H/02/26/02

The University of Edinburgh

Meeting of the Senatus Researcher Experience Committee
to be held on 26 September 2017 at 2.00 pm
in the Board Room, Chancellors Building, Little France

A G E N D A

1.	**Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2017**	Enclosed
2.	**Matters Arising** 2.1 Student status 2.2 eBusiness: CROS/PIRLS final completion rates	
3.	**Convener's Communications** 3.1 Update on Distance/Online PhD differentiation discussion 3.2 U21 working group Research Supervisor Support & Development 3.3 Times Higher Education Awards Supervisor Nomination 3.4 Three Minute Thesis Vitae Competition	
	For Discussion	
4.	**Student employment: Information Services project**	
5.	**Taking Control of your Research Career**	REC 17/18 1A
6.	**Presentation of postgraduate research programme information to prospective and current students**	REC 17/18 1B
7.	**Annual Progression Review Monitoring System: Evaluation**	REC 17/18 1C
8.	**Excellence in Doctoral Education & Career Development:** **8.1 Progress report on work steam 1: Supervisor Training and Support** **8.2 Progress report on work stream 2: Mentoring and Wellbeing** **8.3 Progress report on work stream 3: Personal and Professional Development Record**	
9.	**Enlightenment Scholarships**	
10.	**Review of the Code of Practice for Supervisors & Research Students 2017/18 – update**	REC 17/18 1D
11.	**Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2017 – institutional summary report** (EASE log in required)	
12.	**Task Groups:** **12.1 Review of Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators – Final report**	REC 17/18 1E
	For information and formal business	
13.	**Planning for Senate Committees**	REC 17/18 1F

Date of next meeting: 14 November 2017, Raeburn Room, Old College

14.	**Knowledge Strategy Committee report: 2 June 2017 meeting**	REC 17/18 1G
15.	**Research Policy Group report**	
16.	**Any other business** **16.1 Conferences and events** 16.1.1 UKCGE Annual Conference, July 2017	

Reserved business

17.	**Higher Degree: DSc Submission**	REC 17/18 1H – Closed

Susan Hunter, Academic Services, 18 September 2017

REC: 26.09.17

H/02/26/02

REC 17/18 1A

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

26 September 2017

Taking Control of your Research Career

Executive Summary

This paper outlines a programme of workshops, online learning and peer support devised to help early career research staff (in some disciplines referred to as postdocs) make better decisions and take action to enhance their employability in a range of career areas. It is principally focused on increasing awareness of existing provision although some new resources are in development. This paper has already been presented to Research Policy Group and College of Science and Engineering Research Training Committee and discussed in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine with Drs Paddy Hadoke and Gillian Gray.

As research staff are core to our success in achieving our research goals and as they represent a significant proportion of our researcher community, their interests are relevant to this Committee. There is also increasing interest from key funders (RCUK as was and others) in the approaches institutions take to support the career development of these staff.

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

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan objective of Leadership in Research and the Committee's priority to enhance support for Early Career Researchers.

Action requested

Feedback is welcomed on these potential developments, particularly guidance on how to identify the best approach for advancing these proposals if they are deemed appropriate to the institution and our research staff.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

On-going through Fiona Philippi, member of REC.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   None anticipated at this moment. Significant increase in uptake may have future implications.
2. **Risk assessment**
   None anticipated
3. **Equality and Diversity**
   Improvements to support to research staff are likely to have a positive impact on minorities by improving access to support, advice and development.
4. **Freedom of information**
   Open

Key words

Research staff, postdoc, career, development, skills

Originator of the paper

Dr Sara Shinton, Head of Researcher Development, Institute for Academic Development, September 19th 2017

Taking Control of Your Research Career

Outline: a programme of workshops, online learning and peer support devised to help early career research staff make better decisions and take action to enhance their employability in a range of career areas.

Elements

Transition In

Delivery: Online resource hosted by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to include key information such as the Code of Practice, links to key internal services and IAD information targeted at research staff. Information will be tailored for staff who are both new to Edinburgh and postdoctoral research and continuing with either. Tone of warmth and welcome.

Implications: Confirming with Human Resources (HR) that we can identify new research staff and that our information can be added to any pre-arrival letters OR liaison with College staff if this is done by postdoc champions or similar. (College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) will be piloting this in academic year 17/18)

Career Plan

Delivery: Design of a flexible form to structure conversation with supervisor/line manager, supported by online resource. To happen as soon after appointment as possible. Could be with another academic – role for postdoc champion or mentor? This will be piloted in CMVM as an option for new starts in the next few months.

Implications: Need academic buy-in. Possible need for some training (although form will be designed with common sense principles to minimise need for this). Researcher to take responsibility, but need to make them aware. How to ensure this happens? Option for peer support from a researcher who is 3-4 years ahead (developing their mentoring and managing skills). Focus is on both orientation to academic landscape and ensuring awareness of likely trajectory (out of academia).

Career options

Delivery: Series of workshops and resources (in partnership with Careers Service) to promote range of opportunities open to postdocs. Academic and alternative paths to be covered. Would also link to Research Support Office (RSO) programmes for fellowship and funding.

Implications: Initially, organising third-party materials and promoting existing courses. Opportunity to engage with postdoctoral alumni and gather career stories over time. This could be a project we could offer to an intern in 2018 or develop in collaboration with Research Staff Societies. Potential for mentoring with alumni (Alumni Office interested in providing these opportunities).

Skills for Research

Delivery: Series of workshops and resources (in partnership with Information Services (IS), RSO and others) to develop common skills and complement internal training. (Again, point to fellowship track for those aspiring to academic careers.) Opportunity to broaden research expertise for future collaborations, industrial projects – needs to be academic buy-in to release researchers to develop wider skills base.

Implications: Rebadging of existing provision. Link to industrial partnership and global challenges strategies. Decision about entry onto a fellowship track – need to balance equality and diversity with likely need to limit access to those with potential to succeed.

Skills for Supervision and Teaching
Delivery: Linked to existing IAD provision for learning and teaching (and staff changes in IAD create opportunity to identify named contact for research staff if felt helpful).

Implications: Current IAD provision is open to research staff, including those who are supervising students rather than engaged in lecturing (see: http://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/?p=1064) but we will need to recruit mentors if research staff begin to pursue Edinburgh Teaching Award. Need to clarify how much teaching research staff can take on. Could link to mentoring role for more experienced research staff.

Personal Effectiveness
Delivery: Balance of workshops and online resources to develop broader skills and coping skills (leadership, time management, resilience, interpersonal skills, preparing for annual review).

Implications: Rebadging of existing provision. Development of online resources. Link to learned societies for Chartered membership where available. (The Engineering Postdoc Society have run a series of workshops to support applications for Chartered Status.)

Personal Impact
Delivery: Opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership and initiative. Promoting opportunities to join committees and take a lead on issues. Supporting researchers to develop researchers.

Implications: Cataloguing options, collecting case studies, emphasis of value of postdoc societies as opportunities for demonstrating leadership.

Exit Strategy/Moving On
Delivery: Flexible form for interview/conversation with supervisor/line manager, supported by online resource. Linked to workshops with "Moving on" theme. Link to HR for prompt when end of contract approaches – suggest 12 months from end, but flexible to account for contract length.

Implications: Needs academic buy-in to support need to have some focus on career as end of project deadlines approach; need confirmation from HR that we can tie any developments to existing end of contract processes.

REC: 26.09.17

H/02/26/02

REC 17/18 1B

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

26 September 2017

Presentation of postgraduate research programme information to prospective and current students

Executive summary

The purpose of this paper is to ask the Committee to endorse the Service Excellence Programme's outline proposal regarding the updating of postgraduate research (PGR) programme information in a single system, and the presentation of this information to prospective and current students. The Committee is also asked to consider how it could help to define the new dataset for PGR programme information.

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

This work is being developed under the development theme of **digital transformation and data**, and is being carried out in order to support the delivery of an **outstanding student experience**.

Action requested

For discussion and endorsement. It would be useful if REC College or School representatives could facilitate the Service Excellence Programme in defining the data set for PGR programme information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The Service Excellence Programme will communicate any process changes to staff.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

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

The Committee is asked to contribute to the definition of the PGR dataset, which will require some resource that is expected to be met from within existing budgets.

2. **Risk assessment**

The proposed work is being undertaken in order to avoid reputational and compliance risks associated with current practice of publishing differing or contradictory programme information.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

Equality and diversity implications were considered in developing the proposal and an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and can be published on the initiation of the project and upon delivery of the new services.

4. **Freedom of information**

*The paper is **open***

Key words

PGR, recruitment, marketing, Euclid, data

Originator of the paper

Lesley Middlemass, Service Excellence Programme Analyst, 07 September 2017

Presentation of postgraduate research programme information to prospective and current students

Description of paper

1 The purpose of this paper is to ask the Committee to endorse the Service Excellence Programme's outline proposal regarding the updating of postgraduate research (PGR) programme information in a single system, and the presentation of this information to prospective and current students. The Committee is also asked to consider how it could help to define the new dataset for PGR programme information.

Current model

2 PGR programme information is held in various systems across the organisation and externally: the postgraduate degree finder; the DRPS, School and institute webpages, third party websites (e.g. Find a PhD) etc.

3 There is no golden copy University-wide data source for programme information, which means that published information and statutory returns are compiled from a variety of sources, leaving data inconsistent and inaccurate. Some types of non-standard programme are not supported by current systems.

4 There is no clear guidance or ownership for the development of web content and there is no single online location for all the information that a prospective student needs. Multiple, inconsistent versions of programme information being stored in different systems has resulted in duplication, variation and inconsistency of content across websites, which impacts the University's ability to comply with consumer protection law.

5 Updating multiple data sources with the same or similar programme information demonstrates a duplication of effort and a waste of staff resource that could be better spent focusing on other activities.

Proposed model

6 The Service Excellence Programme proposes to create a single, golden copy data source from which all programme and course information is presented. The system will include separate datasets for different programme types, including PGR programmes.

7 Local areas will be responsible for updating and maintaining programme information in the golden copy system. The system will feature a workflow that includes editorial oversight, which will ensure information is fit for purpose and is legally compliant.

8 Local areas should no longer maintain programme information in their own systems; instead the new programme information system will allow local areas to consume golden copy data from the new system and present it in their own systems. For example, School or institute websites will be able to use a system interface (an application programming interface) to consume programme information from the new single source on their own sites. They can then choose to supplement this information with additional, added-value material if they wish.

9 **Support is required** to facilitate the Service Excellence Programme in defining the data set for PGR programme information.

Lesley Middlemass, Service Excellence Programme Analyst, 07 September 2017

REC: 26.09.17

H/02/26/02

REC 17/18 1C

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

26 September 2017

Annual Progression Review Monitoring System: Evaluation

Executive Summary

The paper provides evaluation of the reach, resource impact, impact on the student experience and implementation of the new system across the University, one year on from it becoming mandatory for use. Input was sought from the Colleges and Student Systems and from themes identified in College annual quality reporting to Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

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

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan objective of Leadership in research and development theme of digital transformation and data.

Action requested

The Researcher Experience Committee (REC) is invited to formally note the paper and discuss the change request identified in section 2.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

REC is invited to consider how any agreed action is implemented.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   The paper does not propose a particular course of action and therefore does not include resource implications.

2. **Risk assessment**
   The paper does not propose a particular course of action and therefore a risk assessment is not included.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   The paper does not propose any policy change and therefore equality impact assessment is not required.

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

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Services
18 September 2017

1. Background

1.1 In 2014/15 consultation meetings with Schools and Colleges for the Postgraduate Research Experience Project identified an annual progression monitoring system for postgraduate research students as a key quick win which system tools could deliver in the short term. Student Systems identified that administration of postgraduate research students across the organisation was carried out in multiple systems with little or no visibility of the records held within the corporate student record. Researcher Experience Committee (REC) approved a proposal by Student Systems to develop an online system for annual progression review monitoring during 2014/15 which was piloted with a number of Schools during 2015/16. The system was rolled out across the University in September 2015 with agreement by REC that its use was mandatory.

1.2 One year on from general implementation, Colleges were invited to feedback on their experiences of the system and consider the impact on staff time/resources and the student experience and their responses are detailed below. System usage data was also sought from Student Systems.

1.3 Data confirms that the system is in use across all Schools and comments show that colleagues find it easy to use and that it provides easy access to information. There have been some issues reported with how the system operates and detailed comments received have been passed to Student Systems.

2. For discussion

2.1 One change request raised across all three Colleges is for administrative staff to have access to all stages of the online report and to be able to sign off reports that are overdue or held up in the system. However, Academic Services believe that this is inconsistent with the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees which state that,

> "The Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School, in consultation with the supervisors will make one of the following recommendations after the annual review…".

2.2 Appendix 1 gives a snapshot of the status of annual progression reviews at 31 August 2017.

2.3 REC is invited to consider the change request in 2.1 above, the implications of any change and whether there may be alternative options for avoiding delays in progression annual reviews.

3. Feedback from Colleges

3.1 College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

3.1.1 Comments were sought from across the College and responses received from the Schools of Health in Social Science, History Classics and Archaeology, Literatures Languages and Cultures, and Edinburgh College of Art. Many of the comments received were systems orientated but the School of Health in Social Science and Edinburgh College of Art also provided detailed information about the impact on their professional support staff in using the system. Both Schools reported an increase in the amount of time

required to follow up on reports and the need to continue using offline processes.

3.1.2 The main issues reported across the College are:

- The lack of ability to create new annual reviews each year even if the previous year has not been completed. (Often the previous year has been completed by the student and supervisor but not by the remaining individuals involved.)
- School administrative staff are keen to have an over-write facility so they can move the review from stage to stage. The system was set up to ensure alignment with the regulations and that academic staff engaged with it, however this means support staff find it very time consuming having to chase outwith the system.
- The need for more link up between the student status and the trigger for an annual review. (For example students who are lapsed or submitted are still being asked for an annual review.)
- When a student has not passed the annual review and a further review is required, the student should not automatically roll into the next academic year, again this should be linked to the student's status.
- The College has had praise from academic staff who find the system does work and is easy to use.
- College staff find it helpful when processing concessions, checking progress for funded students etc.

3.2 College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

3.2.1 Opinions on the pros and cons of the Annual Progression Review System were sought from Postgraduate Research Directors and Administrators in College Deaneries. Feedback was received from The Deaneries of Biomedical Science, Clinical Science, Molecular, Genetic Population and Health Sciences (including The Usher Institute) and from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Medicine. The overall response is that the system is a clear improvement on previous practice and many user problems experienced when it was introduced have been dealt with. However, some issues (including ease of access and a perceived lack of flexibility of the system) remain, and it is apparent that new students and supervisors would benefit from a proper introduction to the system. The College Office has identified a tendency for reports to get "stuck" in the system for a long time. In addition, we have not found an ideal way for Administrators to identify when reviews have not taken place to allow us to prompt those involved to arrange a meeting.

- **Pros**

  There was a clear indication from Deaneries that the new system is a definite improvement on the old paper-based reporting used in College. It makes accessing information more straightforward and it is useful to have a single electronic repository for paperwork relevant to progression/ experience of each student. It was reported that fewer problems are being experienced with the system now than when it started (but with the caveat that at the start an issue

arose with almost every review). It was encouraging that one PGR Director was told by a supervisor that they felt the system was "…fantastic (when it works)."

- **Cons**
  Users feel that there remain numerous, fairly random glitches which prevent smooth working and the response from the helpdesk is not always swift.

  Principal Investigators (PIs) and students need to be continually educated on how to complete and upload documents in a timely manner. If this is not done, the report gets stuck in the system. In some cases supervisors are simply not performing their part of the process. There may also be a need for training for some supervisors and PIs who have not had previous engagement with or access to the student record system.

3.2.2 The College provided a list of issues and suggestions in relation to the system which has been passed to Student Systems. The suggestions included giving local postgraduate research administrators access to the system at all stages of a review as a way of resolving some of the problems identified. The College is also considering running a small number of brief lunchtime workshops on the annual progression monitoring system once initial emails go out to students next year.

3.3 College of Science and Engineering

3.3.1 **Student Experience/Impact on staff time and resources**: The workflow does not fit with processes in place for review in several Schools. There is some excellent practice in Schools such as GeoSciences but the School's review processes do not mirror online reporting schedule.

3.3.2 **Student Experience**: The School of Physics and Astronomy highlighted the drop in satisfaction (down 7%) reported in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) for the question "I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress."

3.3.3 **Impact on staff time and resources**: Many of the issues could be worked around if there were superusers in each School who could administer the system completely (for example as with PGR Thesis Workflow functionality)

3.3.4 **Student Experience/Impact on staff time and resources**: Several instances of students due to be reviewed not having an online annual assessment issued.

3.3.5 **Student Experience/Impact on staff time and resources**: Student Systems are usually able to resolve issues when they come up but there can sometimes be a delay. School administrative staff have to work around the system and keep their own set of notes about reviews. We do also have to deal with a number of enquiries from staff and students on the above. All of this takes up staff time (instead of the functionality saving administrative time).

4. Next Steps

4.1 The annual progression reporting workflow will be reviewed as part of the Service Excellence Programme (SEP) both from a system perspective and from a roles and responsibilities (operating model) perspective. Student Systems advise that this work is scheduled to begin in the next phase of SEP but as yet it is not clear when the resources will be available for the workflow review to start.

4.2 System Usage Data

The data provided is intended to give a snapshot of the status of annual progression monitoring review reports. It shows that the system is being used in all Schools across the Colleges. Data is not related to a particular year, nor is it related to student status.

4.2.1 Charts 1, 2 and 3 show the number of complete and incomplete annual progression reviews by School in each College. The charts are compiled from system information, provided by Student Systems, on 5 September 2017. It should be noted that the data covers all reviews during the period 1 August 2016 to 31 August 2017 and it is expected that more reports will be completed before the end of September 2017.

Chart 1

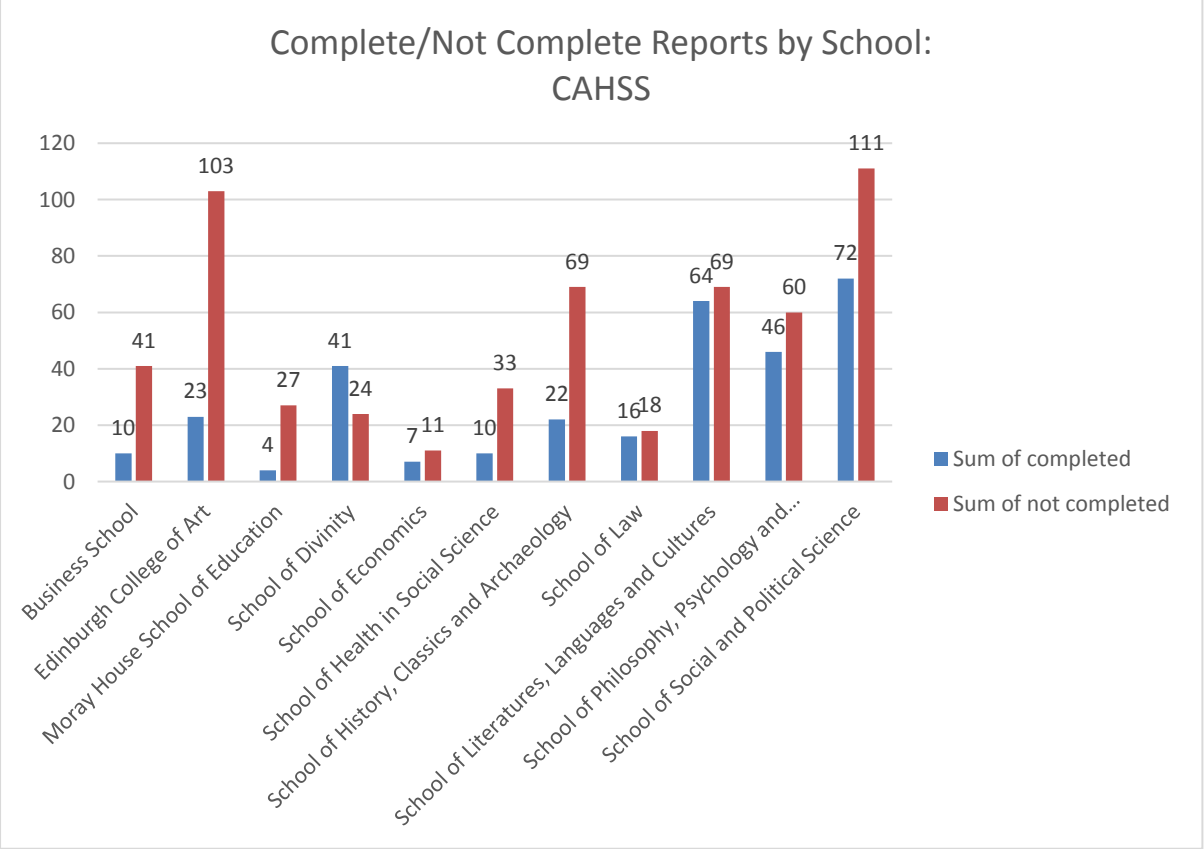


Chart 2

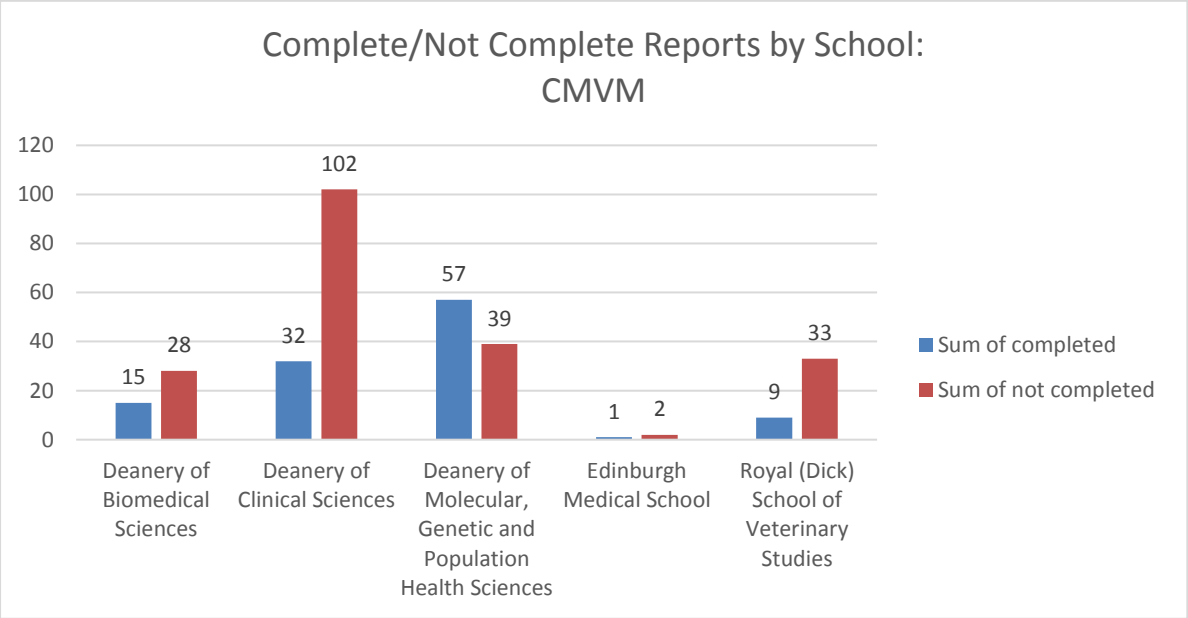
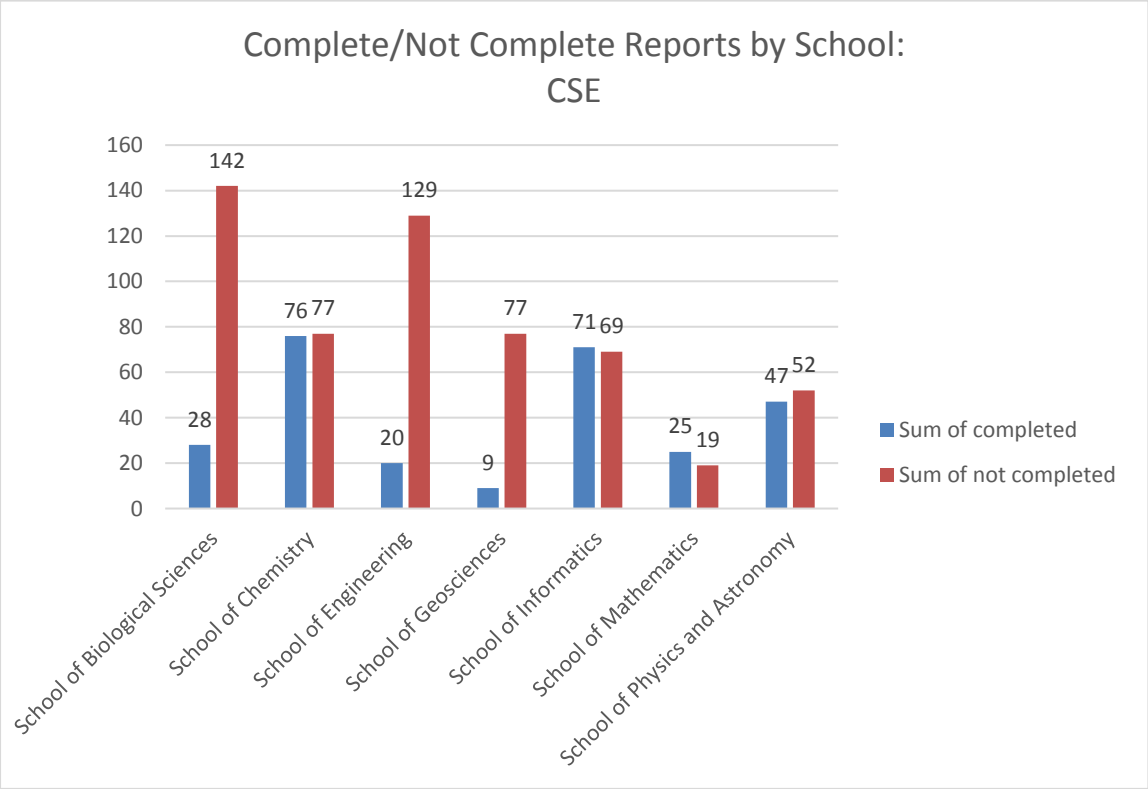


Chart 3



4.2.2 Appendix 1 shows the stage of reviews ordered by College and School. Again it should be noted that the data covers all reviews during the period 1 August 2016 to 31 August 2017 and is not related to a particular year, nor is it related to student status.

5. College Annual Quality Monitoring Reports

5.1 Extracts, relevant to postgraduate research student annual progression monitoring, from the annual quality reports to Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) are included below. No significant institutional issues about the system have been raised through School annual quality monitoring review and reporting process.

5.2 College of Science and Engineering (report to QAC September 2017)

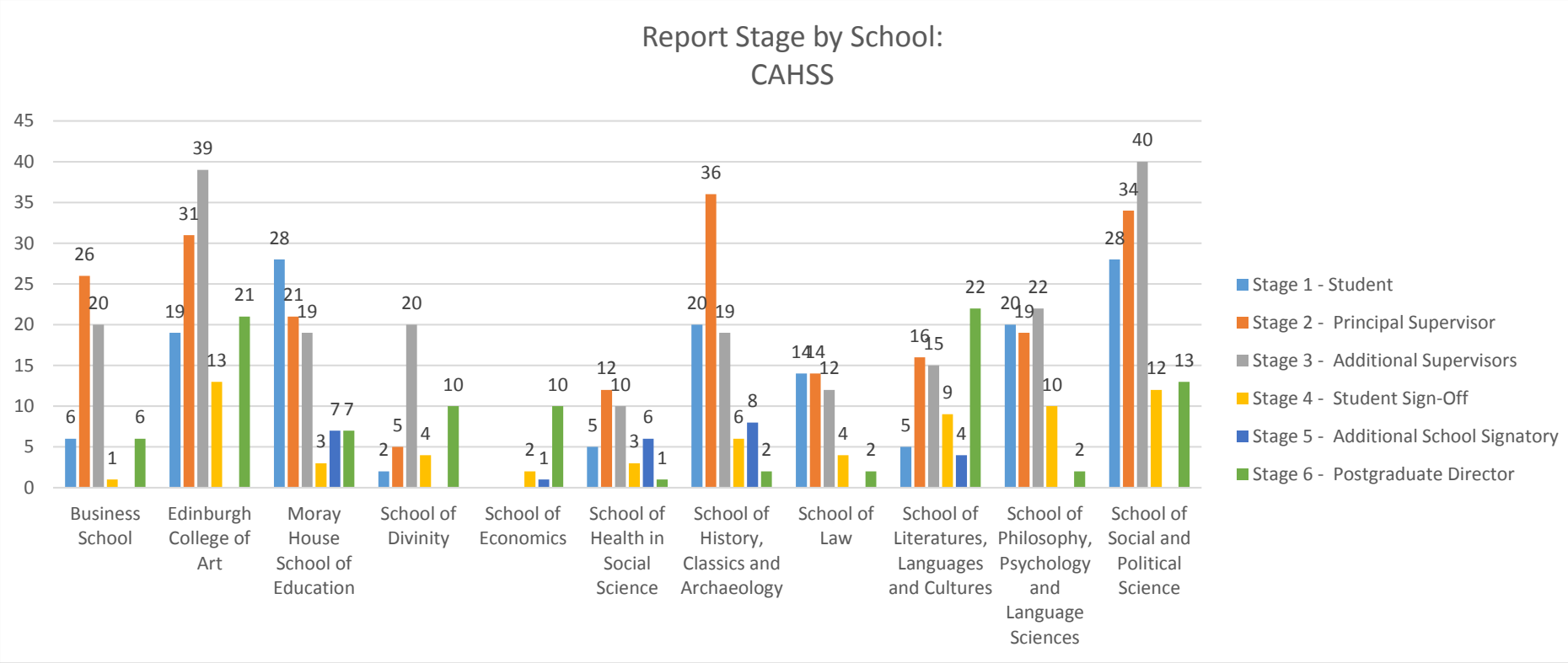
Generally, Schools have found the new system delivered via EUCLID to be labour saving and of benefit. However, system issues have effected perception in some Schools which is having a negative effect on the efficiency of the process and consequently completion of the reports.

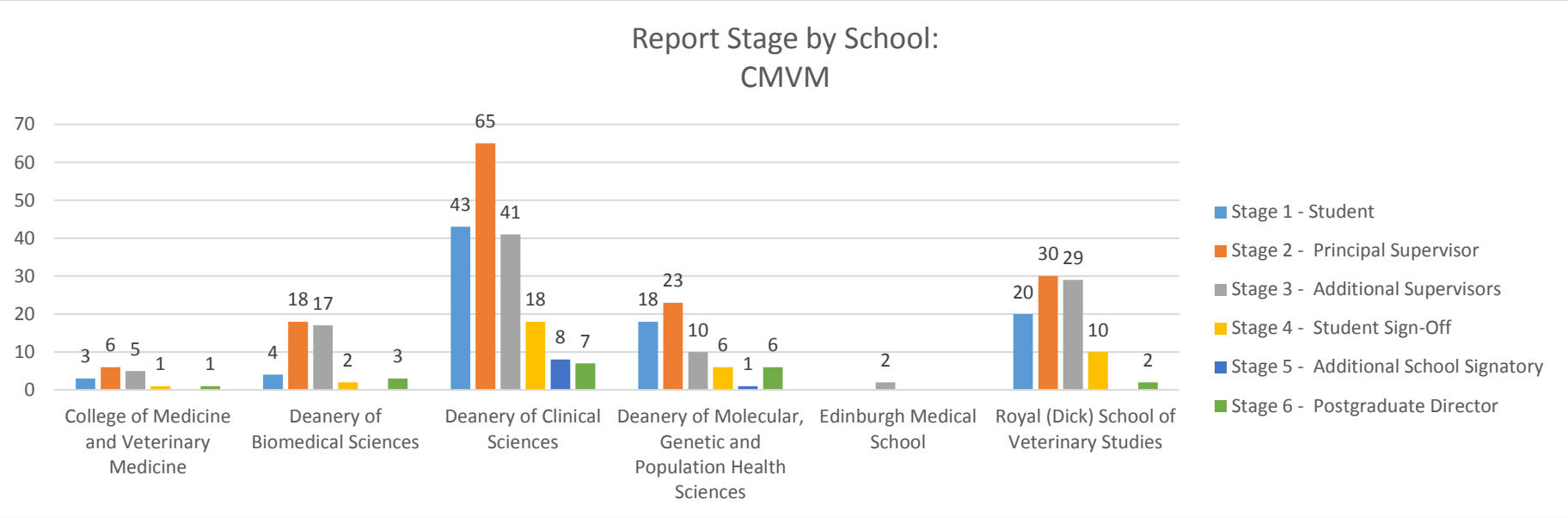
5.3 College annual quality report to QAC February 2017 – Themes for SQAC forward planning:

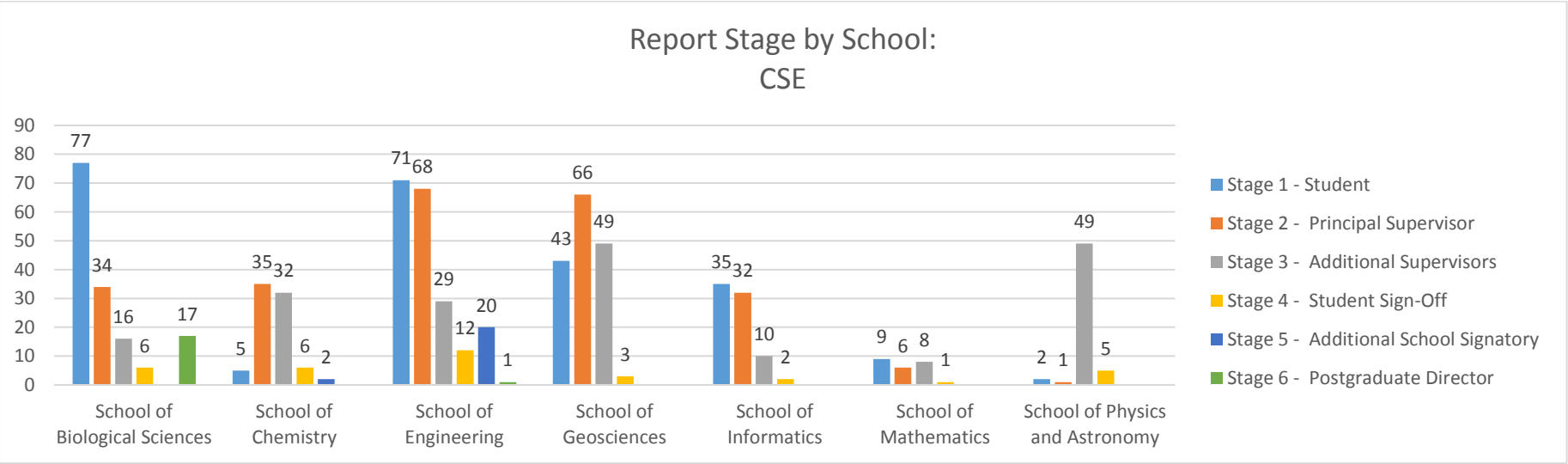
5.3.1 The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies notes that this was the first year that student progression for PGR students was recorded on EUCLID. Although the importance of moving to an online system is appreciated, there was a large number of difficulties and the system does not sit well with the thesis committee structure currently in use. These issues have been logged with Student Systems.

5.3.2 College of Science and Engineering supports further development of University Systems functionality for the administration and support of Postgraduate Research students.

Susan Hunter
Academic Services, 18 September 2017


Report Stage by School:
CAHSS
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Business School
Edinburgh College of Art
Moray House School of Education
School of Divinity
School of Economics
School of Health in Social Science
School of History, Classics and Archaeology
School of Law
School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures
School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
School of Social and Political Science
Stage 1 - Student
Stage 2 - Principal Supervisor
Stage 3 - Additional Supervisors
Stage 4 - Student Sign-Off
Stage 5 - Additional School Signatory
Stage 6 - Postgraduate Director


Report Stage by School:
CMVM
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
3 6 5 1 1
4 18 17 2 3
43 65 41 18 8 7
18 23 10 6 1 6
2
20 30 29 10 2
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Deanery of Biomedical Sciences
Deanery of Clinical Sciences
Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences
Edinburgh Medical School
Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
Stage 1 - Student
Stage 2 - Principal Supervisor
Stage 3 - Additional Supervisors
Stage 4 - Student Sign-Off
Stage 5 - Additional School Signatory
Stage 6 - Postgraduate Director


Report Stage by School:
CSE
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
77 34 16 6 17
5 35 32 6 2
71 68 29 12 20 1
43 66 49 3
35 32 10 2
9 6 8 1
2 1 49 5
School of Biological Sciences
School of Chemistry
School of Engineering
School of Geosciences
School of Informatics
School of Mathematics
School of Physics and Astronomy
Stage 1 - Student
Stage 2 - Principal Supervisor
Stage 3 - Additional Supervisors
Stage 4 - Student Sign-Off
Stage 5 - Additional School Signatory
Stage 6 - Postgraduate Director

REC: 26.09.17
H/02/26/02

REC 17/18 1D

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

26 September 2017

Review of Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students 2017/18 - Update

Executive Summary

The paper provides an update on activity during summer 2017 and identifies options for relocating policy content not currently articulated other than in the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students.

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

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan objective of Leadership in Research and the Committee's priorities of Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development, and reviewing the Code of Practice.

Action requested

Researcher Experience Committee (REC) is invited to discuss the options outline in Section 2 of the paper.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The paper does not propose a particular course of action, however REC is invited to discuss implementation and communication of any agreed action.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   As the paper is for discussion, no specific resource implications are associated with the paper, however there are potential implications on staff time in developing new policy and/or regulations which would be expected to be met within existing resources.
2. **Risk assessment**
   As the paper is for discussion, no risk assessment is included.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
   As the paper is for discussion and equality impact assessment is not required.
4. **Freedom of information**
   The paper is open.

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Services
18 September 2017

Update on review of the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students.

1. Background

Following the paper submitted to Researcher Experience Committee (REC) in February 2017[1], the Committee's agreed that the Code of Practice was a guidance document and could be repurposed as a handbook. It also agreed the revised publication date would be the start of academic session 2018/19.

Academic Services has done an initial review of the Code's content and mapped it with existing content in University regulations, policies and guidance, programme handbooks (as laid out in the Programme Handbooks Policy), web content on student support services, Institute for Academic Development and Student web pages. The mapping is attached as Appendix 1 and includes a gap analysis on where content of the current Code might reside. This exercise revealed potential gaps in policy on expectations of supervision and articulation of supervisory roles and responsibilities (both for supervisors and students).

The current Code of Practice contains some content, not articulated in regulations or policy, which focus group activity suggested is considered by both students and supervisors to be University policy. This is attached as Appendix 2.

It would be possible to retain this content within the new guidance document for supervisors and students without it having the weight of policy. However, if there are agreed University expectations, there is a risk to the student experience of supervision if they are not included in the policy framework.

The Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme, workstream 1 is exploring how to strengthen and enhance compulsory supervisor training across the institution which could lead to a recommendation for incorporation of supervisor training into University policy.

2. For discussion

2.1 Objectives

- Providing clarity for students on what they can expect and where to find relevant information.
- Providing clarity for staff/supervisors on roles, responsibilities and where to find relevant support and information.

[1] Paper B, 16 February 2017

2.2 Potential options

REC has already agreed to the production of a revised Code of Practice as a guidance document by Academic Services. This could take the format of a handbook signposting information that is located in regulations, policy, with support services and other web guidance.

Options for relocating content that is intended as, or is perceived as University policy include:

- Option to include policy content in Degree and Assessment Regulations.
  Implications: This would provide clarity on what is expected. However, it has the potential to result in lengthy regulation content and a lack of clarity on how to deal with guidance elements.
- Option to produce a new policy document with content from Code of Practice not currently located anywhere else.
  Implications: This could provide clarity on expectations of supervision in one document. However, it has the potential to result in a proliferation of documents and the likelihood that a new policy would replicate information currently in regulations which is undesirable.

There may be a need to look at these options in the context of the wider information landscape available to postgraduate research students and supervisors (see appendix 1). This could provide an opportunity to think about the kinds of information we want to convey and how we present it to the appropriate audiences.

REC is invited to discuss the options above.

3. Additional points to inform discussion

Policy and/or regulations development would need to be addressed in a structured way and led by professional support staff in Academic Services with involvement from Colleges and the Students' Association.

It should be noted that the move from guidance to policy for some existing Code of Practice content, would be likely to represent a significant change in some areas, for example where University expectations currently expressed as guidance are not fully adopted. Equally, this would also signal a change to areas where University expectations on supervision are fully integrated and may be exceeded.

Such change would need to be carefully communicated and would require buy in from academic staff across the institution. This could be addressed by a short-life task group (of REC), or incorporation into workstream 1 (Supervisor Support and Training) of the Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme. Policy development is currently out of scope of the workstream on Supervisor Support and Training.

Consideration should also be given to Service Excellence Programme work under the Student Administration and Support sub-programme which is looking at Policy and Regulation Review. The aim of this work is to develop a set of principles for the development, implementation and review of policies and regulations, and to review business processes, roles and responsibilities.

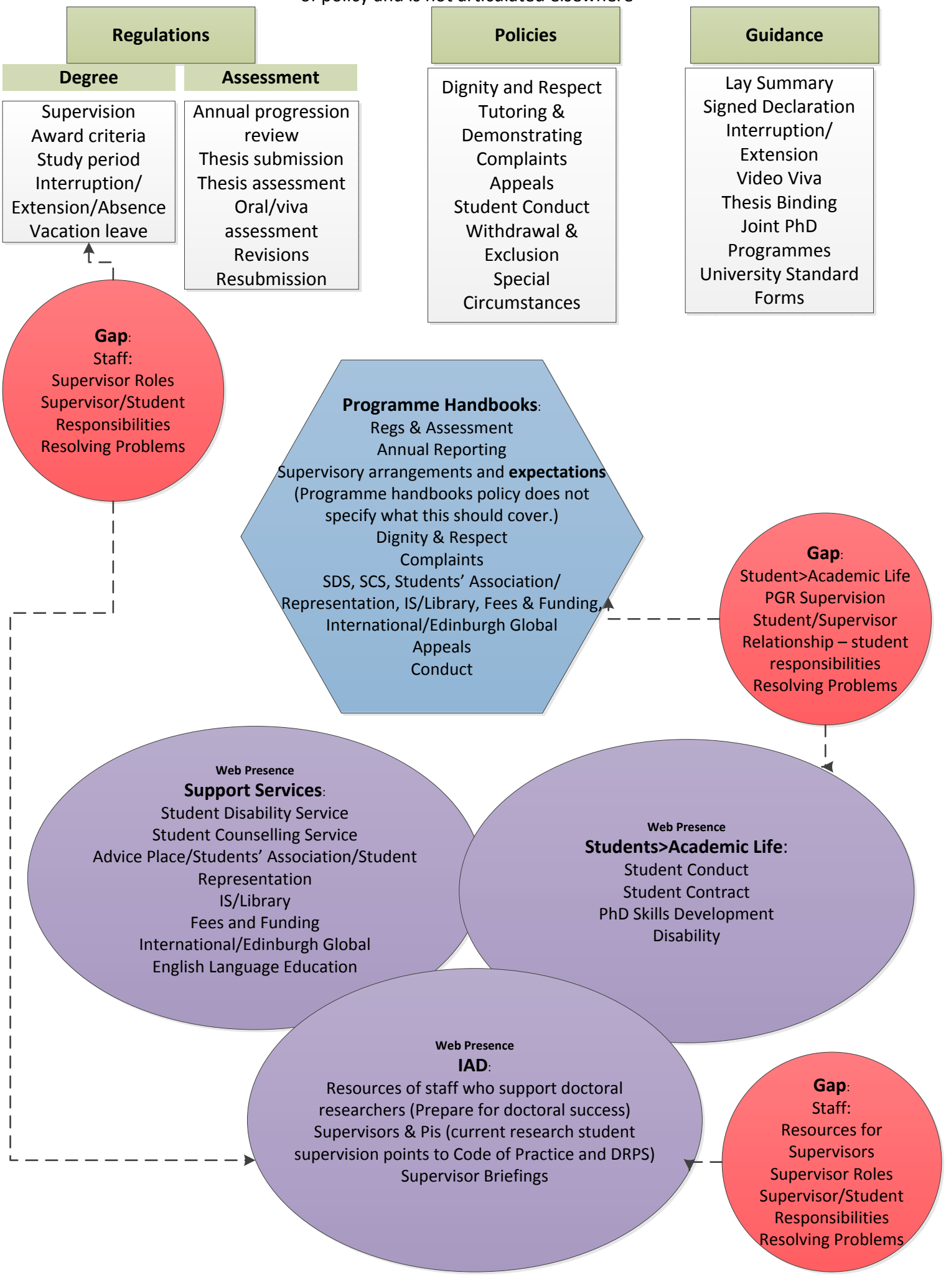
The Annual College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Report: Key Themes 2015-16 paper which was submitted to Quality Assurance Committee in April 2016, identified, "PhD Supervision: A clear policy for PhD supervision is essential to avoid the allocation of insufficiently qualified Supervisors, which can lead to failure and distress for the student in question." as a University level theme for further development.

Susan Hunter
Academic Services, 18 September 2017

Code of Practice for Supervisors & Research Students
Content mapping and gap analysis

Appendix 1

Gaps identified relate to content currently in the Code of Practice which does not have the status of policy and is not articulated elsewhere



Code of Practice for Supervisors & Research Students

Policy/Regulation content mapping

Content in the Code of Practice

Current Code Content	Potential new location	Approval required
This relationship continues from registration until the end of the student's candidature. Supervisors are responsible for supervision of the student's candidature until the final thesis is submitted fulfilling any requirements of the examiners. (1.3.1)	Postgraduate Degree Regulations or New Supervision Policy	CSPC REC
Academic staff who have already served as Assistant Supervisor or Co-Supervisor are eligible to serve as Principal Supervisors. (2.1.2)	Postgraduate Degree Regulations or New Supervision Policy	CSPC REC
The University provides training and support for supervisors, and requires attendance every five years on a College or School supervisor briefing session. (2.1.2) [Part of Excellence in Doctoral Education Workstream 1: Supervisor training & support]	Postgraduate Degree Regulations or New Supervision Policy	CSPC REC
Schools will make alternative arrangements for supervision in the event that the Principal Supervisor is absent for more than six consecutive weeks, including during University vacation periods. The student will be notified formally of any such arrangements. (2.3.3)	Postgraduate Degree Regulations	CSPC

Supervisors employed by Associated Institutions are required to participate in the University's supervisor briefing sessions. (2.3.6) [This is implied in the current wording of PG Degree Reg 35 c but may need to be more explicit]	Postgraduate Degree Regulations	CSPC
The intellectual property (IP) represented by the dissertation or thesis remains the property of the student, as does the copyright of that material to the extent that it has been exclusively generated by the student. Exceptions apply where prior agreements have been undertaken, for example, as part of the conditions of employment on an externally-funded project, or in other sponsored research. (2.6.9)	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees (Reg 29)	CSPC
… the supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the requirement for the minimum number of meetings is met. (3.1) The University requires students and supervisors to back up guidance and decisions with written (or emailed) communication. (3.1.1)	Postgraduate Degree Regulations or New Supervision Policy	CSPC REC
3.2.1 Annual Progression Review Guidance on how reviews are conducted and what should be discussed.	Programme Handbook Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees	Programme & Course Management Policy already approved by CSPC

If the annual progress review indicates serious problems or requests for extensions to the period of study then the College Postgraduate Committee or Board will examine annual reports for: • Indications of how the difficulties arose • What steps were taken by supervisor and student to deal with them at an early stage. (3.2.2)	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees (Reg 14 application of regulation)	CSPC
If the student's research changes direction and diverges from the supervisors' expertise then the supervisors will review their own competence to deal with the new research area. In this case: • The School can recommend a change in supervisors to the College Postgraduate Research Committee or Board. (3.2.2)	Postgraduate Degree Regulations or New Supervision Policy	CSPC REC
Exclusion from Study for Unsatisfactory Academic Performance Procedure for postgraduate research student exclusion. (3.3.8)	Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Policy	CSPC

Examiner Preparation The College is responsible for ensuring that the Internal Examiner and Non-Examining Chair are suitably prepared for the examination, that is: • training is available to inexperienced internal examiners and chairs • they are aware of their duties in the examination process • they are familiar with the University's regulations • they are familiar with the range of recommendations available to the examiners after the oral examination. (3.6.4)	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees (Reg 6)	CSPC
Notification of Examiner Recommendations The examiners may tell the candidate what their views are at the end of or after the oral examination, and they will make clear that their view is a recommendation to the College committee and not a final decision. After inspecting the examiners' reports the committee reserves the right to modify or change the examiners' recommendation. (3.6.6)	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees (Regs 22-24)	CSPC
If the College committee fails the thesis then the candidate will be provided with a written statement explaining the decision. In these circumstances the supervisor will discuss the outcome with the student. The College Postgraduate Dean is also available to talk with the student if requested. (3.7.2)	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees (Reg 36?)	CSPC

4.2 Special Circumstances This section contains policy content not currently articulated in the Special Circumstances policy.	Special Circumstances Policy	CSPC
4.6 The Supervisor-Student Relationship What happens when the relationship appears to have broken down – where to access support.	Postgraduate Degree Regulations or New Supervision Policy	CSPC REC
Appendices (9) Health & Safety, Data Protection and Links to University Policy	Programme Handbooks (should already be included)	Programme & Course Management Policy already approved by CSPC

Susan Hunter
31 August 2017

REC: 26.09.17

H/02/26/02

REC 17/18 1E

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

26 September 2017

Task Group: Review of Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators – final report

Executive Summary

The paper provides an update to Researcher Experience Committee (REC) on the work of the Task Group appointed to review the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators.

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

The Task Group's remit supports the University's mission to provide the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning and enable our graduates and staff to be exceptional individuals equipped to address global challenges. It also supports the strategic objective of leadership in learning.

Action requested

REC is invited formally to note the final Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators, which now includes the final position on the issue of hours worked by Postgraduate Research Students, and to discuss areas of further work which relate to the Policy.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Not applicable at this stage.

Resource/ Risk/Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   No resource implications are identified in the paper.

2. **Risk assessment**
   No risk assessment as the Policy is only at draft stage.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   The Policy has been drafted with the aim of promoting consistency and equality of treatment of Tutors and Demonstrators. The Task Group will finalise its Equality Impact Assessment prior to requesting approval for the Policy.

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

Originator of the paper

Theresa Sheppard
Academic Policy Officer, September 2017

Researcher Experience Committee Task Group on the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators

Update on the agreed policy for tutors and demonstrators

Background

The Task Group appointed by the Researcher Experience Committee (REC) to review the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators has produced a new Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators. The Policy was approved by REC and Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) over the summer, with one matter outstanding: the issue of the hours worked by postgraduate research students.

It was agreed that the final position on the issue would be delegated to the Conveners of LTC and REC, in consultation with key stakeholders, and that the agreed position would be incorporated into the final published version of the Policy.

The Group of key stakeholders met over the summer and agreed that the mandatory cap on all work undertaken at the University would be 9 hours on average per week across the academic year, applied to all full-time students on Postgraduate Research (PGR) programmes.

This position was included in the final Policy, which was then launched to Schools and Colleges in early September. The final version of the Policy and the report of the Task Group are available on the project web page: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/reviewing-the-code-of-practice-for-tutoring-and-de

With regard to implementation of the Policy, since contracts for the 2017/18 academic year are already in place, and Schools already have plans for induction and training for the year in place, it is anticipated that the Policy will not be able to be fully implemented until 2018/19 and Schools and Deaneries have been asked to begin work immediately to ensure that this is the case.

Next steps

The following matters remain outstanding in relation to the Policy.

- Since the Code of Practice has been replaced by a mandatory Policy, implementation should be reviewed after a year, based on feedback from Schools, HR, the Students' Association and others; on an ongoing basis Colleges must have responsibility for ensuring consistent implementation.
- Under the new Policy, PGR students are expected to consult their supervisors before undertaking paid work, and it was recommended by the Task Group that guidance be issued to supervisors on their role with regard to tutoring and demonstrating. This area of work might be considered as part of the review of the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students.

REC is invited to agree a plan for future work to address these outstanding issues.

REC: 26.09.17

H/02/26/02

REC 17/18 1F

The University of Edinburgh
Researcher Experience Committee

26 September 2017

Senate Committee Planning

Executive Summary

The paper summarises out how the planning round for 2018-21 will operate, and how the Senate Committees will be able to input into it. The paper also seeks the Committees' views on some initial thoughts on priorities for student experience, learning and teaching for the planning round.

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

Aligns with the University's strategic objective of Leadership in Learning.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to discuss some initial thoughts on priorities for student experience, learning and teaching for the planning round

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Section 2 explains the arrangements.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   Yes. The paper will assist the University to use its resources strategically.

2. **Risk assessment**
   No. Since the paper aims to generate ideas rather than to recommend a specific course of action, it is not necessary to undertake a risk analysis.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   No. Since the paper aims to generate ideas rather than to recommend a specific course of action, it is not necessary to undertake an equality and diversity assessment.

4. **Freedom of information**
   For inclusion in open business

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, 11 September 2017

Senate Committee Planning

1 Overview of 2018-21 planning cycle

- In August / September 2017, the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) will identify key strategic themes in Schools' annual quality reports and in Teaching Programme Reviews (TPRs) and Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPRs) held in 2016-17;

- At their meetings in September 2017, the Senate Committees will have an initial opportunity to identify student experience, learning and teaching issues that Schools / Colleges / support groups should take account of in the planning round;

- In September / October 2017, Governance and Strategic Planning will circulate to Schools / Colleges / support groups an initial indication of the strategic planning round priorities of the 'Thematic Vice-Principals' (including the Senior Vice-Principal);

- Early in November 2017, the 'Thematic Vice-Principals (including the Senior Vice-Principal) will meet to agree their strategic priorities for the planning round;

- At their meetings in November 2017, the Senate Committees will have a full discussion of issues that should be taken account of in the planning round, including identifying:

    - Strategic priorities for student experience, learning and teaching with significant resource implications that Schools / Colleges and support groups should take account of in their plans;

    - Changes that the Committee has initiated or plans to initiate which would require support groups, Colleges or Schools to allocate significant additional resources;

    - Changes in the external environment (eg regulatory changes) which would result in significant additional work for the University; and

    - Major institutional projects that the Committee would like to make a case for, which would require significant support from support services which could not be accommodated within existing resources.

- In January 2018 Governance and Planning will publish the detailed planning guidance for Colleges and support groups (taking account of input from the Senate Committees as well as the Thematic Vice-Principals' strategic priorities.

- In Semester Two, the Committees will undertake a broader discussion of their priorities for the coming session – and will submit their plans to the 30 May 2018 Senate meeting for approval.

2 Planning round 2017-20 guidance for information

The Thematic VP Priorities and other relevant sections of the 2017-20 planning round guidance are attached as Annex A for information.

3 Reference points for identifying learning, teaching and student experience issues for the 2018-21 planning round

Key reference points when identifying issues for the planning round include:

- The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning_teaching_strategy.pdf

- The results of the 2017 National Student Survey, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

- The strategic themes identified in Schools' quality reports, and in TPRs and PPRs held in 2016-17 (see Annex B).

4 Initial thoughts on priorities for student experience, learning and teaching for the planning round

Taking account of these reference points, and initial discussions between the Thematic VPs, the Senior Vice-Principal has suggested the following as an initial statement of priorities for student experience, learning and teaching:

- Enhancing the sense of shared community linking academic staff and students, and developing more effective ways of listening and responding to students' views;
- Improving the timeliness and quality of feedback on assessment;
- Enhancing the academic support we give to students;
- Recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching and learning;
- Developing new approaches to online learning that can provide an excellent student experience to large numbers of students;
- Strengthening support for tutors and demonstrators.

The Committee is **invited to discuss** these initial ideas, and to suggest any other priorities to take into account in the planning round. The Committee will then have a more substantive opportunity to input into the planning round in November 2017.

5 Process for seeking resources for major developments

If the Senate Committees identify any major developments with implications for the University Secretary's Group (USG), or other support groups, the Senior Vice-Principal will invite the relevant support group to consider including a bid for this in their planning round submissions.

Annex A: Extracts from the published planning round guidance for 2017-21

Thematic Vice Principals' strategic priorities

The University has a single Strategic Plan whereas the planning round asks individual Colleges and SGs to produce their own individual plans and we do not produce a single 'consolidated plan'. However, the Thematic Vice Principals (TVPs) priorities reflect the Strategic Plan 2016 priorities and act like a thread that contributes to 'pulling together' the individual College and Support Group plans into a cohesive whole.

…

Student Experience, Teaching and Learning
The latest NSS outcome shows a decrease in student satisfaction in our relative position in NSS. Together with external pressures arising from the implementation of the pilot round of the Teaching Excellence Framework mean that we will need to continue to focus attention and resources on student experience, teaching and learning, including the following areas (which reflect the remits of SVP, VP People and Culture and VP International):

- Recognition and reward of excellence in teaching and learning;
- Improvement of both timeliness and quality of assessment and feedback;
- Enhancement of the personalised academic support we give to students;
- Enhancement of the sense of shared community linking academic staff and students; and
- Curriculum development in key areas such as online learning, research-led teaching, and experiential learning outside the university classroom, including internationally.

These issues were the subject of intensive discussion at all levels of the University over the autumn, with view to building a shared understanding of our values and priorities around teaching and learning, including regular discussion with Heads of College. These can be expected to inform the planning round and we would welcome a discussion on the scale of your challenges, informed by an appropriate level of data, at the planning meetings. In addition, Schools should continue to produce an annual Learning and Teaching Enhancement forward plan, recognising the importance of this in assuring our reputation for teaching and learning and with it future recruitment.

Annex B: Key themes identified in Schools' quality reports, and in TPRs and PPRs held in 2016-17

- **Learning and teaching accommodation**
  In the context of increasing student numbers and estates developments, insufficient suitable learning and teaching accommodation was the most prominent theme. Comments relate to:
  - Lack of flexible spaces to support innovative learning and teaching;
  - Unsuitable equipment, furniture and ambiance;
  - Disruption and noise due to estates development;
  - Lack of available and suitable spaces for PGR students;
  - Lack of space, especially social space, and School activity being spread across multiple buildings is impacting on the ability to support academic communities.

- **Timetabling**
  Also in the context of increasing student numbers and estates developments, several Schools highlighted issues with timetabling. Issues included the timetabling of back-to-back classes which are in buildings far apart and classes near disruptive estates work, and issues regarding the room booking system.

- **Data to Support Quality Assurance and Enhancement Processes**
  School annual quality reports highlighted challenges accessing and understanding the data available to support the annual monitoring, review and reporting process. The undergraduate student data dashboard has been well received, with a number of requests for postgraduate taught and research student data dashboards.

- **Personal Tutor system**
  Student feedback on satisfaction with the Personal Tutor system varies widely across Schools, and there is a need to clarify roles in the Personal Tutor system.

- **Consistency and clarity of assessment and feedback processes**
  Student feedback highlights a need for clarification of marking schemes and grade descriptors so that student are clear on what is expected of them in assessment. There is evidence of Schools giving this careful consideration and that plans are underway to address this issue, both at School- and University-level (aligning with ELIR outcomes).

- **Postgraduate tutors and demonstrators**
  Training and support was identified as an area for further development, although it was also clear that many Schools have enhanced their processes for recruiting, training and developing postgraduate research students who teach.

Annex C: Committee priorities agreed for 2017/18

Researcher Experience Committee Activity

Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development programme - Governance arrangements – three significant strands of work*
o Supervisor training and support
o Mentorship and wellbeing
o Personal and Professional Development Record

Review the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students*

Review the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators* (originally planning to complete work in 2016-17 but may need to continue into 2017-18)

Monitor and guide the development of the planned Enlightenment Scholarships scheme

Enhance support for Early Career Researchers (make more visible, enhance and structure provision, strengthen partnerships)

***** Already underway in 2016-17

REC: 26.07.17

H/02/26/02

REC 17/18 1G

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Researcher Experience Committee

26 September 2017

Knowledge Strategy Committee Report (2 June 2017)

Executive Summary
This paper provides a report of the Knowledge Strategy Committee meeting held on 2 June 2017.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
University mission, 'providing the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning'; strategic objective, 'leadership in learning'; development theme, 'digital transformation and data'.

Action requested
For information

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
Paper provided for information

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   Paper provided for information

2. **Risk assessment**
   Paper provided for information

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   Paper provided for information

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

Originator of the paper
Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services

KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE REPORT

2 June 2017

1 Core Systems Strategy

The Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University presented a systems roadmap, technical strategies, vendor approach and procurement method for the University's proposed new core enterprise business systems. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Avoiding the current proliferation of local systems by encouraging staff 'buy-in' to the new system rather than relying on University policies to proscribe new local systems – integration with the Service Excellence Programme may aid staff buy-in as the Core Systems Strategy will not be viewed solely as an IT project;
- The opportunity for Information Services staff to spend increasing time collaborating with academic staff rather than maintaining a patchwork of ageing systems as at present;
- Environmental effects of 'cloud' computing systems – currently being considered with the assistance of the Social Responsibility and Sustainability department, initial indications are that large vendors have more efficient systems with lower environmental impact than local systems;
- Careful management of the implementation period to ensure that sufficient time for staff training is planned.

The strategy and the move to the first phase of procurement (competitive dialogue) was endorsed and recommended to Policy & Resources Committee for approval. A formal request for funding approval will follow.

2 Main Library Occupancy Review

The Director, Library and University Collections, presented the recommendations of the Main Library Study conducted by Shepley Bulfinch Architects between November 2016 and April 2017. This followed the Main Library Redevelopment Project which helped to increase user footfall from 1 million visits per year in 2004-05 to over 2 million visits in 2015-16 but has greatly increased pressure on the building (e.g. lifts, ventilation, study space available). The Study's findings that 2,000 extra study spaces are required to meet projected demand was discussed. The earlier approval by Estates Committee of funding to commence a procurement process and appoint a design team to progress the design for the short to medium term development opportunities identified in the Study was welcomed.

3 Library Committee Governance

Proposals to modify the Library Committee's governance structure and Convener were reviewed. It was noted that the remit, activity and membership of the Committee is controlled by University Ordinances no. 64 (Custody and Management of Libraries, created in 1895) and no. 182 (Composition of the Library Committee, created in 1978), which are outdated but difficult to change,

with any revisions requiring the approval of Her Majesty in Council. However, changes to other University Ordinances required by the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 provide an opportunity to replace the Library Committee Ordinances with a single University Resolution – ensuring an high level of consultation and oversight from Court and Senate remain in place but without requiring Scottish Government and Privy Council approval to change the membership of the Library Committee over time.

The Committee endorsed the proposal and recommended that Court approve in principle the revocation of Ordinances no. 64 and no. 182 and their replacement by a University Resolution.

Separately, the Committee approved the appointment of Professor Dorothy Miell as the Convener of Library Committee with effect from 1 August 2017.

4 Learning Analytics Policy

The Chair of Learning Analytics provided an update on the progress of the task group established to develop a Learning Analytics Policy and a set of Principles and Purposes for Learning Analytics approved by the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee. Noting that the Principles and Purposes are a precursor to a more detailed Policy document to be developed covering areas such as data governance, consent and security, the Committee approved the Principles and Purposes subject to minor textual amendment.

5 Digital Skills and Lecture Recording Training Update

The Head of Digital Skills & Training presented activities and plans for delivering Digital Skills training to staff and students across the University in support of the University's aspiration that all educators become digital educators and all students become digital students. It was noted that all lecture recording training will be available online over the summer period for academic staff prior to implementation in the new academic year. The Committee welcomed the presentation and the increasing range of Digital Skills training available within the University.