<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

**Meeting of Senate Learning and Teaching Committee
to be held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 24 January 2018
in the Board Room, Chancellor's Building, Little France**

A G E N D A

1.	**Welcome and Apologies**	
2.	**Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 November 2017**	LTC 17/18 3 A
3.	**Matters Arising**	
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4.1	Teaching Excellence Framework Monitoring	Verbal Update
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	5.3.2 Distance Learning at Scale – Delivering a High Quality Student Experience	LTC 17/18 3 E CLOSED
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Date of next meeting: 14 March 2018, Raeburn Room, Old College

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Philippa Ward, Academic Services, January 2018

Date of next meeting: 14 March 2018, Raeburn Room, Old College

LTC 17/18 3 A

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
held at 2pm on Wednesday 15 November 2017
in the Board Room, Edinburgh College of Art Main Building**

1. Attendance

Present:

Ms Bobi Archer	Vice President (Education), Edinburgh University Students' Association (Ex officio)
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)
Ms Megan Brown	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Academic Engagement Co-ordinator (Ex officio)
Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley	Assistant Principal (Research-Led Learning), Dean (CMVM)
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)
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)
Professor Neil Mulholland	Dean of Postgraduate Studies (CAHSS)
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching, CSE
Dr Sabine Rolle	Dean of Undergraduate Studies (CAHSS)
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:

Ms Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (Ex officio)
Ms Nichola Kett	Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services
Professor Anna Meredith	Director for Postgraduate Taught, CMVM

In attendance:

Ms Laura Cattell	Head of Widening Participation, representing Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions

Mr Gavin Douglas	Deputy Secretary Student Experience
Mr Neil McCormick	Educational Technology Policy Officer
Professor Susan Rhind	Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback
Mr Scott Rosie	Head of Timetabling and Examination Services

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September were approved.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan (item 4.3)

The Director of Academic Services advised members that improving feedback to students on the way in which their feedback was being used was being considered within broader work on student communications being undertaken by the Deputy Secretary Student Experience. A report on this work would be brought to the January meeting of LTC.

> **Action:**
> Director of Academic Services and Deputy Secretary Student Experience to report to January meeting of LTC on student communications work.

4. Convener's Communications

Members noted that this was a period of significant change in the external environment. Uncertainties existed for the University around Brexit, tighter regulation of English universities (which may impact on the Scottish sector), and intensification of the outcome agreement process in Scotland.

5.   For Discussion

5.1   Global Offline Timetable Modelling Project

The Head of Timetabling and Examination Services presented on this Project. It was noted that there were five key Project deliverables:

  i. Delivery of greater spread across the teaching week
 ii. Keeping Wednesday afternoons clear of teaching
iii. Modelling flexibility in course choice
 iv. Modelling some rationalisation of course choice
  v. Modelling for growth by allowing for increased repeat lecture scheduling

The overall aim was to deliver a timetable that was flexible and dynamic and worked well for all.

Modelling would:

- use the 2017/18 timetable as a template;
- factor in programme 'core' courses;

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- factor in programme optional courses deemed 'de facto core';
- take account of 'whole-class' teaching;
- take account of courses where all sub-group teaching must take place simultaneously;
- use existing course choice combinations.

Modelling would not:

- include Medicine and Veterinary Medicine timetables (separate modelling would be undertaken here);
- take account of sub-group teaching eg. tutorials;
- consider staff allocations: modelling would be on the basis of student and estate availability.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- A significant number of teaching staff with school-age children attending City of Edinburgh Council Schools are not contracted to work on Friday afternoons to enable them to fulfil their childcare responsibilities. It would however not be possible to factor this into the modelling if staff allocations are not considered.
- Most laboratory-based courses cannot run past 5.00pm on account of technical staff being unavailable.
- Some staff teach more than one course per Semester, and it will therefore be essential that these courses are not scheduled simultaneously. It will be difficult to factor this into the modelling if staff allocations are not considered.
- The importance of capturing travel time for both staff and students between the University's various sites was noted. Members were advised that travel time for students could be factored into the modelling, provided Schools supplied Timetabling with accurate and sufficiently detailed information. It was noted that, for those students with a travel constraint, there was often a degree of choice involved regarding which courses to enrol on.
- Schools also needed to provide Timetabling with sufficiently detailed information about core and optional courses (eg. cases where one of two possible courses was core) and equipment required for classes etc. Good communication between Schools, Colleges and Timetabling at all levels was essential.
- The impact on timetabling of recruiting students above intake targets was recognised.

5.2 Course and Programme Design: Update and Proposal

The Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback reminded members that work around course and programme design had stemmed from discussions around ways in which feedback quality might be improved. The paper provided an update on the course and programme design resources currently offered by the University, and proposed two options:

1. moving to a position where for new programmes (and ideally courses), engagement with the continuing professional development opportunities outlined in the paper (or an appropriate alternative) was required and built into the project planning.
2. strengthening support for Boards of Studies Conveners to ensure that all had not only the necessary training in the mechanistic aspects of course and programme approval, but also training in the underlying pedagogy.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- There is significant variation in the ways in which Boards of Studies Conveners are recruited across the institution, and the University does not currently have a forum to bring all Conveners together. In this context, option 2 was considered valuable, in that it would lead to greater professionalization of the role of Board of Studies Convener.
- It was noted that there may be benefit in offering the training outlined in option 2 to a slightly wider group and not just to Boards of Studies Conveners. In addition to covering mechanistic and pedagogical issues, the training could also be used to cover issues such as Competitions and Markets Authority requirements and developing business cases for courses.
- Option 2 could be introduced this academic year, but was unlikely to result in rapid culture change in this area.
- More rapid culture change could be brought about by introducing option 1, which was considered best practice. It was recognised that this would be easier for new than for existing programmes and courses. In theory it may be possible to review existing provision through Internal Review processes, although in practice, Teaching Programmes Reviews and Postgraduate Programme Reviews cover large numbers of individual programmes, making it difficult to focus on the design of individual programmes.

In light of the discussion, it was agreed that the Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback would work with IAD, Academic Services and Colleges to introduce option 2 as soon as possible. The Assistant Principal would also give consideration to ways in which option 1 might be introduced for both new and existing programmes and courses. It was recognised that this may require additional resource.

Action:
Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback to:
1. work with IAD, Academic Services and Colleges to introduce option 2 as soon as possible.
2. work with IAD, ISG and Colleges to consider how option 1 might be introduced for both new and existing programmes and courses.

5.3   Class Representatives System

Members were advised that the aim of the changes proposed in the paper was to reduce the total number of class representatives in order to introduce a higher quality and more consistent service. This would be achieved by introducing a programme-level system. It was reported that students consulted by the Students' Assocation were content with the proposed changes.

Learning and Teaching Committee was supportive of the changes, and raised the following points:

- Members were supportive of the programme-level approach. It was felt that it would make it much easier for students to have their voice heard.

- The changes were considered to close many feedback loops, although there may still be benefit in providing Senate Quality Assurance Committee with an annual report of issues arising at Staff Student Liaison Committees that could not be resolved at School-level.
- It would be important to focus on quality of representatives and not just quantity. A focus on building a community of representatives would be key.
- Communication with Schools about the changes should provide a holistic picture of the ways in which the University was listening to students, including mid-Semester feedback etc.

Action:
1. Students' Association Vice-President (Education) to work with Director of Academic Services to take forward the proposals, in consultation with Schools.
2. Senior Vice-Principal to raise the issue with Heads of Schools.

5.4   Draft Lecture Recording Policy

The Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services (IS) thanked those members of LTC who had been involved in the work of the Lecture Recording Policy Task Group. Opinion was now being sought on whether the draft Policy was ready to be sent out for wider consultation. It was hoped that consultation would take place between November 2017 and February 2018, and that the finalised Policy would be in place for the start of Academic Year 2018/19 (when lecture recording would integrate with the timetabling system).

Two issues required particular consideration:

1. management of opt outs;
2. new data protection legislation.

In relation to changes to data protection legislation, although the outcome of discussions in Parliament on the UK implementation of the EU General Data Protection Regulation was not yet known, LTC agreed that consultation on the draft Lecture Recording Policy should not be delayed.

Concerning opt-outs, the Committee agreed that the University should be aiming to introduce a model that was as simple and as consistent as possible in order to ensure that it enhanced the student experience. It was noted that at least one School had already agreed that all lectures would be recorded, and that opt outs would not be permitted. In order to deliver the desired model, LTC expressed strong support for consulting on an approach based on lecturers 'agreeing with' Heads of Schools that an opt-out was required, rather than 'informing' Heads of Schools that an opt-out was required.

Members discussed the potential value of the Policy including a statement of the University's position on the use of lecture recording in cases where classes were too large for the allocated lecture theatre. The value of extracting from the Policy a list of key principles that could be easily communicated to students was also discussed.

Wide consultation would now be undertaken, including consultation addressed specifically to Heads of Colleges and Schools and asking specifically for their responses.

> **Action:**
> Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of IS to:
> 1. amend the draft Lecture Recording Policy to state that lecturers will agree with Heads of Schools that an opt-out is required;
> 2. consider the potential value of including within the Policy a statement of the University's position on the use of lecture recording in cases where classes are too large for the allocated lecture theatre;
> 3. consider extracting from the Policy a list of key principles that can be easily communicated to students;
> 4. proceed with wide consultation on the draft Policy.

5.5 Report from University-Wide Courses Task Group

The Assistant Principal Research-Led Learning reminded members that the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy committed to providing University-wide courses, while the Strategic Plan 2016 referred to the development of flexible study pathways. In this context, the University-Wide Courses Task Group had undertaken benchmarking with comparator institutions, and had used the findings from this to develop a set of underlying principles for University-wide courses at Edinburgh. 3 different types of offering had been identified and discussed by the Task Group:

1. Existing, subject-based courses
2. Themed, interdisciplinary courses
3. A single common course – the Edinburgh Experience

LTC welcomed the paper and was positive about the idea of introducing more interdisciplinary courses, particularly those with an element of co-creation. Concerns were expressed about the idea of introducing anything compulsory on the basis that this may impact on students entering with direct entry to year two and be problematic for those on programmes with constrained timetables. It was also noted that any development of University-wide courses would need to be accompanied by broader thinking regarding the future of the University's undergraduate curriculum, and that any broader discussions would need to take account of the views of the incoming Principal. In order to stimulate thinking regarding the curriculum, the Committee agreed that the Assistant Principal Research-Led learning should undertake wider consultation on the paper's recommendations with a view to presenting on findings at the University's planned 2018 Learning and Teaching Conference.

> **Action:**
> Assistant Principal Research-Led Learning to initiate wider consultation on the paper's recommendations with a view to presenting on findings at the University's Learning and Teaching Conference.

5.6 Virtual Learning Environment Minimum Standards Project: Information

The Committee strongly supported the proposal to undertake a project to review the current use of the University's main virtual learning environment, Blackboard Learn, and to support the adoption of a minimum standard course presentation across the institution.

LTC members were invited to propose members for the Project governance and steering groups.

LTC would receive periodic reports on the Project's progress.

> **Action:**
> 1. All to propose members for the Project governance and steering groups.
> 2. Director of Learning Teaching and Web Services Division of IS to provide LTC with periodic reports on the Project's progress.

5.7 Computer-Aided Assessment – Service Overview and Governance

The Committee was supportive of the paper and agreed that additional governance of this area would be useful. Members raised the possibility of using the existing Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Working Group as a service board, and the idea would be given further consideration.

> **Action:**
> Additional governance to be introduced in the area of computer-aided assessment. Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback and the Director of the Learning Teaching and Web Services Division of IS to consider the possibility of using the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Working Group as a service board.

5.8 Planning Issues

5.8.1 Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan

Members were advised that there were many strands to the Learning and Teaching Strategy, and that priorities for implementation between 2017/18 and 2018/19 had therefore been identified. Different Assistant Principals would take responsibility for each of the priority areas identified. The identified priorities and progress against them would be reviewed by LTC in Autumn 2018. The Committee approved the proposed priorities, noting the importance of considering equality and diversity issues when taking forward each strand of activity.

5.8.2 Senate Committee Planning

The Committee agreed that additional resource was likely to be required to fund the University's widening participation agenda, and that a focus on developing sufficient high-quality learning and teaching spaces – both formal and informal – was essential.

5.9 Widening Participation Strategy

Members noted that this was a revised version of the draft Strategy it had considered at its September meeting. This draft included more on personal tutoring, postgraduate bursaries, flexibility at masters level, the importance of links with local colleges, and increasing the numbers of students from widening participation backgrounds taking part in international experiences. Costings would now be revised for the January meeting of Central Management Group and February meeting of Court, and it was hoped that the Strategy would be launched in March or April 2018. The draft being considered would be

used as an internal guidance document, and a more user-friendly document for external use would also be produced.

LTC discussed:

* the importance of considering both long-term aims and widening participation initiatives that would bear early fruit, for example enhanced scholarships for a specific number of students that would make a significant difference at an individual level;
* the importance of not only providing resources to support students, but of also bringing about widespread culture change within the University;
* the need to provide additional support for widening participation students in their first year, particularly mathematics and English language support. However, this support should supplement the curriculum rather than reduce the level of choice available to these students.
* the potential to work with other institutions in the proposed secondary and primary school partnerships.
* the fact that the proposals around student support and personal tutors pointed towards more professionalization of the personal tutor role, and therefore had implications beyond the Widening Participation Strategy.
* the fact that many of the initiatives discussed would require additional resource.

5.10   Student Mental Health and Academic Policy

It was noted that this was a discussion paper at this stage. Members recognised the importance of considering the potential mental health implications of any new policy introduced, and also noted the complexities around the relationship between mental health and academic work.

The Committee recognised that assessment arrangements had potential to have adverse impact on student mental health. It was advised that the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Working Group would shortly discuss the benefits and disadvantages of exams. LTC also raised particular concerns about the pressures that assessment could place on taught postgraduate students, recognising that an accelerated pace of learning was expected as compared with undergraduate study, many students were from overseas, there was no opportunity for students to resit and limited opportunity to have poor performances discounted. It was agreed that these points would be fed into ongoing Curriculum and Student Progression Committee discussions on PGT assessment.

The importance of good communication, fair and robust processes and procedures for dealing with special circumstances and extensions, and 'good housekeeping' in courses and programmes to students' overall mental health was recognised.

> **Action:**
> Secretary to refer issues relating to taught postgraduate students to the Secretary to Curriculum and Student Progression Committee.

6.   For Approval

6.1   NSS Institutional Questions

Members expressed concern about the number of questions proposed in the paper. It was agreed that:

1. Bank B1 should be removed, as these questions overlapped with B15.
2. Bank B12 should be removed as these questions overlapped with core questions.
3. The Students' Association would be consulted about whether the questions in bank B2 should be asked this year or in 2019. (The questions were asked in 2017, and there was some support for the idea of repeating the questions every other year to allow more time for changes introduced in response to the Survey to have a measurable impact.)

> **Action:**
> Secretary to discuss with the Students' Association and the Students Surveys Unit the possibility of asking the questions in bank B2 every other year.

6.2 Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – Proposals for New and Amended Categories of Achievement

The following new categories of wider achievement were approved for inclusion in the HEAR:

- International Student Centre Committee Member
- Edinburgh Nightline Committee Member

LTC also approved the proposal to amend existing category 10 to read 'Student Membership of University Internal Review Team (TPR, PPR and Thematic Review)'.

Concern was raised about the large quoted time commitment for members of the International Student Centre Committee, and this would be discussed with the author of the proposal form.

> **Action:**
> Secretary to discuss time commitment for members of the International Student Centre Committee with the author of the proposal form.

7. For Information and Noting

7.1 Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) Themes

LTC noted the report.

7.2 Update on Student Administration and Support Strand of the Service Excellence Programme

LTC noted the report.

7.3 Report from Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG)

LTC noted the report.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services
22 November 2017

LTC 17/18 3 B

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>
Senate Learning & Teaching Committee
24 January 2018

Using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity

Executive Summary

The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy includes a commitment to "Using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity". The paper invites the Committee to consider how the University should approach this issue. While it does not propose a major institutional initiative, it does identify some strategic imperatives for developing a clearer institutional position on the issue, and it also identifies some relatively modest potential steps at institutional level which would support and add value to local discipline-specific projects.

To assist the Committee to discuss these issues, the paper provides some contextual information regarding the University's student population, an overview of some local projects in the University, a summary of a range of different ways to think about using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity, and links to some useful sector resources.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
The proposals support the University's Strategic Plan in Leadership in Learning.

Action requested
LTC is invited to discuss:

- The patterns of student intakes, outcomes and student satisfaction of students with different characteristics, and what implications these may have for approaches to promoting inclusion, equality and diversity;
- Possible approaches to thinking about using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity; and
- Whether the University should take any steps at institutional level to support this agenda, to complement activities at discipline level.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
This depends on whether the Committee thinks the University should initiate any institution-level activities in this area.

Resource / Risk / Compliance
1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**.
The introduction of new institutional activities would have resource implications – these will depend what activities (if any) the Committee supports.

2. **Risk assessment.**

The paper does not include a risk assessment.

3. Equality and Diversity

The paper is designed to assist the University to promote equality and diversity for its students. Since the paper does not seek approval for any significant changes to policy or practice, no Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is **open.**

Key words

Originator of the paper

Vice-Principal Prof Jane Norman, Tom Ward
Input from Josh Stapp, Student Survey Insight Analyst

1   Introduction

The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy includes a commitment to "Using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity". The University's implementation plan for the Strategy (approved by the Committee on 15 November 2017) does not highlight this aspect as a strategic priority for institutional action in 2017-18 and 2018-19, and, since the issues regarding equality in the curriculum will vary between disciplines, a focus on local projects may more appropriate than an institutional initiative. However, while this paper does not propose a major institutional initiative, it does identify some strategic imperatives for developing a clearer institutional position on the issue, and it also identifies some relatively modest potential steps at institutional level which would support and add value to local discipline-specific projects.

To assist the Committee to discuss these issues, the paper provides some contextual information regarding the University's student population, an overview of some local projects in the University, a summary of a range of different ways to think about using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity, and links to some useful sector resources..

2   Strategic imperatives

Engaging with these issues will assist the University to ensure the curriculum is relevant and engaging for an increasingly diverse student body, to provide students with the skills they need to flourish in an increasingly internationalised and diverse society, and to assist the University to widen participation to and increase achievement of specific groups / characteristics. In addition to these general points, there are several specific reasons to engage with these issues at this point:

2.1   Athena Swan

The University won an Institutional Silver Athena Swan award in November 2015. If the University wishes to apply for Gold at a future point (unlikely to be less than four years' time), it would need to demonstrate gender 'diversity in curriculum and pedagogy' by addressing the following:

> "Outline how the institution addresses gender inequalities in the curriculum and how inclusivity in pedagogy is addressed. Provide details of how departments and faculties discuss inclusivity in the curriculum at their decision-making committees, and are accountable for actions taken.
>
> This should include reflection on course content, outcomes of different assessment methods, and how equality and diversity is considered in the development of new courses. Please also reflect on staff training and development in inclusive pedagogical practice, and any feedback from students or staff."

2.2 Student Association

In recent years, Student Association sabbaticals have expressed a commitment to promoting diversity in the University's curriculum, learning and assessment, expressing this in terms of 'liberating' the curriculum. The Student Association has established an initiative called LiberatEd, to assist it to take forward these issues:

https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/liberated

To date, students participating in this initiative have facilitated discussion workshops across Schools in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) which have attracted many staff and students

2.3 Scottish Funding Council's Gender Action Plan

The Scottish Funding Council continues to highlight the importance of reducing gender imbalances in participation, retention and in higher education, and recognises that embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in the curriculum is one way to address this.

3 Context – our diverse student population

In recent years the University's taught student population has become more diverse in terms of 'protected characteristics', nationality, and socio-economic background. For example, the proportion of students disclosing a disability, declaring themselves as Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) (UK domiciled), and overseas domiciled students has increased. This increase in diversity will enrich the student experience for all our students, but may also be leading to changes in expectations regarding curriculum, learning and assessment.

The increased diversity of the student body is accompanied by evidence of differential educational outcomes and some evidence of differential student satisfaction regarding learning, teaching and curriculum, for example:

- **Entrants.** A lower proportion of the University's students than might be expected come from certain backgrounds / protected characteristics, for example male students (overall and particularly in some subject areas), female students (in some subject areas), and UK-domiciled BME students.

- **Outcomes.** While in general a high proportion of taught students achieve a positive outcome, there is evidence that on average students from some backgrounds / protected characteristics achieve below-average programme outcomes at the University, for example male students, students who have disclosed a disability, UK-domiciled BME students, and older students.

- **Student satisfaction.** There is also evidence from the University's student surveys, and sectoral analysis, that student satisfaction can vary between different

protected characteristics and groups. For example, at the University at undergraduate level female undergraduate students are a bit more satisfied with their experience of learning, teaching and curriculum than male students (whereas at PGT level there is relatively little difference by gender), and BME undergraduate students are a bit less satisfied with their experience of learning, teaching and curriculum than white students (a pattern that is reversed at PGT level). While these patterns are broadly consistent with those observed in the sector, caution is required when interpreting some of these patterns, for example since there can be considerable variation at the level of individual questions, and it is possible that some of the apparent differences in satisfaction for different protected characteristics could be explained by other variables (for example, the indirect effect of School-level variation).

The Annex provides further information on intakes, achievements, and student satisfaction of different groups.

A very cursory literature review suggests that there is a widespread belief (eg among staff in higher education institutions, and policy-makers) that changes in curriculum and learning and teaching can contribute to increasing completion, attainment and student satisfaction levels for below-average groups / protected characteristics. For example, see the example of Harvey Mudd College (below), where curriculum reform contributed towards increasing the proportion of female students studying computer science.

4   Using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity

There are a broad range of different way to think about using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity. For example:

4.1   Curriculum

- Understanding knowledge in the curriculum as the result of broader power structures within society, challenging dominant (eg white, Euro-centric, male, heterosexual etc) forms of knowledge and the omission or marginalisation of other forms of knowledge from the curriculum. In practice, this could involve exploring whether the authors on reading lists are sufficiently diverse.

- Including space in the curriculum to discuss the topics of diversity, equality, and liberation (eg topics related to gender), or to address specific issues (eg Sexual violence bystander intervention training).

- More 'diverse' curriculum content – incorporating a wider range of international and cultural perspectives / topics / case studies.

- Customising the curriculum - designing the curriculum to engage with a particular group.

- Designing the curriculum to take account of variation in prior academic knowledge of students from different groups.

- Designing curriculum to take account of the wide range of entry qualifications (which may relate indirectly relate to various protected characteristics)

4.2   Learning and teaching

- 'Inclusive' learning practices, designed to help all students to engage and achieve irrespective of background – for example encouraging student-centred, collaborative or active approaches to learning, taking account of taking account of the learning experiences and preferences of students from different backgrounds.

- Inclusive / accessible teaching materials and practices.

4.3   Other

- Intersectional approaches – understanding the impact of multiple group identities on the experience of students.

- Strengthening student support arrangements, including targeted support for particular groups.

- Building a sense of belonging among students from diverse backgrounds.

5   Examples of projects within the University

There are already a range of projects within the University that are using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity. For example:

- During 2014-15 and 2015-16, EUSA worked with staff and students in the School of Social and Political Sciences to develop a new pre-Honours undergraduate course on 'Understanding Gender in the Contemporary World: Key Concepts, Controversies and Challenges'. This course enrolled c. 140 students in its first year (2016-17) and c. 190 enrolments in 2017-18 (approx. 90% of students female).

- The Principal's Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) project on 'Diversity Reading List project in Philosophy'. (www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/funding/funding/previous-projects/year/october-2015/diversity-reading)

- The Institute for Academic Development's PG Certificate in Academic Practice (PG CAP) includes a course on Accessible and Inclusive Learning. Perspectives on equality and diversity are also addressed within many of the other courses and programmes offered by the IAD.

- In 2016, two Edinburgh postgraduate students founded Project Myopia to diversify university curricula through crowdsourcing material from students. Their site features short reviews of films, poems and prose - each highlighting how the piece could be used to enhance the curriculum. The project was runner-up for a Student Parnerships in Quality Scotland (SPARQSs) Student Engagement award in 2017. See: www.projectmyopia.com/

- In 2017, University of Edinburgh staff and students participated in the Equal Bite project on gender in higher education, which included suggestions for promoting equality in the curriculum:

  https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/3373-equalbite.pdf

6   Feedback from recent Teaching Programme Reviews

Teaching Programme Reviews and Postgraduate Programme Reviews ask review areas to reflect on the accessibility and inclusiveness of their provision. Two recent TPRs (English Literature and Social Anthropology) have also highlighted positive engagement with these issues. The relevant extracts are:

Social Anthropology:

> "Decolonising the academy – offering a curriculum that is not exclusively white and Eurocentric - has become a prominent subject for Social Anthropology and was discussed at length with both staff and students during the Review visit. The Review Team **commends** the Subject Area's willingness to engage with this agenda, and the careful attention that is being given by staff members to the student voice in relation to this issue. The addition of material on de-colonising the academy, and an increase in the proportion of readings by authors from under-represented groups in core second and third year courses is noted, as is a forthcoming, weekend event to consider ways in which reading lists might be made more diverse.

> It is **recommended** that the Subject Area continues to support students in their exploration of this agenda by developing an overarching and long-term strategy for the implementation of its ideas into the curriculum. This strategy should take full account of the University's course design processes and procedures, and be carefully communicated to the student body to ensure that there is a clear understanding of aims and timescales. Social Anthropology may also wish to establish a – potentially funded - staff and student forum to facilitate more complex, but shared debate around the issues."

English Literature (note that this is a draft – the report is subject to approval by the Senate Quality Assurance Committee):

> "The Subject Area's engagement with issues of diversity, especially around race and gender representation, is earnest and constructive. Staff are keen to

equip students to debate uncomfortable topics in a sensitive way. The Subject Area is seeking to maintain a balance between diversifying the curriculum, and maintaining the pedagogical coherence of some courses. The Review Team recommends that the Subject Area ensure that the redevelopment of the curriculum give due consideration to the full range of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) issues."

7 Sector resources and approaches

There are a range of publications and tools that will assist subject areas to consider how to use the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity. Some of these resources are general whereas others are subject-specific. For example:

- Equality Challenge Unit:
  - www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/student-recruitment-retention-attainment/student-retention/inclusive-learning-teaching/
  - www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/ecu-hea-compendium/
  - www.ecu.ac.uk/subscribe-to-ecu/your-consultancy-options/tackling-the-bme-attainment-gap/

- Higher Education Academy (general and subject-specific resources)
  www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/inclusion/Disability/Inclusive_curriculum_design_in_higher_education

- Teachability (University of Strathclyde) – resources for reflecting on the needs of disabled students in the curriculum (quite an old resource, but still relevant).
  www.teachability.strath.ac.uk/

These documents include a range of examples of good practices at individual institutions. Other examples include Harvey Mudd College, which attributed its success in increasing the proportion of female students in the (typically majority male) discipline of computer science in part to changes it had made to make its curriculum more inclusive:

https://qz.com/730290/harvey-mudd-college-took-on-gender-bias-and-now-more-than-half-its-computer-science-majors-are-women/

8 Possible approaches to institutional action

Since the issues regarding equality in the curriculum will vary between disciplines, a focus on local projects may more appropriate than an institutional initiative. It is also important that any institutional engagement is handled with care in order to avoid the impression that the University is interfering with academic freedom regarding the curriculum. However, while a major institutional initiative is unlikely to be appropriate, some relatively modest potential steps at institutional level would support and add value to local discipline-specific projects.

Possible institutional approaches may include:

- Making a formal institutional commitment to promoting diversity in curriculum, learning and assessment.

- Encouraging dialogue and sharing of ideas and practices, for example:
  - Using the Teaching Matters website and blog (IAD plans to highlight this topic in April 2018)
  - Encouraging staff and students to submit proposals to the University's Learning and Teaching Conference in future years

- Encouraging Schools to enter into dialogue with their students regarding the type of diverse curriculum, learning and assessment they would like, including co-creation models where appropriate. For example, the University's new Edinburgh Network: Growing Approaches to Genuine Engagement (ENGAGE) staff and student network could promote the issue (the network is scheduled to discuss the topic on 15 February 2018)

- Identifying senior academic leaders in Schools (ideally from a range of different disciplines) who have expressed a commitment to this issue and who may be happy to promote the issue.

- Encouraging Schools to submit proposals for pilot projects regarding approaches to diversity in the curriculum, learning and assessment to the Principal's Teaching Awards Scheme.

- Improving the University's understanding of the issues, for example:
  - Asking the Equality and Diversity Monitoring Committee to undertake further analysis regarding the patterns of student outcome by protected characteristic
  - Seeking to secure resources for further desk-based analysis regarding potential approaches to the issue, and further research into how different groups experience the University's curriculum and learning and teaching

- Promoting to Schools the various sector resources that will assist them to consider these issues (see Section 7 above)

- Exploring the potential to address the issue as part of the planned programme of institutional training and support for Conveners of Boards of Studies

9 For discussion

- What is the right balance between local disciplinary projects and institution-level activities?

- Should the University highlight particular priority student groups (eg the experiences and outcomes of BME and male students), or particular ways of

thinking about the curriculum – or should it allow Schools flexibility to consider those which are more relevant to their curriculum and students?

- Does the Committee support any particular activities at University level?

Annex – Patterns of entrants, outcomes and student satisfaction for students with different protected characteristics and backgrounds

Entrants

- **Gender.** Since 2010/11 the proportion of female undergraduate entrants has steadily increased beyond 60% to c. 63% in 2015-16, and the proportion of male entrants declined to 37%. At PGT level, the proportion of female entrants has exceeded 60% in the last four years, with the latest figure 62.5 % in 2015-16. In terms of the high proportion of UG and PGT female entrants, and low proportion of male entrants, the University is in the top three Russell Group institutions at UG level and top four at PGR level. While there is considerable variation in participation levels between Colleges and individual subject areas regarding the proportions of female and male students, of the undergraduate subject areas heavily dominated (80%+) by either female or male students, nine out of ten are dominated by female students.*

- **Disability.** The proportion of UG students disclosing a disability has increased steadily over the last ten years, and in 2015-16 (the most recent session covered by the report) is at c. 10%. Over the last seven year, the proportion of PGT students who have disclosed a disability has been within the range of 4.8% to 5.6%.*

- **Ethnicity.** Over the last five years (to 2015-16), the proportion of UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants who have declared themselves as black or minority ethnic (BME) has increased steadily, from 6.3% to 9.7%. At PGT level, c. 11%-13.4% of UK-domiciled students have declared themselves as BME in the last five years, an increase on 8%-9.6% in the preceding five years.*

- **Age.** In terms of age, the proportion of UG entrants aged 22 and over has increased in the last five years, although much of this growth can be attributed to a growth in Visiting Students. At PGT level the proportion of older entrants (26 and over) has declined slightly.*

- **Domicile.** An increasing proportion of UG and PGT students are overseas domiciled.#

* Source: The University's Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) 2016 annual report:
http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/EDMARC_15_16/Student_Report.pdf

Source: The University's Student Fact-Sheet

Outcomes

- **Gender.** Female undergraduates consistently outperform males in both the proportion who leave with an exit qualification (difference in range 2.4% to 3.9%

over the last six year) and more markedly in the proportion achieving a 1st or 2.1 Honours degree (difference in range 5.5% to 10.5% over the last 10 years). Similarly, female PGT students consistently outperform males in the proportion who leave with an exit qualification (difference in range c. 1%-3.6%).*

- **Disability.** While there is little difference between the proportion of undergraduate students declaring a disability exiting with a qualification compared to students with no declared disability, the proportion of students who disclosed a disability exiting with a 1st Class or 2:1 Honours is lower in each of the 10 last years (difference in range 1.3%-10.7%) than students with no declared disability. At PGT level, students who disclosed a disability are slightly less likely than students who did not disclose a disability to exit with a qualification (difference in the range 1.3% to 5.2% over the last five years).*

- **Ethnicity.** AT UG level, in 9 out of the last 10 years the proportion of white (UK domiciled) students achieving a 1st or 2.1 Honours degree has been greater than BME (UK domiciled) students (difference in range 0.1% to 9%). This gap is lower than the average in the Russell Group (10% to 14% over the last five years). Similarly, at PGT level, a higher proportion of white (UK Domiciled) entrants exit with a qualification than do BME (UK Domiciled) entrants (range 2.5% to 12.1%).*

- **Age.** At undergraduate level, students aged 25 or under consistently out-perform older categories of students, both in terms of the proportion exiting with a qualification and (particularly for those 21 or under when entering) in terms of the proportion exiting with a 1st Class or 2:1 Honours degree. The same pattern of younger students out-performing older categories students also applies at PGT level.*

* Source: The University's Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) 2016 annual report:
http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/EDMARC_15_16/Student_Report.pdf

Student satisfaction

University of Edinburgh:

The Student Survey team has done some initial analysis of the University's student surveys by some protected characteristics. This analysis has focussed on the undergraduate Edinburgh Student Experience Survey (average results for 2014 to 2016, the last year the survey ran) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (average results 2015 to 2017), since it is possible to analyse individual responses by characteristic of respondent. Due to the way the data is held, this analysis is not possible for the Course Enhancement Questionnaire results, and is very limited for the National Student Survey. The following analysis should be treated with caution – a more detailed analysis would be required in order to establish whether other variables are at play (for example, it would be important to explore whether some of

the patterns can be explained by School level differences, which has not yet been fully considered. There are however quite a lot of similarities between this initial analysis for Edinburgh, and patterns of student satisfaction in the sector as a whole (see below).

In relation to this analysis please note:

- To date, analysis of the results has been done by School for gender but not ethnicity or domicile.

- The University's analysis on ethnicity for UG and PGT covers all students, and therefore cannot be directly compared with the sector analysis of ethnicity in the NSS (which covers only UK-domiciled students).

- While the sector-level data includes an analysis by age and disability, the University has not yet done analysis of ESES / PTES by these characteristics.

The following summarises these ESES and PTES results.

- **Gender – undergraduate.** ESES results indicate that on average female students are 3.5% more satisfied than male students with the quality of their degree programme. There is quite a lot of variable regarding female and male student satisfaction in relation to different questions in ESES, with (for example), male students being more satisfied than female students with their Personal Tutor (by 1%-7% depending on the specific question), whereas female students are more likely than male students (by about 5%) to agree that their views are listened to and valued. However, on the questions specifically relating to learning, teaching, and curriculum, female respondents are consistently more satisfied than male respondents (for example, c. 4% more likely to agree that their programme is intellectually stimulating, c. 5% more likely to agree that staff have made the subjects interesting, c. 6% more likely to be satisfied with the quality of teaching). While in some individual Schools these patterns are reversed, they hold in the majority of Schools.

- **Gender – postgraduate taught.** The PTES results suggest very little difference in the satisfaction of female and male PGT students with their studies. Overall, female respondents are very slightly more satisfied (c. 1%), with some generally modest variation regarding the relative satisfaction of female and male students for specific questions.

- **Ethnicity – undergraduate.** ESES results indicate that, on average, BME respondents' overall satisfaction is c. 4% lower than white respondents, and c. 5% less satisfied in relation to the questions specifically relating to learning, teaching and curriculum. As is the case with gender, however, there is quite a lot of variation regarding BME and white respondents' satisfaction in relation to specific questions, for example BME respondents are in general more satisfied with feedback on assessment.

- **Ethnicity – postgraduate taught.** The PTES results suggest that (in contrast to undergraduate students) BME students are a bit more satisfied than white students. Overall satisfaction is 3% higher for BME than white respondents, while the results for individual questions are quite mixed. For example, white respondents are slightly more likely to think that the programme is intellectually stimulating, while BME respondents are generally more satisfied with feedback on assessment. Overall, however, differences between BME and white respondents' satisfaction are modest.

- **Domicile – undergraduate.** ESES results suggest that domicile is not associated with much of a difference in student satisfaction, compared to gender and ethnicity. For example, overall student satisfaction is within a range of c. 2% for Scottish, RUK, EU and non-EU domiciled respondents. There is some modest variation in the satisfaction of students from these different domicile categories for some questions, with non-EU domiciled respondents a bit less satisfied than average in relation to some of the questions relating to learning, teaching and curriculum.

- **Domicile – postgraduate taught.** The PTES results suggest that EU domiciled students are less satisfied with their studies than other domicile groups. For example, the are c. 4-5% less satisfied overall than the other domicile groups, and are also less satisfied than the other domicile groups for many of the specific questions in relation to learning, teaching and curriculum. There is also a degree of variation in the satisfaction of students from these different domicile groups with specific questions.

Sector:

- **Gender – UG and PGT.** In the 2013 NSS, across the sector there is no material difference in the overall satisfaction of male and female students. There are however some small differences between male and female students in terms of satisfaction as recorded by different question groups in the NSS. Similarly, the 2017 PTES results were broadly similar for male and female participants.

- **Disability – UG and PGT.** In the 2013 NSS, across the sector the overall satisfaction of students who disclosed a disability is c. 3% lower than the average. Students who disclosed a disability are also materially less satisfied with almost all of the individual questions in the NSS. In the 2017 PTES, the largest and most consistent differences in student perceptions were between students who disclosed they had a disability and those who did not.

- **Ethnicity – UG and PGT.** In the 2013 NSS, across the sector UK-domiciled students from the majority of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups have overall satisfaction c. 1-3% less than the average (but with considerable variation between individual ethnic groups). Conversely, in the 2017 PTES, BME students

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had consistently more positive perceptions than non-BME students (please note however that the PTES analysis was not limited to UK-domiciled students).

- **Age – UG and PGT.** In the 2013 NSS, across the sector the overall satisfaction of students aged 20 and under is 0.5% above average, whereas for students aged 21-24 it is c. 2% under and c. 1% under for students aged over 24. There is however considerable variation in satisfaction between age groups for particular question groups in the NSS, for example over 24s are much more satisfied with the 'teaching and learning' and 'assessment and feedback' questions.

- **Domicile – UG and PGT.** In the 2013 NSS, across the sector the overall satisfaction of students domiciled in a country outside the EU is slightly higher than average (c. 1%), whereas for non-UK EU students it is slightly lower than average. There is however considerable variation in satisfaction for particular questions groups in the NSS. In the 2017 PTES, UK-domiciled students had more positive perceptions of their learning and teaching experiences than 'other EU' students but 'non-EU' students had more positive perceptions than UK and 'other EU' students.

Sources:

Higher education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), *UK review of the provision of information about higher education: National Student Survey results and trends analysis 2005-2013,* http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/201413/

www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/postgraduate-taught-experience-survey-report-2017

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<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

17 January 2018

Near Future Teaching: Designing the Future of Digital Education at Edinburgh

<u>Executive Summary</u>
This paper provides an overview of the progress of a strategic project to develop a vision for the future of digital education at the University of Edinburgh, and seeks input from LTC on its focus and means for ensuring impact.

<u>How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?</u>
The project aligns with the strategic theme of leadership in learning

<u>Action requested</u>
For discussion.

<u>How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?</u>
Actions agreed will be implemented by the end of the project in September 2018.

<u>Resource / Risk / Compliance</u>

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   There are no additional resource implications at present.

2. **Risk assessment**
   The paper does not contain a formal risk assessment since it is for discussion rather than approval.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

4. The project is being conducted with a commitment to inclusion of diverse voices; however the paper does not contain an equality impact assessment since it is for discussion rather than for approval of a change in practice at this point.

5. **Freedom of information**
   Open

<u>Key words</u> - digital education, futures, teaching

<u>Originator of the paper</u> - Professor Sian Bayne, AP Digital Education

Near Future Teaching: designing the future of digital education at Edinburgh

Project overview

Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the progress of a strategic project to develop a vision for the future of digital education at the University of Edinburgh, and seeks input from LTC on its focus and means for ensuring impact.

'Futures thinking' has gained traction in recent years as a way for institutions to understand and respond to rapid social and technological change.[1] It usually involves a combination of structured horizon scanning and data gathering among institutional stakeholders, and is often defined as a form of 'design thinking' in which creative and speculative responses to change are co-developed with key stakeholders.

Within universities there is a growing trend to apply this method to collaborative thinking about futures for teaching and learning, often as a way of understanding how digital shifts are re-shaping education. The most successful example of this to date has been the Stanford 2025 exercise conducted in 2015, which focused on the undergraduate student experience (http://www.stanford2025.com/). There have been similarly interesting exercises at MIT (https://future.mit.edu/) and LSE/UAL (http://www.futurehappens.org/). These projects are characterised by their focus on speculative, big ideas, and by participative and collaborative approaches which engage widely across institutions.

Project aims

The focus for the project at Edinburgh is specifically on digital education futures, across undergraduate, postgraduate, on-campus and distance modes. Its aim is to help us maintain a leadership position in digital education, built through the outstanding strategic commitment, leadership and investment we have had in this area over recent years. The challenge now is to maintain and expand this by building a strong, creative vision for a digital education which can inform strategy, policy and planning for the coming decade or more. Over this period we will need to continue to build our thinking around the best innovative teaching methods and delivery modes, but also around how we design our curricula to give our students the skills and capacities they will need to operate within a world defined by data and digital technological shift.

Its core aim is to develop a creative, future-oriented vision for digital education at Edinburgh, which consolidates our leading position by:

1. conducting a participative, institution-wide conversation about digital education and its trajectory at Edinburgh
2. focusing on values, curriculum and pedagogy, not only on technological change
3. surfacing conversations on the open web, foregrounding student voices through high quality media and building awareness of the project across the sector

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[1] The current HE Futures series on WonkHE gives a good overview: http://wonkhe.com/blogs/tag/hefutures/

4. synthesising project findings into an actionable design for the future of digital education, usable by Schools and Colleges

The project was supported by the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee in September 2016, has been running since January 2017 and will complete in September 2018. Aims 1-3 have been largely met and we are now focusing on point 4, in which we will synthesise project outputs and work with Schools and Colleges to understand how these can help inform planning.

Project team
The Near Future Teaching Project is led by Professor Sian Bayne (AP Digital Education) supported by a core team and a Senate Learning and Teaching Committee task group.

Core team
Jennifer Williams (Projects & Engagement Coordinator, IAD)
Dr Michael Sean Gallagher (Project RA, Centre for Research in Digital Education)
Lucy Kendra (Media Coordinator, Information Services)
Lucy Ridley (Projects & Engagement Administrator, IAD)

Task group
Bobi Archer (Student Association VP Education)
Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley (Assistant Principal Research-led learning)
Dr Tim Fawns (Academic Coordinator MSc in Clinical Education)
Professor Judy Hardy (Director of Teaching in the School of Physics & Astronomy)
Dr Sarah Henderson (Deputy PGT Director CMVM)
Melissa Highton (Assistant Principal Online Learning)
Dr Anouk Lang (Lecturer in Digital Humanities, School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures)
Professor Susan Rhind (Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback)
Dr Jen Ross (Senior Lecturer in Digital Education, Moray House School of Education)
Dr Michael Rovatsos (Reader in Artificial Intelligence, School of Informatics)
Dr Michael Seery (Reader in Chemistry Education, School of Chemistry)
Professor Chris Speed (Chair of Design Informatics, Edinburgh College of Art)
Dr Jon Turner (Director of the Institute for Academic Development)

Project methods
After piloting in the early part of 2017, we adopted a method which combines gathering input through thematic events led by task group members, with short 'vox pop' interviews conducted across university campuses. All the events are documented on the project web site:
http://www.nearfutureteaching.ed.ac.uk/

Over 2017 we ran 14 events and workshops, including:

– a design workshop with first year undergraduates at Pollock Halls, a Festival of Creative Learning workshop, and two others with the Mastercard scholars and with the EUSA Black and Minority Ethnic Liberation Group
– creative workshops including a 'Future Fictions' creative writing workshop, a DIY film-making session and a digital and material design session at the uCreate Studio in the Main Library
– four future technology workshops including a focus on: virtual reality; blockchain; internet of (teaching) things and learning analytics

– a design 'collider' event in Design Informatics

We also linked the project to the Digital Futures for Learning course within the MSc Digital Education, generating sustained insights from distance students over semester 1 this year.

We have recorded 50 short interviews ('vox pops') with students and staff, including on-campus and distance students. Interviews are scheduled during key events in the calendar (IT Futures Conference, Vet School 'Technology and Teacakes' conference, Freshers' Week, the e-learning@ed annual conference, Festival of Creative Learning) and at open sessions to which staff and students can sign up for a 15 minute slot.

Next steps

To date 220 people have contributed to the project (107 staff, 105 students, 8 alumni). Around half of these have been from CAHSS, with the remainder from CMVM and CSE and a handful from the support units. Over the coming semester we will be building input from CMVM and CSE students, and from our distance students and support services, by running a 'think tank' with students in the School of Veterinary Studies, student focus groups within CMVM and CSE and additional vox pop sessions with on-campus and online students, and with support services staff.

We will finish our programme of interviews and events at the end of March, and will conduct design workshops with the project task group over April-June: these will develop the detailed vision from which the core team will create a series of outputs to include written reports, video and web content. We will hold a large project event in September to present the project outcomes and vision internally, and will work from this point with Schools and Colleges to use include its insights in planning and development.

Insights from the project have already informed development of pedagogy for the Distance Learning at Scale programme, and the Edinburgh Futures Institute postgraduate programme design. ISG has also funded a parallel project – Near Future Library – which links to and complements the aims of Near Future Teaching.

I will show some of the project outputs to date at LTC, open some emerging themes for discussion, and indicate how the work of the project will help us develop our medium-term vision for digital education.

Siân Bayne, AP Digital Education
15 January 2018

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Learning & Teaching Committee
Meeting 24 January 2018

The future of computer-based examinations

Executive Summary

The paper:

- Summarises the current arrangements for using computers for (exam hall / invigilated) examinations;
- Sets out some evidence of current demand among students and academic staff for computer-based examinations, including demand for free-text / essay-based examinations in particular;
- Explores whether any factors (eg the potential for an increase in the use of computers for school-level examinations) are likely to lead to an increase in demand in the future;
- Highlights the significant infrastructural issues that a move towards a significant increase in computer-based examinations would raise; and
- Highlights some potential assessment, marking and study skills issues associated with computer-based (free-text / essay-based) examinations.

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

The proposals support the University's Strategic Plan in Leadership in Learning.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to discuss the issues raised by this paper and consider proposals for two complementary strands of activity.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

If the Committee supports the proposed way forward, Academic Services would liaise with Information Services Group, the Timetabling and Examination Service, Estates and Buildings, relevant Schools and other relevant areas, to take forward the first strand of activities and to develop firmer proposals for the more substantive second strand.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

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

The paper highlights significant resource implications associated with the delivery of computer-based examinations. It proposes two complementary strands of action. The first strand involves some activities to develop the University understanding of

pedagogical and technical issues – these have relatively modest resource implications. The second strand (a more systematic analysis of the University's current capacity for delivering computer-based examinations, and options for scaling up) would involve potentially quite significant resources.

2. Risk assessment.

The paper does not include a formal risk assessment. In general, the paper is designed to mitigate the institutional risks associated with being insufficiently prepared for the possibility that it will become necessary or highly desirable to move towards greater use of computers in exams.

3. Equality and Diversity

Since the paper does not propose a significant change to policy or practice at this stage, no formal EqIA is required. The paper does however highlight a range of equality issues associated with using computers for examinations, that should be explore further during the proposed pilots.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is **open.**

Key words

Originator of the paper

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services
Input from: Prof Susan Rhind (Assistant Principal, Assessment and Feedback); Scott Rosie (Head of Timetabling and Examination Services); Jo Spiller (Head of Educational Design & Engagement, Information Services Group)

The future of computer-based examinations

1   Overview

This paper was prompted by one College's expression of interest in wider use of computers in, the outcomes of a study in the School of Divinity, and widely reported developments at the University of Cambridge. Where the paper refers to 'examinations' it is referring specifically to exam hall / invigilated (ie 'controlled conditions') examinations, unless it is explicitly referring to a different form of examination (eg 'take-home' examinations).

Some areas of the University have an established practice of students undertaking certain types of non-free-text / essay-based examinations (eg Multiple Choice Question formats, programming) on computers. In addition, the University has undertaken a small number of pilots of using computers for free text / essay-based examinations.

The paper:

- Summarises these current arrangements;
- Sets out some evidence of current demand among students and academic staff for computer-based examinations, including demand for free-text / essay-based examinations in particular;
- Explores whether any factors (eg the potential for an increase in the use of computers for school-level examinations) are likely to lead to an increase in demand in the future;
- Highlights the significant infrastructural issues that a move towards a significant increase in computer-based examinations would raise; and
- Highlights some potential assessment, marking and study skills issues associated with computer-based (free-text / essay-based) examinations.

This paper is based on:

- Consultation with key College contacts, the CAHSS Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee, the Timetabling and Examinations team within Student Systems and Administration, and Information Service Group staff;
- Some sector benchmarking information;
- Research conducted in the School of Education;
- Discussion with the University's Learning Technologies Advisory Group; and
- Feedback from the SQA.

The evidence of student and staff demand for computer-based examinations, and of a move towards greater use of computers in examinations both within the higher education and school sector, is rather mixed and tentative. However, it appears likely that at some point in the future it will become self-evident to both students and staff that handwriting examinations is anachronistic and undesirable, and both the school and higher education sectors will move decisively towards greater use of computers

in examinations. Were that to happen it could become imperative for the University to also move in that direction.

In that context, the paper suggests that as a minimum the University should take some modest steps, so that – were it to consider moving towards significantly greater use of computers in examinations at some point in the future - it would be able to do so based on a better understanding of pedagogical and technical issues. The paper also suggests that the University should consider undertaking a more systematic analysis of the University's current capacity for delivering computer-based examinations, and options for scaling up.

The Committee is invited to discuss the issues raised by this paper and consider the proposed way forward.

In addition to raising a range of broad and strategic issues, the paper also highlights that the University's Examination Hall Regulations should be updated to take full account of computer-based examinations. Academic Services will work with the Timetabling and Examinations team to revise the Regulations independent of work on broader issues raised in the paper.

2   Assumptions regarding the volume of examinations, and regarding future approaches to assessment

This paper does not consider whether the volume of examinations at the University will increase or decrease over time, or evaluate the merits of alternate approaches to assessment. It is possible that, over the longer-term, the number of examinations will reduce as Schools utilise a wider range of assessment types. For example, during the discussion at the CAHSS Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee in November 2017 (see below), there appeared to be significant interest in replacing examinations with take-home examinations (although colleagues also recognised that there were significant logistical as well as potential pedagogical issues associated with such a move). Another alternative to examinations is the remote proctoring model, which uses technology to supervise students taking assessments on their own computer. The Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Working Group is planning to contribute to this debate by exploring the merits of examinations compared to other forms of assessment and the related issue of academic misconduct through e.g. the use of essay mills, at its next meeting in February 2018.

However, as things stand, the number of examination sittings at the University continues to rise (in part, due to the increase in student population). If the University were to consider any strategic investments to support the wider use of computer-based examinations as a result of the proposed road-map, it would be appropriate at that point to assess the likely trends regarding the volume of examinations.

3   Current practices at Edinburgh

At present, the use of computers in examinations at Edinburgh is diverse and localised.

3.1   College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)

- The College already runs a significant number of computer-based examinations for its undergraduate students – undergraduate Medicine and Veterinary Medicine use computers for examinations for all years of undergraduate study. For example, the MBChB has at least two MCQ exams per year group and then a resit diet.
- Computer-based examinations in the College are largely Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) rather than free-text / essay-based.
- Since the College's postgraduate programmes are largely Online Distance Learning, it is unlikely that the College will see any significant demand for (controlled conditions, invigilated) examinations at PGT level.
- The College arranges these examinations using venues such as the Open Access Lab at George Square, the Greenfield Suite in the Hugh Robson Building, Micro Labs in Chancellor's Building, and teaching labs at the Vet School.
- The exams are invigilated by invigilators supplied by Student Administration, and, in principle the invigilation operates in the same way as for paper-based examinations.

3.2   College of Science and Engineering (CSE)

- Biological Sciences is running a computer-based examination for essay-based questions in December 2017 for a fourth year undergraduate course (Molecular Immunology), having piloted the approach in 2016-17. They plan to offer this to students on an opt-in basis (with the option to hand-write instead).
- For several years, the School of Engineering has been running computer-based courses for specific software-based tasks, utilising the School's own computing labs (which have specialised software).
- The School of Informatics has also run computer-based examinations (using specialised software)

3.3   College of Humanities and Social Sciences

- From 2007-08 to 2015-16, the School of Divinity undertook a pilot of offering the option for its undergraduate students to opt-in to use laptops to type their final Honours (typically essay-based) examinations. Students brought in their own laptops, to which Exam 4 software was installed in order to block access to the internet during the examination. Takeup of these opportunities was very modest.
- In Edinburgh College of Art, Architecture is using laptops / desktops for one three hour-examination for the Master of Architecture. This is an 'open book' examination, with students being allowed to access the internet and then submitting their paper on Learn. ECA uses the Hugh Robson Computer Lab.

4   Evidence of potential for increased demand for computer-based examinations

At present, there is some modest and somewhat conflicting evidence of demand from current students and staff for computer-based (free-text / essay) examinations, along with clearer evidence of an increase in demand for computer-based (MCQ) examinations. However, there is external evidence that suggests that student expectations and sector norms may raise demand for computer-based (free-text / essay-based) examinations at some point in the next few years.

4.1   Evidence from academic and professional support staff at Edinburgh

- CMVM plans to expand the use of computers in examinations to include its Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) from 2018-19. C. 10 years ago the Vet School trialled an online system for free text exams but the system at that stage was not able to support reliably. The School has indicated that, if a more reliable system was available, there would be strong interest.

- CSE - Initial enquiries suggest there is growing interest in some Schools (eg Biological Sciences, Mathematics) for increasing the number of computer-based examinations, if the infrastructure is available to support it. The identification of a software solution that allow for the use of diagrams and similar in examinations (see 5.2 below) may stimulate demand from other science disciplines.

- CAHSS - The College's UG Learning and Teaching Committee (CUGLT) discussed the issue of computer-based examinations at its November 2017 meeting, and Schools provided further feedback by correspondence. While no Schools indicated that they are currently planning to move towards utilising computers in examinations, colleagues recognised some of the potential motivations for moving towards computer-based examinations. For example, some colleagues had observed an increase in the proportion of illegible scripts, and others recognised that some students would like to be able to type their examinations. There was interest among several Schools in participating in pilots regarding utilising computers for free-text / essay-based examinations.

- ISG had highlighted an increase in Schools' interest in running computer-based examinations in its paper to LTC regarding Computer Aided Assessment in November 2017.

4.2   Evidence from students at Edinburgh

- The Head of the Timetabling and Examinations Service met with a group of c. 35 student representatives from CAHSS in November 2017. When asked whether they would prefer to undertake formal examinations in a handwritten or computer format, 75% indicated that they would prefer to hand-write.

- During 2016–17, following the conclusion of its pilot of essay-based examinations (see 3.2) the School of Divinity conducted research into students' perceptions

about computer-based examinations, including the reasons that students choose to handwrite or type exams[1]. The main findings were:

- Contrary to the increase of general technology use by students, very few chose to use computers for their assessments. When this option was offered in Autumn 2015 to Level 10 students, about 10% took it. However, the research also suggests that – while in practice only a smaller proportion of students have chosen to use the laptops – roughly 50% of students say they would prefer to type rather than hand-write their exams given the choice.

- Language was the most significant demographic background factor associated with preferences regarding using computers in examinations. Students with first languages other than English showed a strong preference towards using laptops in examinations, whereas students for whom English is the first language showed a slight preference against using laptops; some even suggest that they would be disadvantaged without such a provision. Of the 10% that used computers for their examinations in Autumn 2015, two thirds were international students including those who were born in countries like the United States or those where English is not a first language.

- The central question that respondents work with when assessing their attitudes towards the use of laptops in exams is change. At present, with most respondents taking examinations by hand, a move to examinations on laptops would represent a change, and those who see this change as desirable and feasible tend to make it.

- If such an option were to exist, it should most widely be offered at the pre-honours level for students to experience before making a choice about their honours years.

- Overall, within an increasingly internationalised and technologically-literate student population, the researchers recommended that the University makes significant strides towards a normative provision of examinations in a computer-based format, with special emphasis given to pre-honours years.

- Student Administration and Academic Services receive a small number of ad hoc requests from students to use computers in examinations, which suggests there may be some latent demand.

4.3 Evidence of a move towards computer-based examinations in the higher education sector

While there have been pilots in a range of UK higher education institutions over the past decade, in general these have been very small-scale and localised, and not leading to broader change. There is however some recent evidence that institutions are becoming more interested in moving towards an increased use of computer-

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[1] Dr Alexander Chow and Dr Alison Jack, Student Perceptions of Computer-Based Exams, 2017

based examinations, although to date these developments are taking the form of pilots rather than institution-wide developments. For example:

- The Independent reported on 9 September 2017 date that, having undertaken pilots, the University of Cambridge has decided to move towards institutional-wide use of computers for essay-based examinations (see www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/cambridge-university-scrap-bad-handwriting-exams-sarah-pearsall-a7938131.html). The University has confirmed that, while (contrary to the Independent's report) it does not have any current plans to replace to replace all hand-written examinations with computer-based examinations, it does plan to extend the scope of its pilots.

- Since 2015, Brunel University has been undertaking a pilot for a Bring Your Own Device model for digital examinations, with a view to scaling up this model: https://altc.alt.ac.uk/blog/2017/10/byod-digital-exams-at-brunel-university/

- University of Nottingham's Exam Office offers a service for summative exam hall / invigilated online exams, utilising their online assessment tool, Rogo: www.nottingham.ac.uk/teaching/assessmentfeedback/onlineassessment/index.aspx

- The University of Oxford is planning to undertake some pilots in 2018, having recently identified interest among departments and faculties in using computers for (essay-based) examinations. In preparation for these pilots, in 2017 Dr Liz Masterman and Dr Jill Fresen undertook a thorough scoping study of current practice and research in using computers in examinations (study not published, but available on request from Tom.Ward@ed.ac.uk).

- Benchmarking conducted via the Academic Registrars' Council's Assessment Practitioners' Group network in Autumn 2017 indicates that a present respondents are using computers in examinations primarily for MCQ-based examinations, but that some institutions are undertaking pilots to explore the potential for the use of computers for free-text / essay-based examinations, or are interested in doing so. However, the sample size was low and may not have been representative.

In addition, there is evidence that the use of computers in examinations is becoming more common at higher education institutions in some other countries, particularly in Scandinavia. For example:

- In Norway, a range of institutions are moving in this direction: www.uninett.no/en/content/breakthrough-norway-paperless-exams

- In 2012, the Copenhagen Business School built an examination venue with capacity for c. 600 students to sit examinations using desktop computers, in the context of a national digitisation strategy.

- Aarhus University has introduced computer-based examinations, using their WISEflow system:

  http://studerende.au.dk/en/studies/subject-portals/bss-referencer-do-not-link/exams/digital-exam/faq-digital-exam/

- The University of Groningen has also very significantly expanded its delivery of computer-based examinations (including essay-based examinations):

  http://images.email.blackboard.com/Web/BlackboardInc/%7b92206ad9-90e8-4800-9f1e-31906ebd9184%7d_UniversityofGroningen_DigitalExams.pdf

- Computer-based examinations (including essay / text-based examinations) have been standard practice in US law schools for a number of years.

4.4   Evidence of a move towards computer-based examinations in the school sector

At present, the majority of school-level examinations in the UK (for example, those administered by the SQA) continue to be hand-written.

However, there has been a large increase in the number of SQA candidates with a disability or additional support needs using digital mediums for examinations over the last decade, from practically zero in 2008 to over 2000 candidates and c. 5000 individual requests for digital papers in 2016[2], and a corresponding reduction in the use of scribes or readers. In addition, the SQA already allows students without a disability or additional support needs to request the use of technology for their examinations as an alternative to handwriting to record the responses, and there has also been a significant increase in the number of candidates (and schools) requesting this in recent years.

The CEO of the SQA recently signalled that she would expect hand-written examinations to become much less common over the next ten years:

https://www.scotsman.com/news/end-looms-for-handwritten-exams-in-scottish-schools-1-4634146
http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15709119.Handwritten_school_exams_to_be___39_phased_out__39__in_next_ten_years/?ref=twtrec

The SQA is exploring the development of systems that would facilitate an increase in the number of candidates utilising computers in examinations.

In addition, there is some evidence of other countries moving towards a greater use of computers in school-level examinations. For example, since 2016, the Finnish National Matriculation Examination (the examinations taken at the end of secondary education in order to qualify for entry to University) has been phasing in digital

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[2] Source: http://www.adapteddigitalexams.org.uk/about/

examinations using laptops, with the first subjects digitised in 2016 and the last ones due to be digitised by 2019 (so that, from Spring 2019, hand-written examinations will no longer be used):

https://www.ylioppilastutkinto.fi/en/matriculation-examination/digital-matriculation-examination

In this context, it appears plausible that, in the coming years, a higher proportion of undergraduate students are going to enter the University accustomed to using digital devices for examinations – and that it may seem increasingly anachronistic for the University to continue with hand-written University examinations.

5   Infrastructural, IT and other operational issues regarding computer-based examinations

5.1   Infrastructure to support computer-based examinations

Given current technologies, the delivery of computer-based examinations requires specific types of facilities:

- For examinations using desktop computers – adequate provision of computer laboratories with sufficient space between stations or privacy options (eg partition boards between desktop stations).

- For examinations using students' personal laptops ('Bring Your Own Device') – sufficient power sockets (or temporary power supplies), suitable desk space, Wi-Fi.

At present, computer-based examinations at Edinburgh are all delivered using the University's computer lab facilities. To date, there have been sufficient computer lab facilities to support demand for computer-based examinations. However, CMVM is already indicating that the availability of suitable venues is making the logistics of examinations more complex (eg requiring students taking an examination to be sitting them in a range of different facilities eg competing with other potential users for suitable venues).

While it is possible that the University's computer labs could accommodate some further growth in computer-based examinations, it would be important to monitor whether any increased use of computer labs for these purposes creates a tension with other usages of these spaces (eg study space). The requirement for certain examinations to be held in specific facilities would also create new constraints on examination timetabling. It is worth noting that some institutions that have made a strategic commitment to computer-based examinations have invested in new facilities to support them. For example, the Copenhagen Business School has committed to constructing a new building to deliver them.

The ground floor of Adam House was configured to support the Divinity pilot of essay-based examinations, by installing sufficient sockets on the floor for

approximately 50 students, and providing students with larger desks than for normal (hand-written) examinations. This facility is however no longer available, since Adam House is being used as studio space by ECA.

In addition to having suitable facilities, it is also necessary to have resilient IT systems to support the operation of computer-based examinations (whether delivered in computer labs or on laptops). While many of these examinations may run without technical issues, CMVM reported having experienced three significant network incidents during the April / May 2017 examination diet which disrupted examinations.

5.2   Software to support computer-based examinations

At present, Information Services Group provides central support for the QuestionMark Perception (QMP) software for online examinations. ISG had also supported the Exam4 software for essay-based examinations but due to limited take-up, it withdrew this service in 2016. In some cases Schools or Colleges have funded alternate products to support computer-based examinations. For example, with support from ISG, Veterinary Medicine has procured Speedwell software and Medicine as procured Practique. In addition, Biological Sciences are using Exam Online for its essay-based examinations – this includes a facility to include diagrams and similar in examinations.

ISG plan to review eExams software to determine if QMP remains best-fit for the majority of needs. This may result in a re-procurement in 2018/19.

5.3   Potential efficiencies from computer-based examinations

Computer-based examinations have the potential to achieve efficiencies in various aspects of examination administration. For example, it would make it unnecessary to distribute examination papers and script-books to examination venues, and – as long as the examination answers are marked digitally rather than printed off – it would no longer be necessary to distribute examination papers to markers and moderators. The Copenhagen Business School pointed to a range of efficiencies associated with its dedicated examination building.

6   Pedagogical issues regarding using computers for free-text / essay-based examination

6.1   Assessment and marking

There are several potential issues regarding utilising computers for free-text /essay-based examinations, including:

- **Assessment**.

Typing using a word processor is much more authentic than handwriting large quantities of text which would be a task rarely done nowadays outside of

assessment contexts, and therefore utilising computers in examinations may enhance students' employability. It does however change the intellectual nature of the assessment task. For example, utilising computers allows candidates to edit and reorganise text in a way that it is not possible for hand-written work. In addition, allowing students to type may allow them to produce text more quickly. The University of Oxford 2017 scoping study (see above) provides a through overview of literature on these and related issues.

- **Marking**.

The University of Oxford 2017 scoping study (see above) highlights some research which highlights some reasons for markers to treat hand-written and typed examination responses differently. For example, markers may have different expectations regarding typed work, and there can be a 'reader empathy effect' when marking hand-written work. The Divinity research provides some evidence that markers tend to more harshly mark typed exam scripts compared to handwritten exam scripts)[3]. However the sample considered for the Divinity research was too small to offer conclusive evidence, and the Oxford study notes that there is contradictory and inconclusive evidence regarding whether typed responses receive different marks to hand-written responses in practice. This inconclusive position is consistent with an initial scan of literature focussing primarily on school-level examinations, with some research providing evidence that typed work is marked lower than hand-written work (for example, Russell and Tao[4]), and other research not finding any systematic relationship between the marks awarded and the mode of assessment[5].

There may also be more practical implications for the marking and moderation process. On one hand, there would no longer be any issues regarding legibility of scripts – which may make the marking process more straightforward. On the other hand, some markers may find it more difficult to mark potentially large numbers of examination papers in a short period of time if conducting the marking process digitally.

If the University were considering a significant increase in the number of computer-based (free-text / essay-based) examinations, it would be helpful to base the operation of those examinations on a deeper understanding of how these potential assessment and marking issues may manifest themselves within the University. It may therefore be helpful to build on the Divinity study and sectoral research by undertaking further pilots and accompanying them with an evaluative component. One of the key issues to address is whether typed and hand-written exams are equivalent, and, if not, whether opt-in / opt-out models are appropriate.

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[3] Dr Alexander Chow and Dr Alison Jack, Student Perceptions of Computer-Based Exams, 2017

[4] Michael Russell and Wei Tao, 'Effects of Handwriting and Computer-Print on Composition Scores: A Follow-up to Powers, Fowles, Farnum, & Ramsey', Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation 9, no. 1 (January 2004), available online at http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=9&n=1

[5] Martin Johnson, Rita Nádas and John F. Bell, Marking essays on screen: An investigation into the reliability of marking extended subjective texts, British Journal of Educational Technology, Vol 41 No 5 2010 814–826

6.2   Study skills

It will be important for students to have adequate typing skills if they are required to undertake free-text essay-based examinations using computers. It may therefore be appropriate for the University to highlight this as a necessary skill for entrants, and to offer typing skills courses to students, were it to consider a significant increase in the number of these examinations. It may also be appropriate to offer students opportunities to prepare for computer-based examinations, for example by providing practice sessions.

7   Policy and Regulation

At present, the University's Examination Hall Regulations are based on the assumption that all examinations are hand-written. Indeed, some aspects of the Examination Hall Regulations (and the Taught Assessment Regulations) utilise a vocabulary based on hand-written examinations (eg 'examination papers'). As such, while the Regulations do not prohibit the use of computers in examinations, they may discourage staff from introducing such arrangements. While many of the Regulations can apply equally to the conduct of examinations irrespective of whether they are hand-written or computer-based, it would be helpful if the Regulations could include additional information regarding aspects of the operation specific to the use of computers. Academic Services and the Timetabling and Examinations Team propose to prepare a revised version of the Examination Hall Regulations that incorporate the requirements of computer-based examinations, with a view to seeking approval from the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee by the end of 2017-18.

The wider use of computers in examinations has the potential to raise broader policy issues, for example:

- Whether it is acceptable to have opt-in / opt-out models, which result in different students on the same course being examined using different mediums;

- Whether any move towards widespread and mandatory use of computers in examinations should be accompanied by action in relation to recruitment and admissions (eg to highlight the importance of entrants having good typing skills) and / or study skills.

8   Equality and diversity issues

At present, some students with disabilities are permitted to use computers rather than to hand-write examinations. For example, in 2016-17 c. 450 students had the adjustment for computers in exams on their Learning Profiles, and in the December 2018 exam diet: 355 students registered for special adjustments required a PC to undertake exams, which constitutes 28.7% of all students requiring special adjustments for examinations.

In principle, any increase in use of computers in examinations is likely to increase accessibility. However, it would be important that, when selecting the software to use for computer-based examinations, to take account of the needs of students with disabilities, for example compatibility with assistive technologies such as screen or text reader programs, specialised keyboards or access systems, or speech recognition software.

In addition, it is possible that student background may be associated with preferences for using hand-writing or computers in examinations (as the Divinity study suggests), and / or level of keyboard skills.

9   Potential next steps

The evidence of student and staff demand for computer-based examinations, and of a move towards greater use of computers in examinations both within the higher education and school sector, is rather mixed and tentative. However, it appears likely that at some point in the future it will become imperative for the University to move towards greater use of computer-based examinations.

In that context, it would be prudent as a minimum for the University to take some modest steps, so that – were it to increase its use of computers in examinations at some point in the future - it would be able to do so based on a better understanding of pedagogical and technical issues, for example by:

- Monitoring and learning from developments in the sector;

- Encouraging those Schools utilising computers for free-text / essay-based examinations to accompany this with some research into the associated pedagogical and equality issues (the Principal's Teaching Awards Scheme may be able to provide some support for this).

- Encouraging Schools and Colleges to feed into ISG's planned review of centrally-supported eExam software;

- Improving our understanding of student preferences (ISG already have plans to include questions on the topic in the Spring 2018 JISC student survey regarding students' digital confidence and competence, which will assist with this).

In addition to these relatively modest steps, there appears to be a strong case for undertaking a more systematic analysis of the University's current capacity (eg estates and infrastructure) for delivering computer-based examinations, and options for scaling up (eg exploring the scope for including multi-functional learning and teaching spaces that could facilitate computer-based examinations in future estates developments).

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

24 January 2018

Responding to the Student Voice

<u>Executive Summary</u>

This paper provides an overview of a range of activities intended to encourage and assist Schools to communicate to students regarding the actions that they are taking in response to student feedback, and sets out some recommendations to enhance these activities.

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

It aligns with the strategic objective of Leadership in Learning.

<u>Action requested</u>

For discussion, and approval of recommendations

<u>How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?</u>

In December 2017, the Students' Association Vice-President (Education) and the University's Deputy Secretary (Student Experience) wrote to Schools to update them on a range of activities that the University and the Students' Association are working on in relation to the student voice, and to alert them to some specific strands of work that their Schools will be asked to engage with. That communication anticipated some of the issues set out in this paper.

If the Committee approves the recommendations set out in the paper, the Deputy Secretary (Student Experience) would coordinate relevant actions at University level and would arrange to communicate to Heads of Schools, and the Assistant Principal (Assessment and Feedback) would work with Academic Services and the Institute for Academic Development would take forward recommendations in relation to the Directors of Learning and Teaching network.

<u>Resource / Risk / Compliance</u>

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

The recommendations have resource implications for University level departments (eg Student Systems and Communications and Marketing), which will be accommodated within existing staffing.

The recommendations are designed to assist Schools to communicate to students regarding the actions that they are taking in response to student feedback. While there are resource implications in relation to this, it should be viewed as core business. The recommendations are designed to assist Schools with this work and are unlikely to lead to a significant increase in resource implications for Schools.

2. Risk assessment

The paper is designed to assist the University to manage risks associated with student experience, and in particular the risk that students will not perceive the University as valuing and using their feedback. Implementation of the recommendations in the paper is unlikely to create any new risks.

3. Equality and Diversity

As long as the materials (promotional materials / templates) are produced in an accessible format, the recommendations are unlikely to raise any equality and diversity issues.

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

Originator of the paper

Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary (Student Experience)
19 December 2017

RESPONDING TO THE STUDENT VOICE

INTRODUCTION

The new Student Voice Policy that has been developed by QAC includes a requirement that *"Actions taken in response to feedback is clearly and effectively communicated to students", see:*

www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studentvoicepolicy.pdf

LTC had asked that a shortlife working group be set up to consider ways in which Schools can enhance how they respond to feedback to students and update them on changes being made as a result of their feedback.

Rather than create a new group, we brought LTC reps (Professor Rowena Arshad; Dr Neil Turner; Tom Ward; Dr Cathy Bovill; Bobi Archer (Students' Association) together with the group that is overseeing the Inspiring Students campaign to discuss these issues in the context of wider University/student communications.

APPROACH

We discussed approaches to capturing and responding to student voice through 4 main mechanisms:
- Mid Course Feedback (MCF)
- Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs)
- National Student Survey (NSS)
- Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs)

MCF
We noted that Susan Rhind had written to Schools to remind them of the need to do MCF at all levels of undergraduate studies.

We observed that where staff are motivated by and engaged with their teaching and their students, MCF is an easy, almost automatic part of the conversations that happen regularly between teacher and students about learning. However where staff were not so motivated, MCF risks being a tick box exercise in which opinions are gathered but no feedback on those opinions is provided.

We suggested that local signalling and messaging is important to ensure the success of MCF in the medium term, eg via course leads, via the School Director of Learning and Teaching.

This should be supported by regular reminders and messages from the University, together with links to further guidance such as that provided by the IAD, including:
http://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/teaching-feedback/mid-course

The Directors of Teaching network has provided a forum for sharing good practices regarding approaches to MCF, and Academic Services are working with Directors of Teaching to gather additional feedback regarding effective practices for MCF involving large student cohorts.

CEQs

We noted the obvious challenge of gathering data from students in (say) semester 1 and only being able to report it back to the whole course team for discussion and reflection at the end of Semester 1 or early in semester 2, by which time students will have completed the course in question and moved on to other priorities.

We suggested that this did however create an opportunity for Heads of School to fill the gap with their students - and staff. Professor Rowena Arshad noted that the information and tools provided for her as HoS to do year 4 welcome slots at the start of 2017/18 had been very positive.

We recommend that Student Systems produce a summary of School-level data for each Head of School in time for early semester 2, and that Heads are asked to use these data to feedback key messages (positive and negative) and responses to Course teams and Students. Student Systems are currently developing the first iteration of this data for use in Jan 2018.

Possible mechanisms for feeding back might include:
- Poster and plasma screen campaigns (CAM will again provide templates)
- Staff student Liaison Committees
- HoS blogs or newletters
- Blogs and other HoS social media feeds

We also noted practice in some areas (RDVS was mentioned) to use the first lecture on each course to present summarised CEQ feedback and responses to the new cohort of students just starting – "this is what your predecessors told us last year, this is what we have changed about the course this year. And this is what we have kept as before (and why)." We noted that this information could also be incorporated into course handbooks. In order to encourage more Schools to adopt this practice we recommend that it more widely shared across the institution.

SSLC's

We noted an ambitious programme of work being undertaken by Students' Association VP Education Bobi Archer, to overhaul, streamline and improve the quality of the class rep system, aiming for a smaller number of better trained reps and a smaller number of SSLC's. We supported the direction of travel and noted that Bobi's proposals were to go to the relevant Senate L&T committees shortly. We noted also that Bobi would need University support to achieve her goals and to

ensure that improvements in this area continued to be taken forward after Bobi's initial term of office comes to an end.

We also discussed "what happens with issues that are raised at SSLC but are outwith the SSLC / School's remit?" (eg transport issues). We recognise that many of these issues are raised with (eg) the VP Education who can then raise further with the University, but that this may be a drawn out or somewhat random process. We heard of practice at the University of Bath where SSLC's annually report to the Students' Association VP Education who in turn produces a summary of outstanding issues and presents this to the University's L&T Committee at the start of each year, closing the feedback loop and ensuring that cross-campus issues are fed back into the enhancement process overseen by the L&T Committee.

NSS

We noted that there was little feedback provided to students on what the University was doing with NSS feedback. This year all schools were asked to deliver final year student "welcome back" sessions and highlight initiatives the school was taking forward in response to feedback including NSS. The Inspiring Students campaign was highlighting a large range of enhancement initiatives but these were not overtly linked to feedback. At other Universities (eg Warwick) the institutional NSS website not only promoted and explained the NSS, it also highlighted what the University was doing in response to NSS feedback
https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/aro/dar/quality/categories/feedback/nss/feedback/

Work was underway to develop an NSS microsite in 2017/18, which will include more explanation for students on what the NSS was and what the questions set out to measure; the microsite will include information on UoE responses to NSS feedback. It was noted that the microsite should be cross-promoted throughout the NSS campaign in emails, during shoutouts, guidance material etc. etc, and also during the "you said we listened" campaigns to be delivered in each school.

OTHER

We noted that there was mixed practice in approaches to sharing student voice data with students. For example NSS data is public data (at a certain level) but may still not be widely shared with students in Schools. Giving school and class reps full access to the data (apart from free text comments) could be used to generate a greater spirit of partnership working on student experience enhancements (and also tap into our students' own data skills to help interpret and understand the data better). Guidelines for schools on this area would be helpful. There also needs to be consideration of whether CEQ data should be made available to students in the same way.

It is also worth noting that Teaching Programme Reviews / Postgraduate Programme Reviews involve student input and that Schools should be encouraged to share the outcomes of these reviews with SSLCs and / or the student body more generally.

Finally, we noted work going on in this area includes:

- The launch (2/11) of the Partnership Agreement between the University and the Students' Association.
- A revised / consolidated set of webpages devised by Academic Services under the heading "Student Voice" https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-voice
- The development of a Student Engagement Strategy and network led by Dr Cathy Bovill (IAD)
- Susan Rhind is asking Schools to explain how they are working with their student to discuss matters relating to assessment and feedback.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Deputy Secretary (Student Experience):

- To ensure that Student Systems provide summaries of CEQ, NSS and PTES data in a user-friendly and timely manner so that Heads of School can use it at the start of each semester.
- To ensure that this is accompanied by a range of supporting templates for video, PPT, plasma screen, newsletter etc that School can adapt to their individual circumstances.
- To ensure that NSS promotional materials are expanded to include a "you said we did" type website to sit alongside NSS promotional materials and highlight the power of student feedback

To HOS: that they ensure student feedback results (NSS, PTES and CEQ) are widely publicised and shared across levels and all year groups

To the AP Assessment & Feedback:

To publicise (eg through the Network for Directors of L&T, through the Teaching Matters blog) the R(D)VS practice of using the first lecture of any course to review feedback from the previous year and how the course team have responded to that feedback

To LTC:

To request the VP Education to provide an annual summary at the start of each academic year of cross-campus issues arising from SSLC's over the previous 12 months

To consider whether full datasets (apart from free text) from NSS, CE and PTES shod be made freely available to school and class reps and other students as required

Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary (Student Experience)
Nov 2017

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Learning and Teaching Committee

24 January 2018

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2018:

Institutional Questions and Open Date

Executive Summary

This paper presents the proposed institutional questions and launch date for PTES 2018. The institutional questions are optional and will be specifically asked of students at the University of Edinburgh.

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

Strategic Objective - Leadership in Learning.

Action requested

For approval.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Not applicable.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

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

   Not applicable.

2. **Risk assessment**

   Not included.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   Not included.

4. **Freedom of information**

   Open.

Originator of the paper

Sarah-Jane Brown, Student Surveys Operations Lead

PTES Institutional Questions for University of Edinburgh Students

Theme	Question(s)	Comment
Academic Community	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I feel part of an academic community in the University of Edinburgh.	This question was reinstated to PTES in 2017. Learning Community questions are asked of UGs in NSS. It is recommended that the Academic Community question remains in PTES 2018.
Personal Tutor	I am satisfied with the support provided by my Personal Tutor.	This question is included in the NSS. Asking this in PTES would provide comparable data to UGs. It is recommended that this question is included in PTES 2018.
Overall	Looking back, what one thing could have improved your experience of the University of Edinburgh?	This question was asked in PTES 2017 and it is recommended that this remains as an 'overall' question in PTES 2018.
Library	I am happy with the level of assistance I have received in relation to Library services, whether by email, telephone or face-to-face I am happy with the level of assistance I have received in relation to IT services, whether by email, telephone or face-to-face I know that when the Library does not have a resource that I want, they can usually obtain it for me I can find in the Virtual Learning Environment the learning materials I need for my course *or* From the Virtual Learning Environment I can quickly and easily find the learning materials I need for my course	These questions have been proposed by Library Academic Support. It is recommended that these questions are <u>not</u> included in PTES 2018. Concern was raised in 2017 re the number of library related questions, particularly in comparison to other services. The questions were approved in 2017 with a view to reviewing this in 2018. Institutional library questions have been included in PTES from 2013 – 2017 therefore 5 years of data already exists. If these questions are not approved, a library related question still exists within the core questionnaire under Resources and Services - 'The library resources and services are good enough for my needs (including physical and online)'.

Proposed open date:
It is proposed that PTES opens to University of Edinburgh students on **Monday 2 April 2018**. The proposed date is one month later than PTES has previously opened and follows a recommendation from the PTES Working Group. A later open date means students are more likely to have started their dissertations / met with supervisors. PTES closes on **15 June 2018**.

The University of Edinburgh

Learning and Teaching Committee

24 January 2018

Update on the Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching

Executive Summary

This paper provides an update on progress on the University's Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching. This Framework was requested by Learning and Teaching Committee in 2012, first accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in 2013 and reaccredited by the HEA in 2017. Good progress is being made in terms of positive feedback from participants and increasing participation. An external review of the main new provision for academic staff, the Edinburgh Teaching Award, offered a very positive picture. The main barrier to further increases in participation is staff workloads.

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

The CPD Framework supports the University's mission to provide the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning. Participation in the more advanced levels of the CPD Framework contributes to the strategic priority of leadership in learning.

Action requested

For information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

An update on progress will be given to Learning and Teaching Committee in January 2019.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

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

   None.

2. **Risk assessment**

   The key risk is that workload pressures make it difficult for sufficient colleagues to participate.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

An equality impact assessment has been conducted on the Framework.

4. **Freedom of information**

This paper is open.

Key words
Teaching qualifications, learning and teaching, staff qualifications to teach, continuing professional development.

Originator of the paper

Dr Velda McCune and Dr Jon Turner, Institute for Academic Development, 24.1.18.

Introduction

This paper provides an update on progress on the University's Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching. This Framework was requested by Learning and Teaching Committee in 2012, accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in 2013 and reaccredited in 2017. The provision within the Framework is intended to provide relevant and flexible professional development relating to learning and teaching for all University staff involved in teaching or supporting learning at any point in their careers. The Framework is delivered in collaboration with Schools and Support Services. The current Framework is illustrated in Figure 1. Gaining professional recognition from the HEA provides national recognition for colleagues of their commitment to professionalism in teaching and learning in higher education.

Figure 1: The CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching[1].
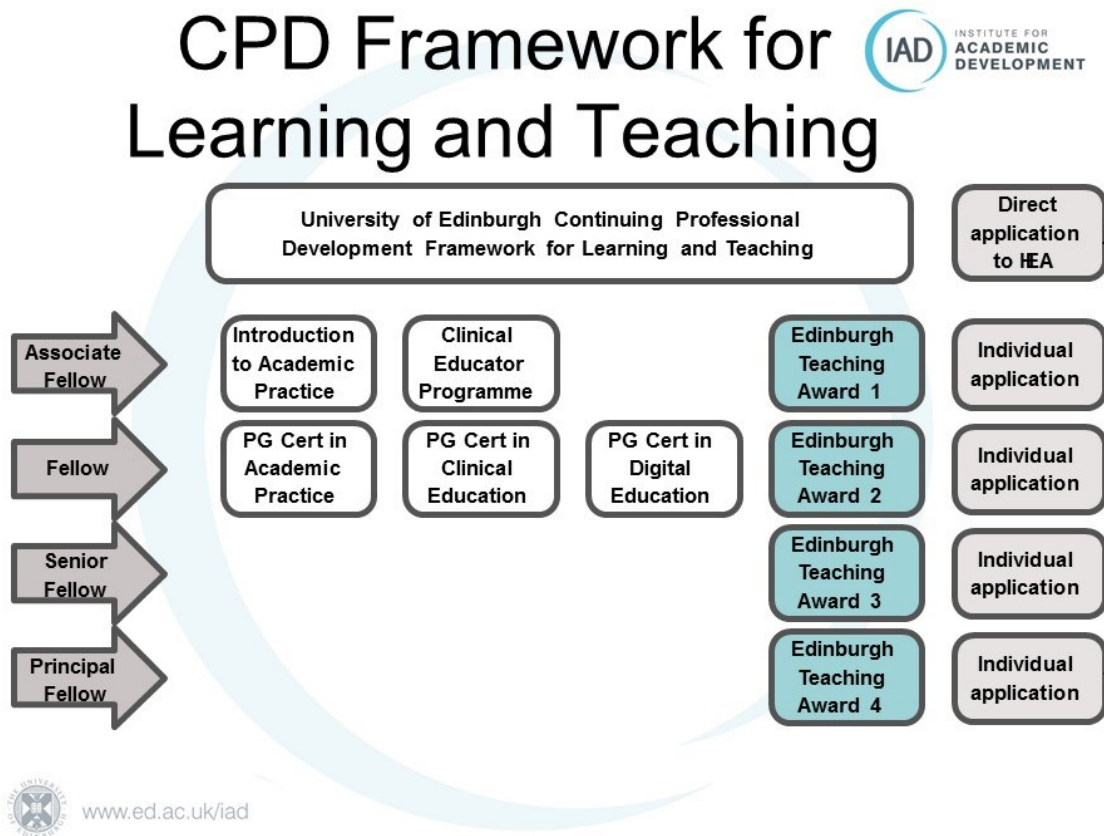
The three main pathways through the Framework for University staff are the Introduction to Academic Practice (IntroAp), the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) and the Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA). For reaccreditation, we have refreshed the PGCAP to bring priority areas - such as programme and course design and assessment and feedback -

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[1] The PG Cert in Digital Education team are currently working with the HEA to finalise reaccreditation. All other reaccreditation is complete.

more to the forefront. We have reduced the total number of assessments in order to encourage better completion rates. We have also updated our digital education practices within the programme to model good practice.

The Introduction to Academic Practice was developed to provide a route to Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy for experienced tutors and demonstrators who previously had no internal UoE route to accreditation. The Introduction to Academic Practice has been designed to include rich and structured face-to-face and online interaction as well as teaching observation. This provides an ideal learning environment for less experienced teachers. Postgraduate students appreciate having a nationally recognised qualification to teach for their curriculum vitae as this is appearing in advertisements for academic posts. At reaccreditation we made minor adjustments to this provision to meet new HEA requirements but the provision is very well received by participants and has high completion rates so we did not want to change it more than was necessary to achieve reaccreditation.

The Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA) requires participants to take part in and reflect on their choice of diverse CPD activities and to write a reflective blog about their practice in relation to the UKPSF. The EdTA can be completed over six months to two years depending on participants' work patterns. The workload for the EdTA was designed to be manageable for academic and support colleagues with demanding full time roles. An external evaluation of the EdTA indicated that this provision was well received by participants and provoked change in their teaching practices. At reaccreditation we simplified some of the processes within the EdTA to make engaging with this provision more straightforward for participants.

We have continued to offer the EdTA in partnership with some of the Schools within the University, to provide a closer fit to local needs and to secure greater buy-in across the University. The most established of these local collaborations is with Veterinary Medicine and from a population of approximately 130 teaching related academic staff, there is now 53% voluntary engagement with the local EdTA programme[2]. In addition, there are perceived changes in several areas: Colleagues seeking out additional teaching and learning responsibilities; increased attendance numbers at the in house CPD workshops; and changes in teaching practice. These changes are being evaluated more robustly in a research project being undertaken as part of an IAD Secondment by Catriona Bell.

In Mathematics a local version of EdTA level 1 targeted at tutors and demonstrators has 13 participants. New local versions of the EdTA have just begun in Biomedical Sciences (directed initially at a group of postgraduate tutors) and in Social and Political Sciences (focusing on a pilot group of new academic staff). Catriona Bell, who leads on the Veterinary Medicine iteration is on secondment to the IAD and is working with Velda McCune to bring more

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[2] The total engagement figure is 95 individuals, 26 of whom are in non academic roles such as veterinary nurses, residents, postdocs and teaching technicians. This comprises 53% of academics = 69/130.

Schools on board. The main challenge for this work is lack of staff time in Schools. In addition local support networks, such as that in Biological Sciences led by Heather McQueen, have started. These aim to provide a collegial within-discipline support for those mentoring and aiming to submit through the centrally run EdTA.

Participation in the Framework

Participation in and completion of the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic practice (PGCAP) has remained relatively stable in recent years despite the introduction of the Edinburgh Teaching Award as an alternative possibility for staff. This suggests an increase in willingness of staff to participate in accredited provision. The number of colleagues completing the full qualification is still relatively low and the biggest barrier to this appears to be staff time. The PGCAP has recently been redesigned to have a forty credit core course plus two ten credit options. This has been done in an effort to increase completions as it means that participants will now only write three assignments whereas previously they would have written five.

Table 1: Participation in the PG Cert in Academic Practice

	AY11/12	AY12/13	AY13/14	AY14/15	AY15/16	AY16/17	AY 17/18*
Matriculated	61	103	131	134	126	151	158 *
Graduated	10	24	25	27	34	25	21*

*to date (the new programme started December 2017)

Participation in the Edinburgh Teaching Award has been growing steadily since the Award was first piloted as shown in Tables 2a and 2b. As participants have two years in which to complete an award it will take time for the completion rates to become fully clear but we estimate they are over 50%. Participants tell us that finding time is the biggest barrier to completion. An external evaluation of the scheme offered a very positive picture of the value of participation. For a more personal viewpoint on the participant experience, this Teaching Matters blog post may be of interest: http://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/?p=1013.

Table 2a: Edinburgh Teaching Award participation (excluding School versions)

Census closest to 1-Sept of each annual year	AY 14/15	AY 15/16	AY 16/17	AY 17/18
Course Participants	77	65	153	190
Completed (*so far)	1	7	49	19*

Table 2b: Edinburgh Teaching Award participation (School versions only)

Census closest to 1-Sept of each annual year	AY 14/15	AY 15/16	AY 16/17	AY 17/18
Course Participants (# note that local groups for Biomedical Sciences and SPS started later in the AY than 1-Sep-2017)	20	19	59	61#
Completed (*so far)	0	5	8	6*

Participation and completion data for the Introduction to Academic Practice are provided in Table 3. The excellent completion rates reflect the close support given to participants by the IntroAp team. Feedback on this provision has been very positive. Other influences on completion are that tutors and demonstrators tend to have somewhat milder time pressures than other staff and do not yet have secure careers providing another incentive to secure an accredited award. We also offer non-accredited workshops on tutoring and demonstrating to larger numbers of participants.

Table 3: Participation in and completion of the IntroAp

Cohort	Participants joining	Participants completing
Jan-14	20	20
Jan-15	46	42
Oct-15	32	29
Jan-16*	45	44
Jan-17	22	21
Oct-17	28	not yet due to complete

* The October 2016 iteration was cancelled due to staff changes.

Looking ahead

For the new Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, the next steps will be to monitor participant progress and to collect feedback from participants. The programme will then be refined on this basis. Ongoing conversations with Schools and Colleges about supporting colleagues to have time to complete CPD for learning and teaching may also enhance completion rates on this programme and the Edinburgh Teaching Award. For the Edinburgh Teaching Award, we aim gradually to increase participation by supporting more School versions of the Award. The central programme may also be able to grow in the near future as we are now getting more volunteers to mentor whereas previously this was a bottle neck blocking increased participation. The Introduction to Academic Practice may be able to grow modestly but our emphasis at the moment is Higher Education Academy accreditation for mainstream academic staff rather than tutors and demonstrators. We will continue to offer our popular non-accredited provision for tutors and demonstrators and to support Schools to enhance their own training provision for tutors and demonstrators, as required by the new policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators.

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Learning and Teaching Committee
24 January 2018

Student Support Teams Internal Audit

Executive Summary
This paper provides the Committee with information on the outcomes of the Student Support Team internal audit. The Audit and Risk Committee will approve the final report at its meeting on 19 September 2017.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
These enhancements align with the Committee's remit to "… support of the enhancement of the student experience."

Action requested
The paper is presented to the Committee for **information**.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
Following an initial communication to key stakeholders from Gavin Douglas (Deputy Secretary, Student Experience) those responsible for taking forward actions will communicate accordingly.

Resource / Risk / Compliance
1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   Resource implications will be considered through actions taken in response to recommendations.

2. **Risk assessment**
   The paper itself does not require a risk assessment. The report identifies a key related risk on the University Risk Register as: *'Failure to provide a high quality student experience impacts on reputation, recruitment and retention'* and confirms that one element in addressing this risk is the effective provision of student support, such as through the Personal Tutor system.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   Equality and diversity will be considered through actions taken in response to recommendations.

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

Key words
Student Support Teams, internal audit, Personal Tutor system

Originator of the paper
Nichola Kett, 15 January 2018

Background

A review of Schools' Student Support Teams was undertaken as part of the 2016/17 Internal Audit Plan. It forms part of the coverage of the Student Experience (student support services) in the Audit Strategy.

Recommendations

1. Training for Student Support Staff

Develop a mandatory training plan, tailored for student support staff (or equivalent).	**Management Comment/Agreed Action** The new Director of Student Wellbeing will be tasked with developing a rolling training programme, to be developed by December 2017 and rolled out thereafter.
A checklist should be developed and maintained electronically in each school to ensure Student Support Officers are provided with mandatory training. Line Managers should be responsible for signing off against the checklist annually. They should also be responsible for ensuring staff with a student support role have received training.	**Current Status** The Director of Student Wellbeing is seeking ideas from key stakeholders on important themes and areas for the training to focus on.

2. Confidential Space

Each Head of School should consider options for a confidential space that is available at short notice. A plan of action should be agreed and shared as appropriate.	**Management Comment/Agreed Action** Assistant Principal Murray will carry out a review of current provision in Schools by 31st December 2017 and develop recommendations by June 2018.
Longer term, each school should consider this issue when planning space requirements.	**Current Status** Schools were asked to respond to the recommendations. The review of responses from Schools was completed on time and communications are now being sent to back to Schools to ensure that actions are undertaken and to inform further recommendations. In general, most Schools have satisfactory provision, however, challenges with lack of space were identified in several Schools.

3. College Networks for Student Support Staff

College Level Forums Each College should have a Student Support Forum or equivalent platform for the sharing of ideas, experience, information and best practice.	**Management Comment/Agreed Action** Assistant Principal Murray to co-ordinate discussion and actions through College Deans, Heads of Academic Admin and Director of Student Wellbeing.
	Current Status Practice was shared in advance of the Personal Tutor Oversight Group meeting in November 2017. The practices within

	the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences were deemed to be exemplary and the other Colleges are takin these into consideration as they develop their fora.
University Student Experience Network The University-wide network should be re-established. This would ensure key institutional messages/policy/objectives are communicated and discussed with relevant staff.	**Management Comment/Agreed Action** The new Director of Student Wellbeing will be tasked with establishing a University-wide forum to meet as needed, e.g. 2x per year. This work will be developed alongside the College-level work identified above. **Current Status** This is being considered in the context of the training for support staff and College fora.

4. Monitoring and Reporting

Senior Management should consider the types of information the University requires for effective planning of student support services.	**Management Comment/Agreed Action** Support & Administration strand of the Service Excellence Programme commencing with data gathering, business needs analysis, consideration of software and system developments (e.g. case management system) and potential structural changes to operating models. **Current Status** Updates on Service Excellence are provided to the Committee separately.
This should include consideration of system and procedural enhancements (including potential development via the Service Excellence Programme).	

5. Assessment of Current Provision

Each Head of School should make an assessment of current Student Support provision and whether it remains sufficient for students. This should cover all student categories. The key contact for each student category should be clarified.	**Management Comment/Agreed Action** This work will also be taken forward through the Student Support & Administration strand of the Service Excellence Programme with a view to identifying structural changes and any revision to current operating models. **Current Status** Updates on Service Excellence are provided to the Committee separately.

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

24 January 2018

Report from Learning and Teaching Policy Group

Executive Summary

In November 2015, the Senate Committee Convenor's Forum was superseded 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. This paper updates the Committee on LTPG's most recent meeting (27 November 2017).

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

LTPG's work supports the University strategic objectives of Leadership in Learning and Leadership in Research.

Action requested
For information

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
N/A

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   N/A – Committee is not being asked for a decision

2. **Risk assessment**
   N/A – Committee is not being asked for a decision

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   N/A – Committee is not being asked for a decision

4. **Freedom of information**
   Open

Originator of the paper
Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services

Report from Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG)

The main points from the 27 November 2017 meetings are set out below. One of the issues discussed at LTPG is addressed in more detail elsewhere on LTC's agenda.

Main points

The Group:

- Received an update on the Student Administration and Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme, advising on appropriate approaches to consultation with staff regarding proposed changes;

- Welcomed a presentation from Prof Sian Bayne regarding progress in developing a vision for digital education – expressing enthusiasm regarding the process for consultation and the ideas that the project is generating, and agreeing that the University should be engaging strategically with how technology is changing education;

- Discussed Peer Observation of Teaching (POT), supporting the idea of continuing to encourage staff to utilise POT; and

- Discussed timetabling and room allocation arrangements issues in relation to 2017-18, noting that although these were not as acute as they had been in 2016-17, the growth in intakes for 2017-18 had created challenges.

The University of Edinburgh

Learning and Teaching Committee

24 January 2018

Report from the Knowledge Strategy Committee

Executive Summary

To update LTC on certain matters considered by the Knowledge Strategy Committee at its meeting on 13 October 2017.

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

Not applicable.

Action requested

LTC is invited to note the report.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Not applicable.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

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

   Where applicable, as covered in the report.

2. **Risk assessment**

   Where applicable, as covered in the report.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   Where applicable, as covered in the report.

4. **Freedom of information**

   This paper is open.

Key words

Knowledge Strategy Committee

Originator of the paper

Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services, January 2018

REPORT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

13 October 2017

1   Digital Transformation

The Deputy Chief Information Officer delivered a presentation on the University's digital transformation activities – the application of digital technology in all aspects of the University. Updates on underpinning digital transformation projects were noted and student focused projects and communications to Schools and Colleges discussed.

2   Distance Learning at Scale

The Senior Vice-Principal presented an update on the current status of the Distance Learning at Scale project, with 13 potential pilot courses identified and business cases in development. The following points were discussed:

- Courses will be research-led and distinctive to the University of Edinburgh;
- 'Unbundling' – opportunities for students to progress at varying rates according to their own preference without the constraint of the standard academic year model;
- Providing appropriate student support tailored to large-scale distance learning courses.

3   Bulk Email Investigation

The Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning presented a report on the investigation into a graduation email error in June 2017. Future actions and lessons learned were noted, including a review of email templates, the timing of potentially sensitive emails and considering which emails require human review before issuing. Members discussed avoiding issuing emails on Fridays and examples at other organisations such as secondary education exam boards.

4   Information Security Policy & Framework

A revised Information Security Policy and a proposed Information Security Framework with supporting standards and procedures were reviewed. Improving communication to staff and students, mandatory awareness training for all staff and replacing an existing code of practice were discussed. The revised Information Security Policy was endorsed, with approval of underlying standards for the Information Security Framework delegated to IT Committee.

5   Digital Research Services

The Director of IT Infrastructure presented the proposed 2017/18 Digital Research Services project programme. The programme's intention to develop and maintain a comprehensive and integrated suite of digital services for University researchers was noted and avoiding duplication of long term research data storage was

discussed. The programme of work and expenditure was approved as set out in the paper.

6   Learning Analytics Update

Linkages between the development of a new learning analytics policy with the new General Data Protection Regulation and distance learning at scale programme were considered. It was agreed to delay developing a detailed learning analytics policy until later in 2017-18 and to introduce interim governance arrangements as proposed in the paper with immediate effect. Developing case studies or examples to assist Schools with interpretation of a new policy was requested.

7   Data Stewards
The Committee endorsed the:
- Catalogue of golden copy data sources, including data steward appointments for the core golden copy data sources;
- Formal definition of the data steward role;
- Proposal that Heads of Colleges and Support Groups should be accountable for appointing Data Stewards in their locales, in line with their overall accountability for information security.

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

24 January 2018

Service Excellence, Student Administration & Support Update

Executive Summary
Dated 20th December 2017, this paper provides a brief update of the work being undertaken by the Student Administration & Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme, as part of a commitment to ensure that the Senate Committees are appraised of progress across each of these projects.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
The Service Excellence Programme has been identified as a strategic priority.

Action requested
To note (no requested action at this stage).

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
Future Service Excellence Programme recommendations will be communicated by the Board through existing committee structures. Future SA&S project proposals will be routed through Researcher Experience Committee, Learning & Teaching Committee, Quality Assurance Committee or Curriculum & Student Progression Committee as necessary.

Resource / Risk / Compliance
1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   N/A at this stage.

2. **Risk assessment**
   SA&S aren't identifying risks for consideration at this stage.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   N/A at this stage.

4. **Freedom of information**
   Open

Key words
Service Excellence Programme / Student Administration & Support

Originator of the paper
Neil McGillivray
Student Administration & Support Programme Lead
20th December 2017

DEC 2017: UPDATE ON SERVICE EXCELLENCE (STUDENT ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT)

The Student Administration & Support (SA&S) Programme's proposed programme of work (emerging from previous CSA and OBC phases) has been endorsed by the Service Excellence Board and the team are now working on a number of projects.

The Programme's vision encompasses a vision for professional services staff, academic staff, students and the University
- For students – from pre-arrival to graduation: Smooth. Seamless. Easy to navigate. "My way"
- For professional services staff: Fewer, better systems so less manual processing and fewer work arounds. Less duplicated effort. Better data. Clarity over who is responsible for what.
- For academic staff: Better admin support for you / your students. Less admin for you.
- For all staff and students: Clear, easy to understand policies
- For the University: Better Value for Money

The SA&S Board last met on 20th November 2017. That meeting endorsed the work of the following projects, asking them to return to the 15th February 2018 Board with fully developed business case and blueprint documentation:

- Special Circumstances, Extension and Concessions
- Working & Study Away
- Student Immigration Service

The SA&S team has subsequently committed to attending the January CPSC meeting to highlight emerging policy recommendations, although is aware that this meeting is scheduled to take place prior to the final 15th February presentation and discussion of these proposals.

Further blueprint recommendations in the following areas will be submitted to the 10th April SA&S Board:

- Student Finance
- Timetabling

SA&S testing of an Examination Timetabling solution will continue into the New Year, seeking a solution for implementation for all centrally arranged exams before the end of 2017/18.

The recruitment of additional seconded expertise into the SA&S team to support Timetabling and PGR is ongoing, with new colleagues expected to join the team in early February 2018, in support of Phase 3 of the programme:

- Creating systems, tools and processes to support the PGR lifecycle (including recording Annual Reviews and HEAR data)
- A major project to provide a single, golden-copy, data source for all Programme and course information, to clarify associated business processes for creation and update, and to provide tools by which the golden-copy data is used to publish key Programme and course information.
- Delivery of a transparent online matriculation process that guides a student through the steps they must complete (including a fee payment stage) in order to be fully matriculated.
- Create systems and tools to support the business processes involved in running Exam Boards.

- Redesign, simplify and standardise the processes for internal reporting through the creation of a single data warehouse and creating a user-centred interface to support day-to-day reporting requirements in Colleges and Schools.
- Completion of earlier work to support the Graduation process by introducing e-ticketing for Graduation (and eliminating inefficient manual processing).
- Various other investigations are planned, including into Online Course Selection, Course Assessment and Feedback tools, and the possibility of a digital document management system to support exam processes from setting questions to marking scripts.

More detail is available on the SA&S wiki, this will continue to be adapted and maintained throughout the coming months, and into the next phase of the programme as detailed proposals are developed for future projects:

https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=346121562