<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 27 April 2023
at 2pm via in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and
via Microsoft Teams**

Present:	
Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)
Professor Laura Bradley	Dean of Postgraduate Research, College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Dr Anne Desler	Director of Quality Assurance & Curriculum Approval, Edinburgh College of Art
Sinéad Docherty	Committee Secretary, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Olivia Eadie	Assistant Director and Head of Operations and Projects, Institute for Academic Development
Dr Pia Helbing	Programme Director, Business School
Sam McCallum	VP Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association Representative
Callum Paterson	Edinburgh University Students' Association Academic Engagement Coordinator
Present via Teams:	
Professor Matthew Bailey	Dean of Quality, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Brian Connolly	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Dr Gail Duursma	School Representative (Engineering), College of Science and Engineering
Dr Meryl Kenny	Deputy Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Social and Political Science

Dr Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, College of Science and Engineering
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Professor Leigh Sparks	Deputy Principal, University of Stirling
In attendance:	
Antony Macocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research, College of Science and Engineering/University of Edinburgh Doctoral College
Pauline Manchester	Deputy Director of Planning and Policy, Governance and Strategic Planning
Apologies:	
Marianne Brown	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling, Co-opted member
Dr Jeni Harden	School Representative (School of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Convener welcomed Callum Paterson as the Edinburgh University Students' Association Academic Engagement Coordinator, and Professor Laura Bradley who has joined the Committee to represent PGR experience on behalf of the Doctoral College.

The Convener noted apologies from Dr Jeni Harden and Marianne Brown.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6th March 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Matters Arising

The Convener noted that the external review of Senate Committees is ongoing. The emerging themes and recommendations are expected to be presented at the Senate meeting in May, with the report to follow.

The item concerning the Student Support model is not on the agenda for this meeting as Marianne Brown is absent due to the Registry Services away day. An update will be presented at the May meeting.

4. Tutors and Demonstrators Governance SQAC 22/23 4C*

*This item was brought forward in the meeting agenda due to time slot constraints of the presenters for papers B and C.

The Dean of Postgraduate Research, College of Science and Engineering (CSE) was in attendance to present this paper, which will also be presented to Senate Education Committee (SEC).

A working group has been set up, Tutors & Demonstrators Oversight Group, and is co-ordinating with Schools to create a governance structure for managing Tutors & Demonstrators (T&D), and to co-ordinate training of this cohort. A survey has been circulated to Schools and Deaneries and some interviews have taken place.

It was highlighted that this is a governance issue, and was flagged in the last ELIR review. The University needs to assure itself of the training of T&Ds, and plans must be in place ahead of the external Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) review scheduled for November 2023. The paper asks for an endorsement of approach from the Committee to progress with its aims in the coming months.

It was proposed that the existing policy needs to be augmented; the policy requires more direction and guidance in order to be better implemented and operationalised. Aspects of the policy should also be reviewed to facilitate cross-college/institute training. However, it was recognised that more resource will be required across the institution to achieve this and the responsibility for training must be considered in the Workload Allocation Model (WAM). It was also noted that Schools require different skill sets from their tutoring staff, and this ought to be reflected in the training model.

It was highlighted to the Committee that the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (PPLS) demonstrates good practice in its model supporting T&Ds and utilising a paid lead role.

A Committee member noted that there is a distinction between demonstrators, postgraduate tutors and full-time or part-time tutors, and therefore a model is needed that will work for everyone. The model of employment for staff in these roles may also need review as there is pressure, across the sector, to abolish Guaranteed Hours contracts although some concerns remain about the viability of fractional contracts.

The Committee discussed the role of the Doctoral College; it works with postgraduate research (PGR) students as tutors but consideration must be given as to whether it is best placed to work with tutors and demonstrators who are not PGR students. The Committee also discussed the role of IAD and the need to move away from the School-led expectation that IAD provides all training to tutors, and whether there is a Human Resources (HR) link or mechanism that can capture the process of ensuring training has taken place. It was noted that HR involvement, as a central responsibility, needs to be approved at an institutional level.

A Committee member raised the issue of feedback and marking; the WAM tariff does not reflect what is achievable in the time allocated, and this issue affects the cohort of tutors and demonstrators. It appears there is correlation between feedback and assessment issues and low National Student Survey (NSS) scores.

Action: Convenor to take these points in the conversation forward to the Assessment & Feedback Strategy Group.

There was support from the Committee for the principles of change, and for establishing consistency in governance and training for tutors and demonstrators across the institution. The Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE) will take the paper forward to SEC and look to turn these discussions into improved policy and guidance.

Action: Doctoral College to present an update to SQAC in the September 2023 meeting.

5. Undergraduate Degree Awarded Analysis

This report was presented by Deputy Director of Planning and Policy, Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP) and the Committee considered the data and findings of the report.

There was some discussion around the best way to use and interpret the data. In some instances, it would be useful to have the exact numbers to allow the Committee to understand exactly how many students are affected by aspects considered in the report.

With regard to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) data, the public data report is back to its annual cycle. This report has a different analysis on the data although still considers the attainment gap.

Action: Committee Secretary to circulate the link to the EDI public data once it is published.

The Committee was informed that GASP is aiming to initiate a project to publish data internally on a dashboard. This should help Schools and Colleges to better understand and respond to the data.

In previous years, after this report was considered by SQAC, Academic Services asked the Schools to reflect on the data as part of the annual monitoring process; this would ensure areas of concern and outliers received a response. This practice was set aside during the pandemic when annual monitoring became a more streamlined activity.

Action: College Deans to share this data with Schools for reflection and response, as part of annual quality processes.

This years' report contained an appendix which presented tariff band benchmarking. This data is available from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and had not previously been explored; as this data was considered to be experimental, the appendix was closed. The Committee requested that this HESA data be included in future years for a fuller picture. GASP can continue to provide this, although requested that the data remain closed.

Action: GASP to include this data set in future reports for the benefit of the Committee.

6. Exceptional External Examiner Appointments

The Committee considered the use of multiple External Examiners from the same institution. Where multiple EEs from the same institution sit on the same board, there is an argument for the policy allowing one EE to be appointed.

The Committee had no objection to amending the policy to allow this, whilst noting that flexibility in the EE appointments system must be balanced with maintaining standards.

Action: Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS) to update the policy to reflect amendments.

7. External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) Thematic Analysis

The Committee considered the analysis and discussed the importance of External Examiner (EE) reports in the assessment and feedback loop. It was noted that the EEs assess the robustness of marking procedures and assessment; they do not assess how assessment is communicated to students. EEs see the output but not the process of the assessment journey. This may be a gap in the EE process.

The Committee discussed student understanding of the role of EEs and the best ways to communicate the findings of EEs. SSLCs were highlighted as a route to communicating EE reports to students and receiving student comments in response. The Committee discussed how best to take these considerations forward.

Action: Convenor to add External Examiners to the agenda for the next meeting of the Assessment & Feedback Strategy Group.

Action: Academic Services to review the External Examiner forms and identify areas of enhancement for Assessment & Feedback.

8. Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation Committee Annual Report 2021-22

The Committee received and noted the annual report of the Accreditation Committee of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC).

Proposal to extend Scotland's Rural College's (SRUC) Accredited Institution status to Postgraduate Research Provision (PGR)

The Convenor presented this paper to the Committee; the proposal to extend SRUC's accrediting powers to postgraduate research (PGR) provision requires decision, and SRUC would like to work with the University of Edinburgh

The Committee was satisfied that due diligence had been undertaken in the process, and that the proposal was a logical extension & development to SRUC's provision. It was noted that the proposal was well put together, and SRUC had an exemplary approach in their paperwork and oversight of the process. It was also noted that guidance booklet produced by SRUC for PGR students was an example of good practice; this can be shared more widely with colleagues for their information.

The proposal to extend accrediting powers was endorsed by the Committee, and can go to Senate for agreement.

Action: Academic Services to inform Senate that it has endorsed the proposal to extend accrediting powers to SRUC.

9. Committee Priorities for 2023-24

The Committee was satisfied with the priorities as laid out in the paper. There was agreement to report these priorities to Senate, although it was recognised that SQAC's work and considerations may not be restricted to only these priorities as defined at this stage.

10. Internal Periodic Reviews: Reports and Responses

The Committee approved the final reports for Moray House School of Education and Sport (UG provision) and the Business School (PGT and PGR provision).

There was a request for further clarification in the 14 weeks response from the School of Informatics.

Action: Academic Services to follow up with the School of Informatics in relation to their 14 week response.

11. Any Other Business

The Committee noted that the Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS) will stand in as Convener for the May meeting. The Committee agreed that this meeting to take place online.