

**Minutes of the Meeting of Senate Education Committee
held via Microsoft Teams at 9.00am on Wednesday 24 June 2020**

1. Attendance

Present	Position
Colm Harmon	Vice-Principal Students (Convener) – Ex Officio
Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (Deputy Convener) – Ex Officio
Sabine Rolle	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Lisa Kendall	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Stephen Bowd	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)
Judy Hardy	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Michael Seery	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)
Neil Turner	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, UG)
Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, PGT)
Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)
Richard Andrews	Head of School, CAHSS
Mike Shipston	Head of Deanery, CMVM
Fizzy Abou Jawad	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice President Education
Stuart Lamont	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Permanent Staff Member
Sue MacGregor	Director of Academic Services – Ex Officio
Velda McCune	Representing Director of Institute for Academic Development – Ex Officio
Shelagh Green	Director for Careers & Employability – Ex Officio
Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services – Ex Officio
Philippa Ward	Academic Services (Secretary)
Apologies	
Iain Gordon	Head of School, CSE
Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions – Ex Officio
In Attendance	
Laura Cattell	Widening Participation, and Representing Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions
Nicola Crowley	Head of Administration – Medical Education, CMVM
Neil McCormick	Educational Technology Policy Officer, Information Services
Paula Webster	Head of Student Data and Surveys

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 25 May 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2020 were approved.

Postgraduate Research Governance (Item 3.2)

Members noted that the CAHSS Dean of Postgraduate Studies had joined the Adaptation and Renewal Team (ART) to represent the Doctoral College.

3. Convener's Communications

3.1 Update on COVID-19 Recovery – Adaptation and Renewal

The Convener advised members that the work being undertaken by ART was fast paced. Further consideration was being given to the best way of communicating outputs.

The current priority for Communications and Marketing was clarifying the arrangements for returning students, although it was difficult to provide specific information about teaching at this stage due to uncertainty over social distancing requirements. Information gathered from students in their penultimate years of study suggested that they were comfortable with the idea of lectures being delivered online, but were seeking reassurance around the arrangements for small group, workshop and seminar work which they would prefer to be delivered face to face.

It was difficult for the University to predict levels of recruitment for 2020/21. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) was discouraging home and RUK students from deferring, but the situation with international recruitment remained uncertain. The data being gathered - for example around uptake of offers of accommodation - was encouraging, and College Admissions Offices were working hard to ensure that as many students with offers as possible matriculated.

Members agreed that reassuring returning students was a high priority, as was providing ongoing support for Postgraduate Research Students.

Members were asked to encourage those within their constituencies to share best practice around the development of hybrid teaching via the Edinburgh Hybrid Teaching Exchange <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/learningexchange/>

<p>Action: All members to encourage those within their constituencies to share best practice around the development of hybrid teaching via the Edinburgh Hybrid Teaching Exchange.</p>

4. For Discussion

4.1 Proposals for Student Support and Personal Tutors in MBChB

The paper was presented by the Head of Administration for Medical Education, who advised members that CMVM had been considering the way in which MBChB students were supported for some time. The University's Review of Student Support and Personal

Tutoring and the COVID-19 pandemic had provided further opportunities to review the existing system.

The Committee noted that, at present, many MBChB Personal Tutors are NHS clinicians who are paid for the role. However, workload, lack of access to University systems, and poor communication between Personal Tutors and the Medical School can make the role challenging.

The MBChB Year Co-ordinators are the members of staff who are most consistently in touch with students and with placement staff who might raise concerns about students' wellbeing. The paper therefore proposed the redefining of the MBChB Year Co-ordinator role to give Co-ordinators the authority to triage student support issues. The Co-ordinator would be supported by an expanded Student Wellbeing team and NHS professional mentors who would be recruited to empower, encourage and act as role models for students. The mentors would not be remunerated for their services but would be issued with honorary contracts to maintain a connection with the University.

The Committee discussed the need to define and review the professional mentor role carefully to ensure consistency of student experience. Caseload for the Year Co-ordinators was also discussed. It was recognised that numbers of students per Year Co-ordinator would be high, but the Medical School was confident that the model was workable.

Members supported and approved the proposed changes. It was recognised that the MBChB system differed from that which had been agreed through the Review of Student Support and Personal Tutoring. However, it was considered to be appropriate for the MBChB programme, and the Committee agreed that there was sufficient flexibility within the agreed student support model to accommodate the MBChB structure.

4.2 Online Assessment 2020-21 – Discussion Paper from CMVM

The Committee noted the concerns that exist around ensuring that assessed work undertaken by students online is both robust and secure. Members discussed:

- the value of ongoing dialogue with students, which makes it easier to identify anomalous performance;
- the possibilities around online proctoring, although in general, Schools would prefer to find alternative ways of ensuring that assessments are secure;
- essay mills - the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance advised the Committee that student-led guidance highlighting the dangers for students of using essay mills was planned;
- whether the repurposing of closed book exams as open book exams for the May 2020 exam diet had inadvertently encouraged poor scholarship;
- the need to understand the full impact of the May 2020 exam diet;
- ways in which poor scholarship and plagiarism might be designed out;
- the potential to make greater use of vivas, although the Committee recognised that undertaking selective vivas raises concerns around equity, particularly for students with disabilities;
- the need to ensure that exams were fair for all students, remaining mindful of the fact that not all students have access to the same technology and networks;
- the value of undertaking benchmarking against other institutions;

- the need to ensure that any required policy and regulatory changes are made as quickly as possible;
- and overall, the importance of cultivating an atmosphere of trust and a compassionate approach. It was agreed that the University should be relying more on ongoing dialogue and encouraging good scholarship than on proctoring and plagiarism detection tools.

Members agreed that a task force should be set up within the Curriculum Resilience stream of the ART programme to give further consideration to issues around online assessment.

Action: Convener to discuss the establishment of a working group on online assessment with the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning.

4.3 Consultation on Proposals to Alter the Teaching Day / Week for Semester 1 2020/21

The Committee noted that the paper was based on a requirement for 2 metre social distancing and that by the time the University returned to teaching in September 2020, this may no longer be necessary. However it was agreed that it was important to plan for all possible scenarios.

Members recognised the significant work that had gone into developing the model outlined in the paper, but had substantial concerns about the implications for both student and staff wellbeing of introducing Saturday teaching. There were also some concerns around normalising an extended teaching day. Members discussed:

- the fact that the proposed changes could extend inequities for students and be particularly difficult for those with caring responsibilities or part time employment;
- the potential difficulties an extended working week might cause for those using public transport;
- payment of staff – would staff teaching outside of normal hours be paid at the same rate?
- the potential impact on staff morale of poor attendance of out-of-hours classes;
- concerns around workload and fairness in the allocation of teaching slots in areas of the University that do not have effective workload allocation models;
- the fact that the proposed changes would impact not only on students and teaching staff but also on support services, for example teaching office, laboratory and technological support staff;
- the importance of maintaining space within the week for students to undertake extra-curricular activities.

The Committee therefore agreed that the existing timetabling constraints should remain in place for curricular activity, but that Schools should be allowed flexibility to access teaching spaces outside of core times for non-curricular engagement with student cohorts.

The Committee also agreed that modelling going forward should be based on 1.5m social distancing.

4.4 COVID-19 Undergraduate Survey

Members welcomed the paper which focussed on students' experiences of digital learning in the last three to four months, their well-being and priorities outside their studies.

The Committee discussed the way in which the feedback loop might be closed. It was agreed that there would be benefit in asking Schools to consider practical ways in which they might respond to the survey's findings and to share these via the Hybrid Teaching Exchange.

Action: Members to encourage Schools to consider ways in which they might respond to the survey's findings, and to share these via the Edinburgh Hybrid Teaching Exchange.

4.5 Learning Technology:

4.5.1 LTW Learning Technology Update for Semester 1

Members noted the paper.

4.5.2 Virtual Classroom Policy

Whilst recognising that it was preferable to deliver smaller group teaching face to face, the Committee agreed that the University should ensure that it had a policy in place to support the delivery of teaching and learning via the Virtual Classroom.

The Committee welcomed the content of the draft Virtual Classroom Policy but were concerned about proliferation of University policies. It was therefore agreed that the new content would be incorporated into the existing Lecture Recording Policy.

It was noted that there would be benefit in clarifying what was meant by 'a student is...recorded': in Collaborate, this could mean showing their face by video, speaking, chatting or, for example, voting.

Principle 12 within the draft Policy was felt to be difficult to enforce on account of the editing skills potentially required.

Members suggested that there would be benefit in extending the scope of the Policy to cover teaching delivered via Zoom or Microsoft Teams in addition to Collaborate.

5. For Information

5.1 Annual Monitoring: Changes due to COVID-19 Outbreak

Members noted the changes made to annual monitoring processes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services
27 May 2020