and colleagues in the College Office are reviewing where there are opportunities to move towards a single School Teaching Programme Review for all Undergraduate programmes in every School in CAHSS. This will be discussed at the College Planning and Resources Committee on 28 May.

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) preparation is progressing well with next steps focussing on drafting the reflective analysis. Academic Services will be contacting colleagues in due course to ask for contribution of content. There will be an opportunity for colleagues to comment on the draft report. The Convener highlighted that we are keen to ensure that the report reflects the diversity and good practice that exists across Schools and that this is incorporated throughout the report where appropriate.

It was discussed that it may be useful for ELIR to be included as a standing item on College and School Committee agendas for information.

Academic Services are working with Communications and Marketing to discuss effective ways of promoting ELIR as part of wider communications around enhancing the student experience. However suggestions of effective ways of engaging staff and students in the preparations would be welcomed.

4. Matters Arising

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation Committee:

At the meeting on 25 April it was discussed whether it may be appropriate for the accreditation process to be overseen at University level rather than College level. It was agreed that the Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture to discuss at College level and report back to the Committee.

Dr Kirstein reported that the College have recommended that the accreditation process should be overseen at University level, particularly if there is growing engagement with the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

It was noted that the development of a new Memorandum of Agreement requires University level support and it would be helpful to instigate a discussion on this part of the process as soon as possible in preparation for next year's accreditation.

Action: Academic Services to discuss the governance process involved in moving the SRUC accreditation oversight to University level.

Directors of Quality Strategic Development Sessions

The outcomes of the sessions will be sent to School Directors of Quality with a short survey to seek feedback on the sessions and suggestions for future sessions.

Widening Participation (WP) data.

At the meeting on 27 February 2019, the Committee considered the Annual College Quality Reports. The Colleges raised concerns that WP data may not be readily available.

It is anticipated that the data will be available once the new data dashboards are rolled out. Colleagues are asked to review the data at that point and to follow up with the Head of Student Surveys and Data to discuss any concerns.

For Discussion

5. Senate Themes for 2019/20 meetings

The Committee discussed a numbers of suggestions for themes for the Presentation and Discussion sections for Senate in 2019/20. These included: Diversity, Edinburgh Futures Institute - cross curricula initiatives, Staff and Student wellbeing, Staff and Student experience – working together in partnership.

Action: Committee Secretary to forward suggested themes to Senate Secretariat.

6. External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy

The Committee received the draft policy for approval, following comments received from the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

The comments related to the retention schedule seeking reassurance that consideration of part-time students had been taken into account in approving a five year timeframe.

The Committee **approved** the Policy subject to paragraph numbers to be checked and the wording in section 21 to correspond with the title of the chapter.

7. Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) escalation of issues project

The Committee discussed proposals to explore different approaches to escalating issues that cannot be addressed within SSLCs. The Convener thanked Dr Andrew Horrell for preparing the paper.

It was noted that the main challenges are that the diversity of existing approaches make it difficult to provide clarity in terms of expectations for SSLC roles and the interactions between the SSLC and other University and School committees.

At present there is not a clear or consistent way for issues which are relevant to the student experience but cannot be addressed at programme or School level to be escalated to College or University Committees.

The Committee noted that whilst it is important that a clear process is in place to enable the College and University to be aware of issues, it may not be appropriate to take a mandated approach for each School. It was discussed that it would be useful for Schools to set out their current approach to escalating issues and closing the feedback loop. It was suggested that approach could be set out in a flowchart to provide clarity for both students and staff.

The Committee discussed that it would also be helpful to be able to monitor the number of issues being escalated as well as identifying and collating any emerging themes.

The Committee noted that although they agreed with the recommendations in principle they were not supportive of approving that all Schools follow the same approach at this time. It was agreed that the Colleges and Academic Services should work together to explore approaches with Schools.

Action: Academic Services and College Deans to meet in first instance to discuss how to take this forward with Schools.

8. SSLC Guidance update

The Committee discussed the proposal to revise the SSLC operational guidance to policy to mandate particular approaches to strengthen the value of SSLCs.

The guidance was reviewed as part of the project to explore different approaches to escalating issues that cannot be addressed within SSLCs.

The Committee was not supportive of the proposal to amend the operational guidance to policy. It was agreed to review the wording in the guidance as part of the work with Schools and Colleges on escalating issues. Minor amendments to the guidance will be made to reflect the revised version of the UK Quality Code and consistency of wording in section 7.

Action: Academic Services and College Deans to meet in first instance to discuss how to take this forward with Schools.

9. Student Voice Policy

The Committee discussed the Student Voice Policy which has been reviewed to reflect the changes proposed to the SSLC guidance.

In line with outcome from the discussion on items 7 and 8, the Committee agreed that the proposed changes in the SSLC section should not be approved at this time. This will be included as part of the work with Schools and Colleges on escalating issues and reviewing SSLC guidance.

The policy will be updated to reflect the agreement by the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee which recommended that mid-course feedback be encouraged for postgraduate taught courses from September 2019 and that Academic Services consult with Colleges about the proposed introduction. It also recommended that: mid-course feedback should be standard for courses running for 10 weeks or more; guidance on what constitutes mid-course feedback is produced; existing examples of mid-course feedback are shared; and the term mid-course feedback (rather than mid-semester feedback) is used consistently.

The Committee noted that the follow-up evaluation of mid-course feedback and a review of course enhancement questionnaires identified a need to provide clarity for staff and students on the various student voice mechanisms and how they relate to each other.

It was noted that work had begun by Academic Services and the Students' Association to develop a graphically designed visual of the new student representation system. However as this was still in a transitional phase, this graphic was not shared. All Schools and Deaneries have now confirmed that they will be moving to the new student (programme) representative system from 2019/20. Therefore, the original graphic will be expanded upon and online and hard copy versions shared across the University.

The Committee commented that it would be useful to have more of an understanding of how the Student Panel is advertised and promoted. It was suggested that it may be helpful to

promote the Student Panel to School Directors of Quality and Directors of Teaching networks.

Action: Academic Services to amend the Policy to incorporate the changes to mid-course feedback.

Academic Services to request an update on Student Panel from Head of Student Data and Surveys and to circulate to the Committee.

10. Providing Summaries of Student Feedback to School Representatives Pilot update

The Committee received a paper outlining proposals to provide summary reports of student feedback to School Representatives.

Schools will be asked to provide a short contextual overview to accompany the reports which should outline numbers of programmes, students and nature of the cohort.

It is hoped that the availability of the survey reports will help support School Reps in their role and become part of an on-going conversation with the School on activity and initiatives to enhance the student experience.

The Committee **approved** the proposal that survey reports are made available to School Representatives.

11. Thematic Review: 2018-19 initial findings report

The Committee noted the progress update on this year's Thematic Review.

The Committee noted that due to the ELIR there will be no thematic review during 2019/20. At the QAA annual meeting earlier this year, it was suggested that Academic Services would carry out a review to look holistically at learning from thematic reviews in terms of equality and diversity.

For Information and Formal Business

12. Service Excellence Programme: Student Support and Personal Tutoring Project update

Ros Claase, Design Lead, Student Support and Personal Tutor Review, presented an update on the project.

The Committee noted that the project had commenced in April 2019 and included Emma Hunter as Academic Lead. The Vice Principal Students will take on oversight of the project following the departure of the Senior Vice Principal in the autumn.

The project team are gathering information on current practice across the University, involving discussion with students and staff. The project covers all taught provision, at present postgraduate research student support is not in scope.

The Committee noted that it would be useful for the project team to speak with the Senior Tutor Network and the unions. The Committee are encouraged to inform the project team about existing networks that would be useful to speak to.

It was agreed that it would be useful for the Committee to receive a further update in September.

The Committee noted that the School Annual Quality report annual reflections may be useful to the project team.

**Action: Committee Secretary to invite Design Lead to the September meeting.
Committee Secretary to share School Annual Quality Report Sub Group outcomes with Design Lead.
Design Lead to share link to the project SharePoint site.**

13. College Annual Quality Reports : update on actions

The Committee noted the update on actions from the College Quality Reports.

14. ELIR 4 – Outcomes of Reviews

The Committee noted the key themes arising from the recommendations and commendations identified in the first four reviews completed in the ELIR 4 cycle.

15. Internal Review Reports

The Committee **approved** the reports.

16. Any Other Business

The Convener thanked the outgoing Students' Association Vice-President (Education) for her impressive contribution to the work of the Committee.

17. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 19 September 2019 at 2pm