

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee

**Meeting to be held on Wednesday 27 January 2016 at 2.00pm in the  
Chancellor's Building, Little France**

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2015 LTC 15/16 3 A
- 3. Matters Arising**
- 3.1 Matters arising from the meeting held on 18 November 2015 (and not elsewhere on the agenda):
  - 3.1.1 Principal's Teaching Award Scheme (Item 7.3)
  - 3.1.2 University Representation on Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC) (Item 7.4)
  - 3.1.3 Knowledge Strategy Committee (Item 7.5)
- 4. Convener's Communications**
- 4.1 Learning and Teaching Communications
- 4.2 ELIR
- 5. For Discussion**
- 5.1 Proposal for Review of the University's Academic Year Structure LTC 15/16 3 B
- 5.2 Continuing Professional Development for Learning and Teaching: Progress Report LTC 15/16 3 C
- 5.3 Academic Year 2016/17: Use of Week Between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 LTC 15/16 3 D
- 5.4 Assessment and Feedback: Update on Activities LTC 15/16 3 E
- 5.5 Strategic Direction for the Edinburgh Award and Higher Education Achievement Report LTC 15/16 3 F  
TO FOLLOW
- 5.6 University Student Recruitment Strategy: An Update LTC 15/16 3 G  
**CLOSED**
- 5.7 Open Educational Resources Policy LTC 15/16 3 H
- 5.8 Lecture Capture at the University of Edinburgh LTC 15/16 3 I
- 5.9 Student Experience Update LTC 15/16 3 J
- 6. For Approval**
- 6.1 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2016: Institutional Questions LTC 15/16 3 K
- 7. For Noting / Information**
- 7.1 University Response to 'Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice – Consultation' LTC 15/16 3 L
- 7.2 Enhancement Themes - Update LTC 15/16 3 M
- 8. Any Other Business**

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

2.00pm on Wednesday 16 March 2016 in the Raeburn Room, Old College

For formal approval at LTC meeting to be held on 27 January 2016

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) held at 2pm on Wednesday 18 November 2015 in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House

### 1. Attendance

#### Present:

Dr Elaine Haycock-Stuart	Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Health in Social Science (co-opted member)
Professor Peter Higgins	Representative of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Ms Melissa Highton	Convener of Learning Technologies Advisory Group (ex officio)
Professor Charlie Jeffery (Convener)	Senior Vice-Principal
Ms Nichola Kett	Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services
Ms Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka	EUSA Academic Engagement Co-ordinator (ex officio)
Dr Margaret MacDougall	Medical Statistician and Researcher in Education (co-opted member)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Senior Lecturer, School of Mathematics, CSE (co-opted member)
Dr Gale Macleod	Dean of Postgraduate (Taught), CHSS
Dr Velda McCune	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's Nominee) (ex officio)
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching, CSE
Professor Neil Turner	Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, CMVM
Mrs Philippa Ward (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	University Secretary's Nominee, Director of Academic Services (ex officio)

#### In Attendance:

Mr Barry Neilson	Director Student Systems
Mr Jonny Ross-Tatam	EUSA President

#### Apologies:

Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley	Assistant Principal (Research-Led Learning)
Mr Gavin Douglas	Deputy Secretary – Student Experience
Ms Rebecca Gaukroger	Director, Careers Service (co-opted member)
Ms Shelagh Green	Director, Careers Service (co-opted member)
Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)
Ms Erin Jackson	Distance Learning Manager, School of Law, CHSS (co-opted member)
Mr John Lowrey	Dean of Undergraduate Studies, CHSS
Professor Ian Pirie	Assistant Principal (Learning and Development) (ex officio)
Professor David Weller	Director for Postgraduate Taught, CMVM
Professor Wyn Williams	Director of Teaching, School of GeoSciences, CSE
Ms Imogen Wilson	EUSA Vice President (Academic Affairs) (ex officio)

### 2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2015 were approved.

### 3. Matters Arising

#### 3.1 Innovative Learning Week (Item 5.8)

Members were advised that a sub-group had been established to consider the purpose of the week between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 in 2016/17. The group would meet in January 2016.

## 3.2 Annual Planning Round Guidance (Item 5.9)

Guidance on the Learning and Teaching-Related Content of School Annual Plans had been circulated to all Colleges with the request that Schools take it into consideration when preparing their Annual Plans.

## 4. Convener's Communications

### 4.1 Course Evaluation and Online Submission and Return of Feedback

It was reported that Principal's Strategy Group (PSG) had agreed that all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes within all Schools must be using EvaSys (Course Evaluation Data Automation) by academic session 2016/17.

PSG had also agreed that all areas must move to using online submission of assessed work and return of feedback. The timescale for this remained to be determined.

LTC confirmed that it supported the way forward agreed by PSG.

### 4.2 Outcome of Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR)

The Committee was advised that the ELIR meetings were now complete. The University had been given a judgement of 'effectiveness' in its ability to assure and enhance academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. This was the best possible outcome for an ELIR.

The following areas of positive practice had been identified:

- Online distance learning
- The Edinburgh Award
- The University's strategic approach to teaching and learning
- The work of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD)
- The University's approach to monitoring and review of both academic and support areas
- The External Examiner project
- Internationalisation
- The use of data to enhance the student experience
- The University's approach to self-evaluation

Specific aspects of the following areas of activity required some development:

- The Personal Tutor system
- School-level student representation
- Feedback, focussing specifically on scheduling and sequencing of assessments

More substantial development was required in the following areas:

- Ensuring adequate and consistent resourcing for major projects
- The PGR student experience

### 4.3 Update on Work on the Student Experience, Teaching and Learning

Members noted that Learning and Teaching Policy Group was now active. The minutes of the Group's meetings would be brought to LTC routinely.

The Convener had attended 11 meetings with Schools, typically with the Head of School and the Director of Teaching, to discuss the student experience, teaching and learning. There were many examples of positive practice, but deep-seated challenges remained to be addressed in several Schools. Developing an understanding of what constitutes good performance in teaching and recognising and rewarding this was key. A sub-group of Learning and Teaching Policy Group was giving this further consideration. Sub-groups had also been established to consider communications and curriculum innovation.

It had been agreed that the University's Vision for Learning and Teaching would not be progressed at the current time. Instead, the focus would be on the level of priority the University attached to learning and teaching. Ways in which aspects of the Vision might be progressed would be considered in due course.

An Academic Strategy Group meeting early in 2016 would discuss the development of a set of values around the University's commitment to teaching. It was hoped that these could be embedded within the next Strategic Plan.

The Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services division of Information Services asked for members to provide her with information about areas in which technology is lacking and with a strong steer on direction of travel to enable her to plan accordingly.

## 5. For Discussion

### 5.1 Use of Student Data to Help Enhance Learning and Teaching, the Student Experience and Operational Effectiveness

Prototype dashboards were shown to the Committee and were very positively received. The dashboards demonstrated were School-level, but it was noted that it should also be possible to produce College-level dashboards.

The ambition was to make the dashboards open to all University staff members via the web. Some systems development would be required to facilitate this.

### 5.2 Grade Point Averages (GPA) – Proposal for Minimalist Adoption

Members were reminded that at the previous meeting, it had been agreed that the University should seek to develop an on-demand GPA service based on a minimal adoption model. As such, a simple system using an algorithm that could be applied across the University had been developed. In order to avoid unnecessary complexity, Schools would not be permitted to vary the algorithm used at this stage. The Committee approved the proposed system and approach to communication, and also agreed that a regulation should be added to the Taught Assessment Regulations summarising the University's approach to GPA.

It was noted the Higher Education Green Paper (discussed later in the meeting) strongly encouraged institutions to adopt GPA. Significant additional work would be needed if the University were to consider introducing GPA for all students. The on-demand service would provide the University with an opportunity to undertake modelling for the future.

### 5.3 Assessment and Feedback

## 5.3.1 Measures of Quality and Approaches to Assessment

The Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback attended the meeting to present her initial thoughts on developing measures of feedback quality and approaches to assessment. The importance of sharing and encouraging best practice and simplification where possible were highlighted. Members also discussed viewing feedback not as a separate entity, but as a dialogic aspect of the learning process that was embedded within curriculum design. Developing assessment literacy and ensuring that students were clear about what feedback was was also considered. It was noted that useful definitions of feedback were contained within the course descriptors developed as part of the Programme and Course Information Management Project.

**Action:** Ms Kett to pass definitions of feedback contained within course descriptors to Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback.

Members welcomed proposals to build an Assessment Feedback Network / Community of Practice with IAD, and discussed the potential to use this Network to encourage peer to peer professional development in this area.

## 5.3.2 Turnaround Times Systems Analysis

The Director of Student Systems provided LTC with a high level update on the systems analysis being undertaken to help Schools measure assessment and feedback turnaround times more effectively. Whilst a University-wide move to online submission of assessment and return of feedback and marks, as agreed by Principal's Strategy Group in October 2015, would greatly facilitate the collection and use of assessment and feedback data, it was recognised that there was not a one-size-fits-all solution in this area, and that variation in practice across Schools needed to be taken into account. Some assessment types were not suitable for electronic submission and feedback, and alternative solutions would need to be developed in these cases.

## 5.3.3 Opt Outs

The Convener reported that opts outs from the agreed 15 working day feedback turnaround time were the responsibility of College Committees. Opts outs would be approved where strong pedagogical reasons for being unable to comply with the prescribed turnaround time existed. Opts outs requested on the basis of workload would only be permitted for one academic session, the expectation being that resourcing issues would be resolved in advance of the next session.

The structure of the academic year, and specifically the timing of the examination of Semester 1 courses was discussed. It was agreed that a working group would be established to give this issue further consideration.

**Action:** Director of Academic Services to establish a working group to consider the timing of the examination of Semester 1 courses.

## 5.4 Student Survey Unit Priorities

Members noted that the Student Survey Unit was now part of Student Systems. The paper provided an update on the Survey Unit's priorities for the next 12 to 18 months. The key priority would be to support the roll out of EvaSys to all Schools and for all courses by the start

of academic session 2016/17. There would be a number of practical challenges associated with the roll out. LTC was content with the identified priorities set out in the paper, but requested that, in light of the focus placed on the PGR student experience in the recent ELIR, further consideration be given to the way in which the University used the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

The importance of continually informing students of what the University had done in response to their survey feedback was discussed.

## 5.5 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

The importance of this survey in a competitive postgraduate market was recognised, and members discussed ways in which better use might be made of the data it generated. The Student Survey Unit was investigating the relationship between responses and student demographics, and the value of separating out online and on site student responses was highlighted. Heads of Schools would be consulted about the information they would like obtain from PTES. The potential to produce PGT versions of the undergraduate dashboards discussed under 5.1 was considered.

## 5.6 Information Services Group Strategy to Support Learning and Teaching

LTC considered the Strategy, noting that whilst it was a five to ten year plan, it would be updated year on year. Members were broadly positive, whilst recognising that, at the present time, there were not clear mechanisms in place for linking the student experience, the requirements of teachers, planning around teaching spaces and Information Services' planning. This issue would be given further consideration.

**Action:** Convener and Director of Academic Services to discuss ways in which Information Services' planning might be informed by the student experience, the requirements of teachers and planning around teaching spaces.

The Committee discussed the potential value of and costs associated with lecture capture.

## 5.7 Student Recruitment Strategy – What is Our Offer?

The Committee was advised that the 'Portfolio, Development, Innovation and Review' workstream was considering Edinburgh's offer, and specifically, that which is distinctive about Edinburgh's provision. This would be discussed in more detail at the January 2016 meeting of LTC.

## 6. For Approval

### 6.1 Higher Education Achievement Record – Proposal for Change to Categories of Wider Achievement

Learning and Teaching Committee approved the recommendation that 'PALS Student Leader' be added to the categories of wider achievement included in the HEAR, subject to the Peer Support Project Co-ordinator providing further information about specific threshold requirements and their monitoring and evaluation. The addition of 'Peer Support Leader' was not approved on the basis that significant variability can exist in the volume, level and quality of engagement involved. It was agreed that the decision could be revisited if the Peer Support Leader were able to provide more information and greater clarity around thresholds and validation.

The Committee agreed that a broader discussion about the role of the HEAR and its relationship with the Edinburgh Award would take place at the January 2016 meeting.

## 6.2 Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes Task Group Report and Proposals

The Committee approved the proposal that the Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes be discontinued from 2016/17, it being agreed that this was consistent with current discussions about the simplification of policy, regulation and processes. Members noted that the majority of the information currently contained within the Code could be accessed in other ways. Alternative locations would be identified for the content that was not currently available elsewhere.

## 7. For Noting / Information

### 7.1 Piloting Learning Analytics (LA) with Fully Online Masters Programmes

LTC noted the paper which outlined the case for the implementation of a Learning Analytics pilot focussing on fully online Masters programmes and courses and had been endorsed by Principal's Strategy Group. Members were advised that a Learning Analytics Policy, informed by this pilot, would be developed and brought to LTC for discussion in due course.

### 7.2 Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice

Members considered the UK Government Green Paper. It was noted that it provided some clarity on the Teaching Excellence Framework but that questions still remained. Whilst the Paper was mainly aimed at English institutions, it was likely that it would also have implications for Scottish institutions. The University would therefore be preparing a response to the Green Paper.

**Action:** Convener and Director of Academic Services to discuss the University's response to the Green Paper.

### 7.3 Report from LTC Distance Education Task Group

LTC welcomed the report, noting in particular progress in relation to providing early life support for online distance education programmes, staff development and distance education marketing.

The Vice Principal Digital Education would be consulted about future plans for the Distance Education Initiative.

**Action:** Distance Learning Manager to discuss future plans for the Distance Education Initiative with the Vice Principal Digital Education.

It was also agreed that the Convener and the Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services would discuss the potential to mainstream Principal's Teaching Award Scheme funding into core budgets.

**Action:** Convener and Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services to discuss the potential to mainstream Principal's Teaching Award Scheme funding.



## 7.4 Enhancement Themes – Update

Members were advised that ‘resilience’ was a key theme for the forthcoming session. Strong applications for Enhancement Themes funding had been received and would be considered in the near future. Given the imminent retirement of the Assistant Principal Learning and Development, a replacement University representative to serve on the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee would be sought.

**Action:** Ms Kett to identify a University representative to serve on the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee.

## 7.5 Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

The Committee was reminded that this was a joint Committee of Senate and Court. The need for the Senate Committees to have greater influence on the business of KSC was discussed, and the potential for the Distance Education Task Group to take ideas relating to online distance education to the Committee was considered.

**Action:** Distance Education Manager to consider ways in which the Distance Education Task Group might feed into the work of KSC.

## 7.6 Interdisciplinary Teaching

The item, remitted to LTC by QAC, would be addressed through the Student Recruitment Strategy ‘Portfolio, Development, Innovation and Review’ workstream.

## 7.7 Consultation on Changes to the National Student Survey, Unistats and Information Provided by Institutions

Members were advised that the four Higher Education funding bodies were consulting on changes to the National Student Survey (NSS), the Unistats website and the Key Information Set (KIS). Responses needed to be submitted by 4 December 2015. The Committee discussed the NSS Student Unions question.

## 7.8 Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy

It was reported that the University was in the process of developing a Corporate Parenting Strategy to ensure that it upheld the rights and safeguarded the wellbeing of care leavers studying at Edinburgh. Members discussed the importance of assigning to these students the most experienced Personal Tutors, and ensuring that 52-week accommodation was available.

## 8. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 27 January 2016 at 2.00pm in the Board Room, Chancellor’s Building, Little France.

Philippa Ward  
Academic Services  
November 2015

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

27 January 2016

## **Proposal for Review of the University's Academic Year Structure**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper:

- Sets out the background to the University's current academic year structure;
- Provides an initial analysis of two alternate models for the academic year;
- Invites the Committee to decide whether to enter into a formal review of the academic year structure;
- Sets out the main activities that the proposed review would involve; and
- Proposes the remit, membership, and indicative outputs and timescales for a task group of the Committee to manage the proposed review.

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

Excellence in Education; Outstanding Student Experience

### **Action requested**

LTC is invited to discuss and decide whether to establish a task group to enter into a formal review of the University's academic year structure. If the Committee approves this way forward, it is invited to approve the remit, membership and indicative outputs and timescales for the task group.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The proposed task group would coordinate communication in relation to the review. If the University decided to change its academic year structure, it would be necessary to establish an implementation plan.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

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

The proposed review is likely to take significant resources, requiring project management support, along with significant input from University academic leadership and input from Schools, Colleges, EUSA and most University support services. If the Committee supported this review, there would necessarily be a significant opportunity cost in terms of the other projects that the Senate Committees may wish to undertake during the relevant period. If the University did agree to implement a new academic year, there would be substantial resource implications involving in implementing the change.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The paper highlights some potential risks associated with options for changes to the University's academic year structure. The proposed review would include a full risk assessment.

### **3. Equality and Diversity**

If the proposed review recommended a change to the University's academic year structure, any decision would be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

### **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**.

#### **Originator of the paper**

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, 19 January 2016

## Proposal for review of the University's Academic year structure

- 1 This paper:
  - Sets out the background to the University's current academic year structure;
  - Provides an initial analysis of two alternate models for the academic year;
  - Invites the Committee to decide whether to enter into a formal review of the academic year structure;
  - Sets out the main activities that the proposed review would involve; and
  - Proposes the remit, membership, and indicative outputs and timescales for a task group of the Committee to manage the proposed review.
  
- 2 At its meeting on 16 December 2015, the Learning and Teaching Policy Group discussed an earlier version of this paper, and was supportive of the University initiating a review of its academic year structure.

## Background to the University's current academic year structure

- 3 The University has reviewed the structure of the academic year twice over the last thirteen years:
  - At a special meeting in May 2002 Senate agreed to adopt a 'modified semester' model. This was one of three major institutional changes during that period – along with the establishment of the three Colleges, and the Curriculum Project.
  
  - In June 2009 Senate agreed to amend the academic year (with effect from 2011-12) to add one week for revision in semester one and one additional week of teaching in semester two (between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4), and to reduce the length of the Semester Two examination diet by one week. Senate subsequently agreed to use this additional week of teaching for Innovative Learning Week. When Senate agreed to these amendments in 2009 it did so on the basis that the changes “were relatively modest and provided an interim solution while looking forward to more fundamental review in the future.”
  
- 4 The University's current academic year structure is set out at:  
  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/semester-dates>
  
- 5 Some particular programmes, including UG medical and veterinary medicine programmes, the MBA programme, and professional courses with work placements such as those operated in Social Work, Education and Nursing, have opt-outs from the academic year structure. In addition, some collaborative programmes will be operating on the partner institution's academic year.

- 6 At its 28 September 2015 meeting, LTC decided that the University should retain the additional week in Semester Two, but decided to explore alternate uses of this week rather than continue with ILW in its current form. ILW will however continue in 2016-17.
- 7 The Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee has already approved the academic year dates for 2017-18 and approved provisional dates for 2018-19. It would therefore be difficult to introduce any changes until 2018-19 at the earliest.

## **Reasons for revisiting the University's academic year structure**

- 8 Recent discussions at Senate Committees, feedback from staff in Schools and Colleges, and representations from EUSA, suggest that many stakeholders would like the University to review its academic year structure.
- 9 The main issues that stakeholders have raised are:
  - In principle, the asymmetry between the lengths of Semesters One and Two is undesirable.
  - The relatively compressed nature of Semester One and the short period of time between the end of teaching and the start of the examination diet in Semester One may be contributing to the bunching of assessments.
  - Students have little time to receive and take account of feedback on Semester One coursework assessments before examinations.
  - In Semester One students have less time to consolidate their learning and revise prior to the examination diet than in Semester Two (normally one week, compared to three weeks in Semester Two). This issue is particularly acute in 2015-16 and 2016-17 due to the way the calendar falls (resulting in only three working days for revision between the end of teaching and the start of the examination diet in Semester One).
  - The examination diet is shorter in Semester One than Semester Two (c.10-12 days of examinations, compared to c. 20 days in Semester Two). As a result, in Semester One students have less of a gap between examinations and more chance of having two examinations on the same day (although in practice this affects only a small proportion of students).
  - The compressed Semester One examination diet creates significant pressures on available space for examinations, particularly since some key large venues in the Central Area are currently unavailable due to estates development work.

- At present, c. 12% of Semester One courses are examined during the Semester Two examination diet. While EUSA, Senate Curriculum and Student Progress Committee, and the College of Science and Engineering, support the idea of increasing the proportion of S1 courses examined in S1, in practice it would be challenging to move many examinations from the S2 to S1 examination diet without increasing the length of the diet given the timetabling and space pressures that the S1 examination diet already faces.
- Students can find Semester One tiring since it is intensive and offers no opportunity to rest and consolidate their learning. Staff can also find Semester One tiring.

## Options and constraints

- 10 This paper provides an initial analysis of two possible options for modifying the academic year structure, which stakeholders have shown a particular interest in:
  - Option 1: Hold the examination diet for Semester One in January, and start Semester Two later in January.
  - Option 2: Add an additional week to Semester One by starting the Semester One a week earlier.
- 11 In general, the analysis suggests that both models would offer benefits in terms of the student experience, but that both would also create practical (logistical / financial / HR) issues. Both the potential benefits to student experience, and the practical issues, appear likely to be greater for Option 1 than Option 2.
- 12 In setting out these options, the paper assumes the following constraints:
  - The total number of weeks of teaching will not reduce.
  - The University would not hold summer graduations any later than at present.
  - Students on taught programmes (with the exception of students on 'modular' programmes or taking individual courses on a CPD basis) will continue to start their studies at the start of Semester One.
  - While it may be desirable to reduce the total number of examinations over time (eg by moving to a greater variety of forms of assessment), this is unlikely to happen in the short to medium term (the total number of examinations across the Semester One and Semester Two diets has remained static at c. 2,000 over the last five years, and the number of candidates taking these examinations has increased by more than 10%).

- It may be possible to reduce the length of the Semester Two examination diet without moving examinations to the Semester One examination diet, but this would have adverse impacts on the student experience.
- It will not be possible to reduce the same time for marking / moderation / Board of Examination processes between the Semester Two examination diet and graduations.
- The same academic year structure will continue to apply to all programmes and all levels of study, and the number of opt-outs granted will continue to be minimised.
- The University is unlikely to support teaching or examination during the Christmas vacation period.
- The University and EUSA will not want any changes to the academic year to compromise their commitment to the Edinburgh Festivals.

## Issues to take account of when evaluating options

- 13 A review of options for the academic year structure should consider the following issues:
- Pedagogical considerations and broader impact on the student experience
  - Alignment with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
  - Operational academic considerations, including sufficiency of time allowed for marking and examining
  - Simplicity and consistency – minimising the number of programmes that require opt-outs from the standard academic year structure.
  - Impact on availability of space for teaching and examinations
  - HR considerations
  - Access to University facilities and services
  - Financial impact on students
  - Financial impact on the University
  - Impact on the University's and EUSA's involvement with the Edinburgh Festival
  - Systems issues
  - Legal implications
  - Admissions implications
  - Implications for Visiting Students
  - Implications for Study Abroad arrangements
  - Impact on collaborative programmes with other institutions
  - Change management issues
- 14 This initial scoping does not provide detailed analysis of the options in relation to all these issues. Instead, it highlights issues which would require extensive further analysis if the University wished to pursue them further.

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## Option 1: Hold the examination diet for Semester One in January, and start Semester Two later in January

### 15 Summary of proposed model:

- An additional teaching week (or 'reading week') during Semester One.
- Opportunity to increase the length of the Semester One examination diet slightly to a full two weeks.
- Examinations in January would start at the time that Semester Two teaching currently starts (ie c. 11-15 January, depending on how the calendar fall in a particular year)
- Semester Two would start in the week after the end of the January examination diet, meaning starting, and ending, Semester Two two weeks later than at present.
- The current two weeks of Spring vacation would be replaced with teaching weeks.
- No change in the length of the Semester Two examination diet

### 16 Initial evaluation of proposed model:

Issue	Pros	Cons / Potential Issues
<i>Pedagogical considerations and broader impact on the student experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional teaching week (or 'reading week') in Semester One would increase the volume of teaching activity and would enhance the student experience.</li> <li>• It would make it easier to provide students with feedback on their coursework before they sit examinations.</li> <li>• It would also allow students a longer period for consolidation and revision prior to examinations.</li> <li>• It would also create greater symmetry between the two semesters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students would not have any break between examinations and the start of Semester Two courses.</li> <li>• Students would start Semester Two courses before they have provisional results for their Semester One courses. This may create particular issues where Semester One courses are pre-requisites for Semester Two courses.</li> <li>• Replacing the Semester Two Spring vacation with teaching weeks would reduce the time available for revision prior to the Semester Two examination diet.</li> <li>• During the previous review of the academic year</li> </ul>



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		<p>in 2009, the University ruled out the option of examining Semester one courses after Christmas because, although the model was in place in some other institutions, feedback suggested that Edinburgh students did not find it acceptable to study over the Christmas period. It would therefore be important to undertake broad consultation with students regarding this model.</p>
<i>Alignment with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework</i>	No issues identified	No issues identified
<i>Operational academic considerations, including sufficiency of time allowed for marking and examining</i>	No issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic staff would need to mark Semester One examination scripts during Semester Two teaching weeks.</li> <li>• The replacement of the Spring vacation weeks with teaching weeks may create logistical issues regarding the operation of PGT progression boards</li> </ul>
<i>Simplicity and consistency (minimising the number of programmes that require opt-outs from the standard academic year structure)</i>	No issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is likely that this model would require opt-outs for some collaborative programmes</li> <li>• It would be necessary to confirm whether this model would result in opt-outs from any other programmes</li> </ul>
<i>Impact on availability of space for teaching and examinations</i>	A slight increase in the length of the Semester One examination diet would lead to a modest reduction in pressure on space for	There may be increased pressure on teaching space during the (current) Spring vacation weeks if the University wishes to continue to provide

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	examinations	facilities for conferences activities during that period.
<i>HR considerations</i>	There would no longer be any expectation that staff should mark examination scripts during the Christmas break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacing the Spring Teaching vacation weeks with teaching weeks would reduce the scope for staff to take annual leave during that period.</li> <li>• The removal of the Spring Teaching vacation weeks would reduce the opportunities for academic staff to prepare for, attend, or host, conferences</li> <li>• While Easter is no longer a public holiday for the University, in practice many teaching and support staff take annual leave during the Easter period (particularly because it tends to coincide with the dates of school holidays). Under the current academic year structure, Easter falls within the spring break in the majority of years. Under the proposed model, the Easter break would fall during teaching weeks in a higher proportion of years.</li> <li>• Model may require some support staff to work during the Christmas break period (see Access to University facilities and services, below)</li> </ul>
<i>Access to University facilities and services:</i>	No issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the University held Semester One examinations in January, there would be a case for opening the Library and providing relevant support services (eg Counselling, IAD study skills support, IS support) during the Christmas break period to assist students to revise.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some particular groups (eg students who do not have study facilities at home) may be particularly keen for the University to open up these services.</li> </ul>
<i>Financial impact on students</i>	No issues identified	Removing the Spring vacation would reduce the time for students to work full-time to earn money.
<i>Financial impact on the University</i>	No issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in weeks of teaching and reduction in vacation weeks may reduce the University's ability to generate income from conference activities that rely on access to space normally used for teaching.</li> <li>See also VS issues (below)</li> </ul>
<i>Impact on the University's and EUSA's involvement with the Edinburgh Festival</i>	No issues identified	No issues identified
<i>Legal implications</i>	No issues identified	Legal advice would be required regarding whether students would be seen as signing up to a particular academic year structure when entering into their 'contract' with the University, and, if so, whether there may be legal issues in making such a change which could be perceived to be of detriment to some students without phasing it in so it does not affect students already admitted to the University.
<i>Admissions issues</i>	No issues identified	May create some logistical issues for Semester Two Welcome arrangements, since they may need to be held at the same time as examinations.

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<i>Systems issues</i>	No issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will require student systems changes</li> <li>• Impact on other systems likely but to be determined</li> </ul>
<i>Implications for Visiting Students</i>	No issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University has a large number of Visiting Undergraduate Students compared to many comparator institutions. In 2014-15 it recruited about 1,500 VUGs (headcount) and appears likely to exceed that number in 2015-16. During the last five year, there has been a steady shift from full-year to single-semester VUGs, with a particular emphasis on Semester One. For example, in 2015-16 there were about 750 S1 VUGs, compared to 550 in 2011-12, whereas the number of full-year VUGs reduced from 450 to 330 during the same period.</li> <li>• It would be problematic to ask S1 VUGs to remain in Edinburgh during January for examinations, for example because in many cases this would require them to miss studies at their home institution, and because many of them would plan to go home for Christmas. In 2015-16 approximately 200 S1 courses which examine in December have S1 VUG enrolments. If the University moved the Semester One diet into January, Schools would need to either set alternate assessments for these courses or prevent S1 VUGs from taking these courses (reducing the attractiveness of</li> </ul>

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		<p>the University to VUGs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If any VUGs did want to (or were required to) sit examinations in January, it may be necessary for Accommodation Services to amend its contracts in order to offer accommodation for this extended period.</li> <li>• Holding boards of examiners two weeks' later in January than at present would mean delays in providing transcripts for Visiting Students to give to their home institutions. This is likely to cause practical issues for a minority of VUGs and their home institutions (for example, where a student needs to show his / her home institution that he / she has passed a course in order to meet a pre-requisite for a Semester two course).</li> </ul>
<p><i>Implications for Study Abroad arrangements</i></p>	<p>No issues identified</p>	<p>At present, while the majority of University of Edinburgh students that study abroad (either on a compulsory or non-compulsory basis) do so for the full year, in a small number of areas (eg Divinity, parts of ECA), students study abroad for a single semester. There is interest in increasing the number of opportunities for single semester study abroad, in order to make international opportunities available to a larger number of students. If the University examined Semester One courses in January, this would constrain Schools' ability to offer study abroad in Semester Two.</p>

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<i>Impact on collaborative programmes with other institutions</i>	No issues identified	It is likely that some of the University's collaborative taught degree programmes will be based on arrangements in which students study on courses at Edinburgh in Semester one and at a partner institution in Semester two (or vice versa). Where this is the case, the proposed model may cause practical issues. Further analysis is required in order to establish whether this would be an issue in practice.
<i>Change management issues</i>	No issues identified	Given that this model implies a major change in the academic year structure, it would be necessary to undertake substantial communication activities to ensure all students, staff, and other stakeholders (eg External Examiners) are aware of the change

- 17 A variant on this model would involve starting examinations in January a week earlier than Semester two teaching currently starts (that is, c. 4-8 January, depending on how the days fall). This would create the scope to either retain one week of the Spring break or allow students a break before January examinations and the start of Semester Two teaching. However, it would require students to travel very soon after New Year, and would require University staff to run examinations on the first working day after the Christmas break (or very soon afterwards) – both of which would create significant logistical issues.

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## Option 2: Add an additional week to Semester One by starting the Semester a week earlier

18 Summary of proposed model:

- Hold Welcome Week a week earlier than at present
- Start Semester One a week earlier than at present
- Either add an additional teaching week (eg a 'reading week' part-way through the semester) to Semester One, or provide an additional revision week before the Semester One examination diet
- Continuing to examine Semester One in December, with no change in the length of the examination diet

19 Initial evaluation of proposed model:

Issue	Pros	Cons / Potential Issues
<i>Pedagogical considerations and broader impact on the student experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the additional week for teaching (eg a 'reading week') would increase the volume of teaching activity and would enhance the student experience. It would also create greater symmetry between the two semesters.</li> <li>• Alternately, using the additional week for revision would have the benefit of allowing students to have a period for revision closer to that available in Semester Two. It would also make it easier to provide students with feedback on their coursework before they sit examinations.</li> </ul>	No issues identified
<i>Alignment with the Scottish Credit and</i>	No issues identified	No issues identified

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<i>Qualifications Framework</i>		
<i>Operational academic considerations, including sufficiency of time allowed for marking and examining</i>		Resit marking and Board of Examiners arrangements would increasingly overlap with Welcome Week and the start of Semester One
<i>Simplicity and consistency (minimising the number of programmes that require opt-outs from the standard academic year structure)</i>	No issues identified	Since the proposed model involves relatively little change from current arrangements, it is unlikely that any programmes have a rationale for opt-outs (though this would need to be confirmed)
<i>Impact on availability of space for teaching and examinations</i>	No issues identified	No issues identified
<i>HR considerations</i>	No issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starting the academic year earlier would reduce the scope for staff to take annual leave during early September</li> <li>It would also reduce the opportunities for academic staff to prepare for, attend, or host, conferences in early September</li> </ul>
<i>Access to University facilities and services:</i>	No issues identified	May require English Language Teaching Centre to change the timings of its pre-sessional courses
<i>Financial impact on</i>	No issues identified	An increase in the overall length of the academic



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<i>students</i>		year may lead to an increase in accommodation costs (whether in University or private accommodation).
<i>Financial impact on the University</i>	No issues identified	No issues identified
<i>Impact on the University's and EUSA's involvement with the Edinburgh Festival</i>	No issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University (and EUSA) provide a large amount of accommodation, including teaching spaces, for Festival activities. The start of Semester One is constrained by the allocation of two weeks for maintenance of University buildings after the close of the Festival.</li> <li>• Accommodation Services rent out their rooms during the Festival. It would be necessary to explore whether an earlier start date would have any impact on this.</li> </ul>
<i>Legal implications</i>	No issues identified	In principle could raise the same potential issues as may apply to Option One, but any issues unlikely to be as significant as for Option One.
<i>Admissions issues</i>	No issues identified	<p>UG admissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University already begins its academic year comparatively early within the sector, causing some logistical challenges in completing the UCAS admissions process prior to the start of the academic year (given that A-levels and some other school qualifications are not available until mid-August and offer-holders have until 31 August to meet any conditions).</li> </ul>

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		<p>Bringing the start of the academic year forward would increase these logistical challenges regarding admissions and would also compress the time available for post-confirmation pre-arrival activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An earlier start date would make it more difficult for UG Tier 4 offer-holders to secure study visas in time for the start of the session – potentially leading to an increased number of students starting late (adversely affecting their student experience) or even declining their offers.</li><li>• If the sector were to move towards Post Qualification Admissions for UG study, as has been muted at various times over the last decade, starting the academic year earlier would be likely to cause Edinburgh increased logistical challenges in implementing PQA. However, at present PQA appears unlikely to happen at least in the medium term.</li><li>• It would be necessary to explore whether an earlier start date would create any issues for Accommodation Services assigning accommodation.</li></ul> <p>PG admissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many offers for PhD study are conditional on the applicant passing a PGT programme. An earlier start to the academic year would mean that a higher proportion of conditional offer-holders for</li></ul>
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		<p>PhD study would not have received confirmation that they had passed PGT programmes in time for the start of the academic session. While there would be scope for some flexibility with Home / EU offer-holders, there would be particular issues for Tier 4 offer-holders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An earlier start date may also make it more challenging for Accommodation Services to assign rooms following confirmation.</li> </ul>
<i>Systems issues</i>	No issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have modest Timetabling implications (room allocations will need to be firmed up a week earlier than at present), but unlikely to be a major issue.</li> <li>• No other system issues identified – but it would be necessary to undertake a full analysis of this.</li> </ul>
<i>Implications for Visiting Students</i>	No issues identified	<p>Some incoming Visiting Students will be required to study at their home institution during August / early September (eg to take resits, or in some cases semester dates may run through the summer). It is therefore possible that starting the academic year earlier may create practical issues for incoming students. It is probable that this will only affect a small minority of incoming Visiting Students.</p>
<i>Implications for Study Abroad arrangements</i>	No issues identified	<p>Due to delays in partner institutions providing transcripts, at present a significant number of students return from study abroad and resume their studies at Edinburgh before they have been able to</p>

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		supply the University with a transcript showing that they passed their year abroad. If the University starts Semester One a week earlier, the proportion of students affected by this issue would increase. This would however not be a major issue.
<i>Impact on collaborative programmes with other institutions</i>	No issues identified	Any impact likely to be modest
<i>Change management issues</i>	No issues identified	Since the change proposed is relatively modest, the change management issues would be less than for Option One.

## Other possible options to explore

- 20 The following alternate options were considered but ruled out during the 2009 review:
- Teaching (eg for students who are not in their first year of programme) during Welcome Week in Semester One
  - Compressing the Semester One examination diet into one week
  - A fixed spring break part-way through Semester two
  - An extra week for marking after Semester One
  - Reducing the summer vacation from 15 weeks to 14 weeks
  - Moving the resit examination diet from August to July, to make it easier for students to find accommodation during resits.
  - Eliminating the summer resit diet and instead holding resits in December and April / May
- 21 It is however possible that circumstances have changed and some of these options may be worth revisiting.
- 22 In addition it may be worth considering the option of holding some examinations in December (eg for courses on which VUGs are enrolled) and others in January.

## Activities and resource implications of proposed review

- 23 If the University wished to explore in more detail Option One or Two, or any other option, it would be necessary, prior to making a final decision, to:
- Undertake a far more thorough and detailed data gathering, modelling and analysis of the practical implications of the proposed model(s)
  - Consult with students, staff and trade unions
  - Seek legal advice
  - Benchmark comparator institutions
  - Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment
- 24 This is likely to take significant resources, requiring project management support, along with significant input from University academic leadership and input from Schools, Colleges, EUSA and most University support services. If the University did agree to implement a new academic year, there would be substantial resource implications involving in implementing the change, for example communications activities, coordinating implementation activities, considering requests for opt-outs.
- 25 For comparison:

- The adoption of a 'modified semester' model in 2002 followed a long period (2000 to 2002) during which the University conducted a fundamental review of options. This work involved several stages of formal consultation, and various different sets of proposals being presented to Academic Policy Group / and Senate. It involved c. 0.5 FTE of senior administrative time in the year prior to a final decision, along with significant commitment of time from the Senior VP, members of working groups, and support services. There was then substantial further work during the implementation phase in managing communications, overseeing implementation and considering cases for opt outs. For example, during the implementation period the working group met approximately ten times.
- While the decision in 2009 to revise the 'modified semester' model involved relatively modest change (far less significant than Option One, above), it nonetheless involved extensive data-gathering, benchmarking, modelling, option appraisal and consultation over the period from Summer 2008 to Spring 2009, guided by a working group and supported by a Policy Adviser working c. 0.25 FTE on the project.

26 It is possible that some of the modelling and analysis undertaken in 2000-2002 and 2009 would not need to be repeated in full. However, it is possible that some aspects of the analysis of options would be more complex than in 2002 and 2009, for example because the sector has greater awareness of consumer rights of students, the number of S1 VUGS has increased significantly, the University has increased the number of collaborative programmes, and IT its systems are more integrated.

### **For discussion and decision – proposal to establish task group to conduct review**

- 27 LTC is invited to discuss and decide whether to establish a task group to manage a formal review of the University's academic year structure.
- 28 If the Committee supports the establishment of a task group, it is invited to approve the following remit, membership, and indicative outputs and timescales for the task group:

### **Objectives**

- To evaluate options for changing the academic year (including but not limited to the two options set out above), taking account of the implications for the student and staff experience, as well as other practical and resourcing implications;
- To manage consultation and communication activities regarding the review;
- To make recommendations to Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, which would then make recommendations to Senate and other relevant bodies, and consult Principal's Strategy Group and other bodies as appropriate.

## ***Membership***

- Deputy Secretary (Student Experience) (Convener)
- One Assistant Principal
- One Dean and one senior administrator from each College
- EUSA representative
- Director of Human Resources or delegate
- Director of Student Administration or delegate
- Director of Academic Services or delegate
- Corporate Services Group representatives regarding Accommodation Services and the Festival

## ***Outputs and timescales***

- 29 The proposed task group would provide LTC with an interim report for discussion at its 16 March 2016 meeting, and a final report with recommendations for its 25 May 2016 meeting. It may also be appropriate to consult with other Senate Committees (eg Curriculum and Student Progression Committees) and other University Committees (eg Principal's Strategy Group) during the review. If the task group recommends changes to the University's academic year structure, and if LTC supported these recommendations, it would be necessary to seek approval from Senate and, if appropriate, from Court. If possible, Senate and if appropriate Court approval would be sought in summer 2016 (meaning the Senate meeting on 1 June 2016 and the Court meeting on 20 June 2016), with a view to any proposed changes being implemented with effect from 2018-19.
- 30 The Committee is invited to note that these timescales are extremely challenging. It will be necessary for all relevant stakeholders to be fully committed to the review in order that it can be delivered on this timescale.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee

27<sup>th</sup> January 2016

## **Continuing Professional Development for Learning and Teaching: Progress Report**

### Executive summary

This paper provides an update on work to implement an overarching Continuing Professional Development Framework relating to learning and teaching.

- It is proposed that those elements of the Framework most relevant to staff within the University are scaled up over the next two academic years.
- Creating tailored versions of CPD provision in collaboration with Schools would be an ideal model for scaling up and this is currently being trialled in Veterinary Medicine and is about to begin in Mathematics.
- Progress on the Framework is generally proceeding according to the plans previously presented to this Committee.
- Feedback on the new elements of this CPD Framework has been very positive.
- The Committee are asked to comment on the plans for scaling up the provision.

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

This work contributes to the delivery of an outstanding student experience.

### Action requested

The committee is requested to consider the progress made and comment on plans for future directions.

### How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated

Actions will be implemented by the Institute for Academic Development in collaboration with Schools, Colleges and Support Services. Regular progress reports will be made to Learning and Teaching Committee and Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG).

### Resource/Risk/Compliance

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

The plans up until the end of 2016-2017 can be delivered with current IAD staffing and support from Schools. There are implications for staff time to participate in and support the CPD Framework.



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## 2. Risk Assessment

Updates to LTPG will include a risk register and focus on early identification and amelioration of any risks or problems with the roll out and expansion of the CPD framework.

## 3. Equality and Diversity

Equality impact assessments have been carried out for the main components of the CPD Framework.

## 4. Freedom of information

This paper is **open**.

## Keywords

Keywords: learning, teaching, assessment, continuing professional development.

## Originators of the paper

Velda McCune and Jon Turner, Institute for Academic Development, January 2016.

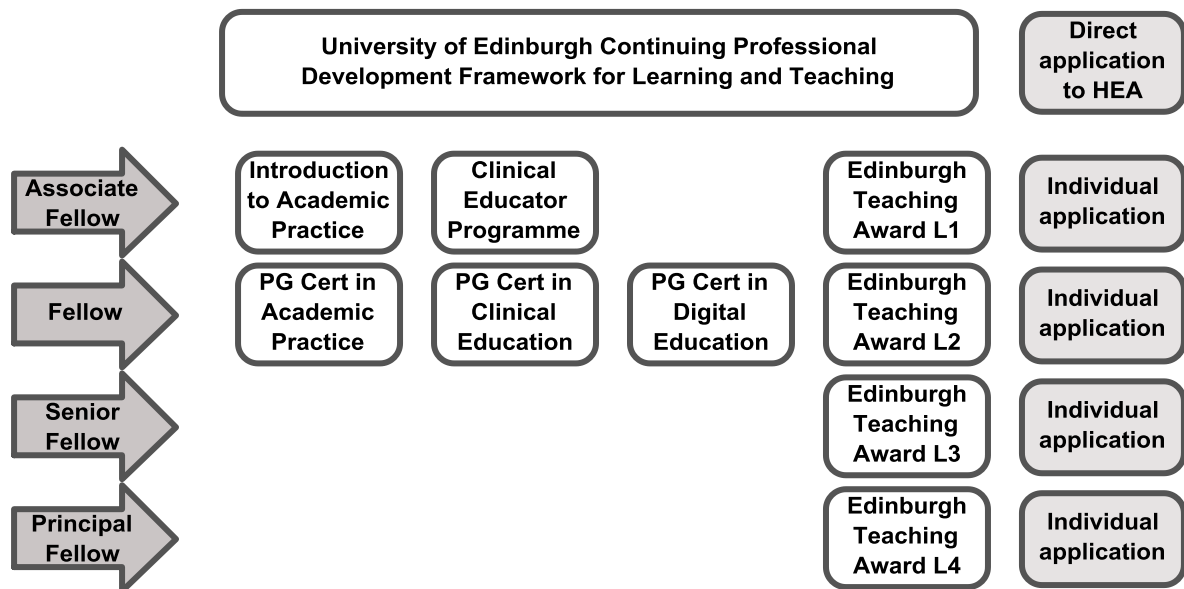
## Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching: Update on Progress

Velda McCune and Jon Turner, Institute for Academic Development

### Introduction

Discussions at the Learning and Teaching Committee in September 2012 identified the need to move forward with plans to provide a coherent framework for CPD and professional recognition for staff in relation to learning and teaching. A full Framework, accredited by the Higher Education Academy, is now in place. This 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



### Data on numbers of Higher Education Academy fellows within the University

Table 1 below shows the data currently available from the Higher Education Academy on the number of Fellows within the University. We are aware of flaws in these data and the IAD is currently collaborating with Human Resources to create more accurate and complete internal records in Oracle. Data quality in this area is an issue nation wide.

Table 1: Staff at the University recognised as HEA Fellows, data from HEA annual report

	July 12	July 13	July 14	Dec 15
Associate Fellow	14	20	51	115
Fellow	205	243	281	311
Senior Fellow	0	0	5	15
Principal Fellow	0	0	5	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>450</b>

## Progress on the CPD Framework

When we are considering CPD for Learning and Teaching for staff within the University of Edinburgh, the majority will achieve their accreditation through the Introduction to Academic Practice, the Edinburgh Teaching Award, the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and IAD supported direct applications to the HEA. The other programmes involved in the CPD framework have mostly external participants or are smaller.

The Introduction to Academic Practice is a new non-credit bearing course aimed primarily at tutors and demonstrators who have some teaching experience. Successful completion of the course leads to Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. The Introduction to Academic Practice ran for the first time in January 2014. It comprises face-to-face workshops, online activity and reflective writing. A summary of participation in the Introduction to Academic Practice is given in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Participation in the Introduction to Academic Practice**

Cohort	Participants joining	Participants completing
January 2014	20	20
January 2015	46	42
October 2015	39	tbc
January 2016	44 (to date)	tbc

Feedback on the Introduction to Academic Practice has been very positive. Participants engage with the course activities well beyond the minimum required for completing the course. They particularly appreciate:

- the teaching observation;
- building of close relationships with other course participants;
- discussion of their own practice;
- the broad range of workshop activities;
- being able to relate literature and theory to their practice.

The Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA) is a route to all of the levels of fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. It involves a wide choice of CPD opportunities followed by a final submission which is an oral presentation or a blog. The EdTA is designed to be flexible in approach and timescale to suit the needs of staff in demanding complex roles. The EdTA began on a pilot basis in April 2014. As participants have up to two years to complete the Award, we would not expect the first cohort to complete fully until March 2016. The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies is running a pilot of their own iteration of the Edinburgh Teaching Award. The School is providing mentors for participants and some of the participants' CPD opportunities. The IAD is providing additional CPD and the processes for assessing submissions and achieving accreditation. We hope that this will provide a model for work with other Schools as this would provide an ideal process for offering the most relevant CPD and creating truly scalable provision. A pilot will begin with Mathematics this semester. Participation and completion data from the main and vet iterations are given in Tables 2a and 2b.

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

	AY 14/15	AY 15/16
Numbers on programme	63	139
Completed	8	16 so far
Estimated completion within 2 year prescribed period	45	100

(Minimum time to completion is 6 months, prescribed time to completion is 2 years.)

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

	AY 14/15	AY 15/16
Numbers on programme	19	17
Completed	0	2 so far

Early feedback is generally very positive with most participants feeling that they have gained useful insights and have had good support from their mentors. About half of the respondents to our survey reported they had already changed their teaching practice as a result of participation.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) is an established route to Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy which builds on the earlier Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching. Participation in the programme is generally voluntary although new teaching staff are expected and encouraged to attend the orientation and two option courses. Participation in the programme is summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3: Participation in the PG Cert in Academic Practice**

	AY11/12	AY12/13	AY13/14	AY14/15	AY15/16
Course Participants	393	423	361	405	TBC
Matriculated	61	103	131	134	115
Graduated	10	24	25	27	22 (so far)

One recent development in the programme has been offering online courses, peer observation of teaching has also been added to the Core course on the programme. Feedback received from participants, SSLC, course organisers and the external examiner has been very positive. The PGCAP team will be refreshing the programme over the next few months in preparation for reaccreditation with the Higher Education Academy. Likely developments will include shifting from 10 credit option courses to 20 credit option courses to reduce assessment load and make the programme more scalable.

### Future directions

At this stage we have demonstrated that the different elements of the CPD Framework are practical and valued by participants. We also have examples and insights that will allow us to develop plans to scale up the capacity of the CPD Framework and increase the numbers gaining HEA accreditation through the different pathways available to meet School, College and University strategic priorities and requirements. This should lead to a marked increase in the percentage of Edinburgh University

staff with HEA accreditation. A key question at this stage is whether and what targets we should set for CPD Framework participation and completion, and how scaling up can best be supported.

We anticipate that the majority of the increase in participation by academic staff with teaching responsibilities will come from participation in the Edinburgh Teaching Award. Estimated completion rates for the Edinburgh Teaching Award are set out in Table 4. In addition to this we anticipate that around 25-30 colleagues will complete the PG Cert in Academic Practice each year and that some staff newly recruited will already have Higher Education Academy Fellowship in place.

In addition to annual reports to LTC, six monthly reports on rolling out and expanding take-up of the CPD Framework will be made to LTPG to ensure that CPD developments align effectively with enhancement priorities, including arrangements for reward and recognition, annual review and communication. Updates to LTPG will include a risk register and focus on early identification and amelioration of any risks or problems with the roll out and expansion of the CPD Framework.

**Table 4: Estimated completion rates for the Edinburgh Teaching Award**

Academic Year	Estimated EdTA completions
15/16	25
16/17	75
17/18	150
18/19	200
19/20	300
20/21	400

### Summary and points for discussion

At the moment we are encountering healthy levels of demand for participation at all levels and in all strands of the CPD framework. This is encouraging and reflects the positive messages that the University is sending out about the importance of learning and teaching, and the increased emphasis on this in University promotion (reward and recognition) processes.

A key issue at this stage is to consider the potential for setting targets for participation and completion of different elements and levels of the CPD framework. These could be operational targets for the IAD and Schools, a target for inclusion in the new University Strategic Plan, or both. We would value the advice of the committee on exploring this topic and in providing guidance on how best to build participation, and completion, in the CPD framework.

- 1) Would University level targets or expectations for participation and completion be useful? What should these targets be?
- 2) It will be important for scaling this provision to run more School focused variants of the Edinburgh Teaching Award with mentors provided by the Schools. Advice on how to encourage participation in this manner would be appreciated.
- 3) More generally, a potential limiting factor on progress with the Edinburgh Teaching Award is the availability of colleagues willing to mentor participants and assess submissions. Discussion of workload implications in these area would be valuable.

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- 4) Colleagues require time to participate in the CPD Framework, so support for participation in workload planning will be important and reflections on this topic from the committee would be valuable.
- 5) Encouragement to participate in the CPD Framework during annual review processes will be important and we are happy to discuss the form these discussion might take.

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

27 January 2016

## **Academic Year 2016/17: Use of Week Between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper reports on a meeting of a sub-group formed at Learning and Teaching Committee's request to consider the purpose of the week between teaching blocks 3 and 4 in academic year 2016/17. It includes proposals for consideration by Learning and Teaching Committee.

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

Excellence in Education; Outstanding Student Experience.

### **Action requested**

For discussion and consideration of the sub-group's proposals.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Should the proposals be approved, Learning and Teaching Committee will need to consider how the changes will be implemented and communicated.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

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

The sub-group did not consider resource implications. These will be need to be considered if Learning and Teaching Committee approves the proposals.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

Not included

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The equality impact of the proposed changes has not yet been assessed.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

This paper is **open**.

### **Originator of the paper**

Philippa Ward, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

## **Proposal for Academic Year 2016/17: Use of Week Between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4**

### **Background**

The November 2015 meeting of Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) agreed that a sub-group would be established to discuss the use of the week between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 in 2016/17 (and potentially in 2017/18).

The sub-group met on 11 January 2016 with the following membership:

- Dr Philip Bailey – Representing College of Science and Engineering
- Ms Johanna Holtan – Institute for Academic Development
- Dr Philip Larkman – Representing College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
- Mr John Lowrey – Representing College of Humanities and Social Science
- Professor Lesley McAra – Assistant Principal Community Relations
- Professor Susan Rhind – Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback
- Ms Helen Stringer – Assistant Director, Careers Service
- Dr Jon Turner – Director, Institute for Academic Development
- Mrs Philippa Ward – Academic Services (Secretary)
- Ms Imogen Wilson – EUSA Vice-President Academic Affairs

(Apologies were received from Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Assistant Principal Research-Led Learning.)

### **Summary of Discussion**

The sub-group discussed the following key points:

- Members recognised the value of a flexible week between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 in Semester 2 to facilitate activity that is not possible during structured teaching weeks. It therefore endorsed LTC's view that the week should be retained in 2016/17 (and potentially in 2017/18).
- The sub-group expressed its support for the work that had been undertaken by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), and Ms Holtan in particular, in previous years to support Innovative Learning Week. Steps being taken, in response to feedback, to add value to Innovative Learning Week 2016 were welcomed. The introduction of a less top-down approach with more working alongside the community; the use of seed funding; the emphasis being placed on projects that had the potential to be developed throughout the academic year; and the publication for the first time of a Handbook for those running events were considered to be particularly positive developments. The sub-group was keen for this work to continue, and for a curated space for innovative and creative learning to be retained.
- Notwithstanding this, it was agreed that it was no longer appropriate for the week between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 to be named 'Innovative Learning Week'. The focus was considered too narrow and to detract from innovative and creative learning taking place throughout the academic year.
- The sub-group was keen to introduce greater flexibility into the week and for it to be used for a broader range of purposes. Possible 'streams' of activity were proposed including:
  - the continuation of a curated space for innovative and creative learning
  - community engagement / experiential learning



- social responsibility / sustainability
  - collaborative / interdisciplinary projects
  - employability / development of graduate attributes
  - student wellbeing - this could potentially align with EUSA's 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Week' in the future
  - the development of communities of practice around teaching
  - reflection / consolidation (potentially supported with simple toolkits)
  - fieldtrips (including overseas trips to support the University's aim of offering more students an opportunity to go abroad during their studies)
- The possibility of offering some credit-bearing activity during the week was raised.
  - The value of promoting the week as a partnership between students and staff was highlighted.
  - It was agreed that, should a flexible week of this type be introduced, some central coordination to allow a comprehensive programme for the week to be published would be important. However it would not be necessary to channel all activity through the IAD.
  - The importance of the communication around the week was discussed. It was agreed that the week should no longer be seen as a separate entity but as an opportunity to expand on and celebrate strategic activity being undertaken throughout the academic year.
  - The sub-group discussed a number of potential names for the week including 'Festival of Learning' and 'Flexible Learning'. All members were keen to avoid using the term 'Week' within the name.
  - The importance of viewing these changes in the context of the current academic year structure was discussed. Concerns were raised about the asymmetry in exam preparation time in the two semesters, and it was noted that the benefits of a flexible week of the type described needed to be balanced against this. It was noted that a proposal for the review of the University's academic year structure would be taken to the January 2016 meeting of LTC.

## **Proposals Relating to Use of the Week**

The sub-group therefore proposes that the University:

1. retains a flexible week between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 in Semester 2 of 2016/17 (and potentially in 2017/18 subject to light-touch review of the success of the week in 2016/17);
2. uses the week for a range of purposes. This should include retention of a curated space for innovative and creative learning building on the valuable work supported by IAD in recent years, and other ideas proposed by the University community.
3. considers the possibility of allowing some credit-bearing activity to be undertaken during the week;
4. re-names the week to reflect its broader focus and the desire for it to be seen not as a separate entity, but as an opportunity to expand on and celebrate strategic activity being undertaken throughout the academic year.
5. ensures that communication of any changes reinforces the University's ongoing support for innovation and experimentation in learning.

## **Broader Proposals**

In addition, it is proposed that the University:

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6. encourages IAD to continue developing and offering support for innovative and creative approaches to learning throughout the year (via seed funding, handbooks, resources and curated programmes).

**Learning and Teaching Committee is invited to discuss the proposals. Should the proposals be accepted, LTC will need to agree how the changes will be taken forward and communicated.**

Philippa Ward  
Academic Services  
18 January 2016

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

27 January 2016

## **Assessment and Feedback: Update on Activities**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper is the Assistant Principal's (Assessment and Feedback) update on assessment and feedback-related activities at January 2016.

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

Excellence in Education; Outstanding Student Experience

### **Action requested**

For discussion

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Key activities will be communicated via the Senate Committees' Newsletter.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

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

Not known at the current time for all proposed activity. Resource implications will be considered as activity develops.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The paper does not include a risk assessment.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

Not included in the paper.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

This paper is **open**.

### **Originator of the paper**

Professor Susan Rhind  
Assistant Principal (Assessment and Feedback)

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## Assessment and Feedback: Update on Activities January 2016

Aim	Activity	Detail	Progress
<b>Share and encourage best practice in assessment and feedback</b>			
<b>Community of Practice</b>	Establish a network of Directors of Teaching		<b>By e-mail. Needs individual follow up</b>
	Launch event focussing on developing our assessment and feedback (DoTs plus other interested school staff)	Main focus: share successes and challenges from the schools. Outputs to include: - showcase LEAF and encourage participation - advertise A+F reading group/network - offer with IAD to visit schools and assist with specific projects - ideas/suggestions for future events - encourage EDTA / staff development	<b>Feb 2016</b>
	Visit schools to meet DoTs and relevant colleagues – either as small groups or to attend learning/ teaching committees or equivalent		<b>From Dec/ Jan2016</b>
<b>Feedback/Assessment Quality: Programme and Course Level</b>			
	Monitor feedback/ assessment quality	Monitor course and programme assessment and feedback (LEAF) Liaise with other AP's re EVASYS and ESES developments	<b>Regular LEAF meeting updates</b>
	Improve feedback/ assessment quality	Meet with LEAF schools to discuss outcomes	<b>Being scheduled</b>
		Ensure assessment and feedback opportunities exist in close proximity to course delivery (regulations). <i>[Link to review of academic year structure]</i>	<b>To discuss with academic services</b>
		Reduce assessment where possible	<b>To discuss with schools</b>
<b>Feedback/ Assessment Quality: Individual Level</b>			
	Monitor feedback/ assessment quality	EVASYS/ Proformas?	<b>To discuss with EVASYS group and schools</b>
	Improve feedback/ assessment quality	Encourage with IAD (and other APs) engagement with Edinburgh Teaching Award	<b>Ongoing</b>
		Build into peer observation schemes?	<b>To discuss with schools and IAD</b>

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		Explore technology solutions to enhance/ facilitate assessment and feedback	<b>To discuss with Melissa Highton</b>
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Many of these activities will involve close collaborative working with IAD – specifically Neil Lent and Hazel Marzetti who will have an appropriate time commitment built into their roles in particular to support school outreach.

Prof Susan Rhind, Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback  
January 2016

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The University of Edinburgh

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

27 January 2016

## **Strategic Direction for the Edinburgh Award and Higher Education Achievement Report**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper reports on a meeting held on 25 January 2016 to discuss the University's strategic direction for the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) and its relationship with the Edinburgh Award.

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

Excellence in Education; Outstanding Student Experience

### **Action requested**

For discussion and approval of the proposals laid out in the paper's summary.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Via the Senate Committees' Newsletter.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

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

None unless changes are made to the way in which the HEAR operates.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The paper does not include a risk assessment.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

Not included in the paper.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

This paper is **open**.

### **Originator of the paper**

Philippa Ward  
Academic Services  
26 January 2016

# Strategic Direction for the Edinburgh Award and Higher Education Achievement Record

## Background

The Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) has now been in place for several years and has functioned adequately, if not strategically. The Edinburgh Award was developed in direct response to the introduction of the HEAR, and has been successful in this regard and in its own right.

Given that these two elements have matured and the landscape around them altered, it was agreed that it was timely to look again at the University of Edinburgh's strategy for the HEAR, including its relationship with the Edinburgh Award. A group of those involved in the development of the Edinburgh Award and production of the HEAR met on 25 January 2016 to consider these issues.

## Membership of Group

- Shelagh Green – Director of the Careers Service
- Tina Harrison – Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
- Barry Neilson – Director of Student Systems
- Sarah Purves – Director of Membership Support and Development, EUSA
- Jon Turner – Director, Institute for Academic Development
- Philippa Ward – Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
- Tom Ward – Director of Academic Services

(Apologies were received from Gavin McCabe, Edinburgh Award Manager)

## Discussion

The following key points were discussed:

1. It was noted that evidence suggests that employers do not value the HEAR on the basis that it is institution-specific (and many institutions have not adopted the HEAR) and therefore does not facilitate comparison of applicants. However, students do appear to value the HEAR. As such, the group agreed that the University should continue to offer this to students.
2. The group agreed that HEAR Section 6.1 – the Section that allows the University to confirm information relating to wider achievements whilst a matriculated student – should continue in its current form ie. it should record facts or roles rather than the skills developed by students.
3. The importance of having robust arrangements in place for making changes to the categories of achievement included in Section 6.1 of the HEAR was reiterated. The group was satisfied with the existing arrangements for approving new categories and with the criteria used to assess categories, namely that they are:
  - equitable;
  - available to a broad range of students;
  - scaleable;
  - and result in robust and validated data.
4. It was recognised that different activities listed on the HEAR will represent different levels and types of commitment. However, it is for employers to discuss with applicants at interview the precise nature of the commitment associated with any activity – and there is no need for the HEAR to differentiate between these different levels and types of commitment.
5. The group discussed the potential value of reviewing the content of the proposal form for adding new categories of achievement to Section 6.1 of the HEAR. Specifically, it was noted that

there may be value in the form requesting additional information on verification processes and on thresholds that must be met in order for an achievement to be recognised on a student's HEAR.

6. The potential value of offering a HEAR to postgraduate research students was raised. At present, all undergraduate (except MBChB) and postgraduate taught students are offered a HEAR. The group did however recognise that extending the HEAR to PGR students would be a significant development and require significant further exploration.
7. The Edinburgh Award supports and encourages personal development through reflection within and across experiences. It has attracted interest across the sector and was well regarded within the recent ELIR. The future strategic development of the Award is part of a wider consideration of the University's Employability Strategy, which LTC will be asked to contribute to in due course. The group was content that the Edinburgh Award can sit comfortably alongside the HEAR. It agreed that the Edinburgh Award should continue to be recorded on the HEAR. However, the group also recognised that the Edinburgh Award often involves a greater time commitment than other achievements listed on the HEAR, and that the requirement for participants to reflect on their experiences adds significant value. The group was keen to find new ways of promoting the Edinburgh Award to ensure that the student body is fully aware of the benefits it offers.
8. The group recognised that some students may use Student-led Individually Created Courses (SLICCs) to produce academic work regarding similar activities to those currently recognised on the HEAR and on which students reflect via the Edinburgh Award. In principle, the group did not see any issues regarding this, since SLICCs would be credit-bearing (unlike the Edinburgh Award) and would be assessed through a different process.

## **Summary**

The group proposed the following:

1. That the University of Edinburgh continues to offer undergraduate and taught postgraduate students a HEAR.
2. That HEAR Section 6.1 continues in its current form, namely as a record of facts or roles rather than skills developed by students.
3. That the existing arrangements for approving new categories of achievement for inclusion in Section 6.1 of the HEAR continue.
4. That the proposal form for adding new categories of achievement to Section 6.1 be reviewed, specifically in relation to the information provided about verification processes and thresholds.
5. That the University considers the merits of offering a HEAR to postgraduate research students.
6. That the University considers new ways in which the Edinburgh Award might be promoted.

**LTC is invited to approve these proposals.**

Philippa Ward  
Academic Services  
26 January 2016



The University of Edinburgh  
Learning & Teaching Committee  
27 January 2016

## **Open Educational Resources Policy**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper includes an update on OER activity and a policy for consideration. The policy presented to the committee is intended to be enabling and to be “clear and concise to encourage participation by all”. By adopting the policy, we believe that the University will demonstrate its commitment to those members of the University who wish to use and create OERs in their learning and teaching activities, and those who wish to disseminate the knowledge created and curated within the University to the wider community.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee’s strategic plans and priorities?**

ISG remains committed to supporting open and sustainable learning and teaching practices by encouraging engagement with OER within the curriculum, and supporting the development of digital literacies for both staff and students in their use of OERs.

### **Action requested**

The Committee is invited to discuss and approve the policy.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The approved policy will be communicated via the OER support Service in ISG and via the Senate Committees’ Newsletter.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

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

The policy does not in itself require staffing, but the advice service to support OER activity is currently funded from within ISG budgets as support for learning and teaching activity.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The policy is designed to mitigate the risks currently faced within the University of re-use of learning materials without clear copyright permissions and licencing. Adoption of this policy will remove a barrier to open practice which is currently perceived by colleagues.

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### **3. Equality and Diversity**

Open educational materials are more easily shared, adapted and published for a range of diverse audiences.

### **4. Freedom of information**

This paper is **open**

### **Originator of the paper**

Melissa Highton. Director, Learning, Teaching and Web Services

## OER Update

In November 2014 Melissa Highton and Dash Sekhar (then EUSA VPAA) presented a paper to LTC describing a vision for Open Educational Resources (OERs) at the University along with proposed policy, guidance and description of an OER service delivered by Information Services (ISG). The action requested was:

“To consider recommendation that Information Services provide an OER service including training, staff development and guidance to support colleagues in making informed decisions about licencing options for their OER in support of the University OER vision.”

The committee discussed the need to ensure that all guidance relating to OER was clear and concise to encourage participation by all; the importance of making better use of archives in teaching, as well as making archives open; and links between OER and other initiatives and activities, particularly the global access strategy and distance learning developments.

Since then ISG have been supporting sustainable learning and teaching through student and staff engagement with OERs:

- An OER service has been funded by ISG, including a dedicated OER advisor to work directly with academic staff, students and support services
- A number of OER workshops have been successfully delivered focussing on the reuse and sharing of OERs in the context of course development, and a series of openly bookable sessions are scheduled for the coming semester. OER workshop participants have valued the opportunity to discuss and develop literacies relating to the open sharing and reuse of digital resources for teaching and learning. This is clearly an area that our student and staff bodies are keen to develop.
- Joint projects are being actively pursued with Library and Collections in order to open up valuable teaching materials held in the University's digital archives and repositories.
- Awareness of OERs, and open education more widely, are key elements in the developing IS Learning Design (LD) framework, which is being piloted with current and developing distance learning courses.
- A website dedicated to promoting OERs at the University of Edinburgh, Open.Ed, has been developed and will be launched in early 2016 (launch event on 4<sup>th</sup> February). This website will bring the elements of OER together: showcasing good practice by a number of educators and initiatives across the University (from individual academics to institutional initiatives); providing guidance on best practice; providing information on forthcoming OER events; and aggregating blogs from some of our prominent open practitioners.

- Building on the Wikipedia editathon events that have been on-going over the past year, which focus on the value of Wikipedia as an active platform for the development of open knowledge within the curriculum, ISG has sponsored a Wikimedian in residence, in conjunction Wikimedia UK.
- Demonstrating commitment to open practices and policies in the wider educational community in Scotland, ISG also supports Open Scotland by funding an “OER liaison – Open Scotland” post. Open Scotland is a cross sector initiative that promotes Open Policies to “develop Scotland’s unique education offering, support social inclusion and inter-institutional collaboration and sharing and enhance quality and sustainability.”
- University of Edinburgh will host the international OER16 Conference in April 2016. The conference, which focuses on the value proposition for embedding open culture in the context of institutional strategies for learning, teaching and research, will feature a number of outstanding examples of open practice from the University of Edinburgh.

ISG remains committed to supporting open and sustainable learning and teaching practices by encouraging engagement with OER within the curriculum, and supporting the development of digital literacies for both staff and students in their use of OERs. The policy presented to the committee is intended to be enabling and to be “clear and concise to encourage participation by all”. By adopting the policy, we believe that the University will demonstrate its commitment to those members of the University who wish to use and create OERs in their learning and teaching activities, and those who wish to disseminate the knowledge created and curated within the University to the wider community.



# Open Educational Resources Policy

## Purpose of Policy

This policy outlines the University's position on Open Educational Resources (OERs) and provides guidelines for practice in learning and teaching.

The University encourages staff and students to use, create, and publish OERs to enhance the quality of the student experience, enhance the provision of learning opportunities for all, and improve teaching practices. It also recognises that use, creation, and publication of OERs are consistent with the University's reputation, values, and mission to *"make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world, promoting health and economic and cultural wellbeing"*.

## Overview

This document provides background, University position and guidance for the use of OERs in learning and teaching at the University of Edinburgh.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

This policy applies to all students and staff in the University. It is overseen by the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee.

Contact Officer	Name	Role	Email

## Document control

Dates	Approved: DD.MM.YY	Starts: DD.MM.YY	Equality impact assessment: DD.MM.YY	Amendments: DD.MM.YY	Next Review: YYYY/YYYY

Approving authority	Learning and Teaching Committee on behalf of Senatus
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Consultation undertaken	Learning and Teaching Committee, Edinburgh University Student Association (EUSA), OER working group, OER workshop participants, OER practitioners participating in EUSA benchmarking exercise, Library & University Collections, Centre for Educational Technology, Interoperability and Standards (Cetis), UKOER community.
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Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Information Services
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Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	n/a
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UK Quality Code	Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching
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Policies superseded by this policy	n/a
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Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 650 2138.
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Keywords	Open educational resources, open education practice, open education, widening participation
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# Open Educational Resources Policy

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## Background

The University is committed to participating in a scholarly community characterised by world-leading teaching, research and practice across a range of disciplines. We promote and support the development and continuous improvement of our courses and programmes to provide our students with the optimum learning experience, which is distinctively an Edinburgh experience.

Our staff use a wide range of self-generated teaching materials to support exceptional teaching, including teaching notes, hand-outs, audio, images, animations, multimedia materials and others. Staff also provide students with resources generated from elsewhere within the University to support learning, for example from the University library, museums and collections. In addition, resources are available from beyond the University to support student learning. These may include images, audio/video resources, animations and other digital resources.

Open educational resources (OER) are digital resources that are used in the context of teaching and learning (e.g. course material, images, video, multimedia resources, assessment items, etc.), which have been released by the copyright holder under an open licence (e.g. Creative Commons) permitting their use or re-purposing (re-use, revision, remixing, redistribution) by others. Staff and students at the University of Edinburgh may wish to use OERs to enhance learning and teaching whilst contributing to *“a vast pool of educational resources on the Internet, open and free for all to use ... creating a world where each and every person on earth can access and contribute to the sum of all human knowledge”*<sup>1</sup>.

## University position

1. The University encourages staff and students to use, create and publish OERs to enhance the quality of the student experience, provided that the resources are fit-for-purpose and relevant.
2. Use, creation and publication of OERs are consistent with the University’s reputation, values and mission to *“make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world, promoting health and economic and cultural wellbeing.”*
3. It is expected that OERs used, created or published by individual staff and students will normally be single units or small collections (e.g. podcast episodes, small collection of images etc.) rather than whole courses.
4. Whether or not OERs are used or published in a School, Department or Service is ultimately a decision for the Head of School, Head of Department or Head of Service as appropriate. Unless stated to the contrary, it is assumed that use, creation and publication of single units or small collections will be allowed. Where use, creation and publication are to be restricted, Schools, Departments and Services are encouraged to identify and communicate a rationale for restriction. It is expected that justifications for restriction will normally be based on protection of commercial interests.
5. University policies on IPR must be adhered to. When using OERs, students and staff must comply with the terms of the licence of use.
6. All OERs used and created must comply with University policies on inclusiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> Cape Town Declaration. (2007). *Cape Town Open Education Declaration: Unlocking the Promise of Open Educational Resources*. Retrieved from: [www.capetowndeclaration.org/read-the-declaration](http://www.capetowndeclaration.org/read-the-declaration)



# Open Educational Resources Policy

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7. The University reserves the right to remove resources that do not comply with its policies, and/or request removal of resources from external repositories/sites.

## Guidance

1. It is the responsibility of staff and students to ensure that they have the necessary rights to publish an OER and that all resources published comply with all relevant policies (e.g. copyright, IPR, accessibility).
2. Staff and students are advised to publish OERs using a Creative Commons attribution licence (CC BY). Other Creative Commons licences (for example to add a non-commercial use or share-alike element) may be used if the creators feel this is necessary or appropriate for their particular resource, or to comply with the license of any third party content used in the resource.
3. When creating and publishing OERs, the copyright owner(s), author(s), date and Creative Commons licence applied must be visibly attributed. The copyright owner will normally be the University of Edinburgh for OERs created at the University. Author(s) should also be properly acknowledged, giving recognition for work undertaken, along with date and Creative Commons licence applied so that others can clearly understand what permissions for reuse are being granted. An example of good attribution would be:

© [Author Name], University of Edinburgh 2016 CC BY

4. The University recommends that written and interactive digital teaching resources should be published in an appropriate repository or public-access website in order to maximise discovery and use by others. Where OERs have been created as part of an externally funded activity, any storage and/or repository locations mandated as a condition of the funding should be used.
5. The University recommends that audio/video based OER teaching resources should be published in the University's multimedia repository, *Media Hopper*.
6. Staff and students are encouraged to collect data where possible on usage of their OERs for: quality assurance mechanisms (e.g. module/programme review); staff recognition, reward and progression; or recognition of a student's portfolio-of-work.
7. Where students are producing OERs as part of their programme of study or within a staff-directed project, these guidelines should be followed and OERs should be checked by a member of staff before publication.

Adapted from University of Leeds OERs (<http://find.jorum.ac.uk/resources/10949/17559>), incorporating additions from the GCU Interim OER Policy (<http://www.gcu.ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/library/content/pdf/GCU-Interim-Open-Educational-Resources-Policy-Approved.pdf>) and the University of Greenwich Position in relation to Open Educational Practices 2015-2017 (<http://blogs.gre.ac.uk/greenwichconnect/files/2015/09/UoG-Position-re-Open-Educational-Practices-ALTCVersion-DRAFT.pdf>).



# Open Educational Resources Policy

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**Insert latest date approved/amended**



The University of Edinburgh  
Learning & Teaching Committee

## **Lecture Capture at University of Edinburgh**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper outlines the opportunities and risks associated with a large scale rollout of an automated lecture capture service at University of Edinburgh.

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

There have been repeated requests to ISG from colleagues in schools, colleges and from EUSA that all university lectures should be available online to improve the student experience.

### **Action requested**

LTC are invited to consider the policy and practice issues in the paper and approve ISG to do further exploration regarding cost options to replace CaptureEd and extend lecture capture to more teaching rooms.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Actions and recommendations from LTC will inform ISG 10 year planning and future business cases.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

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

This paper does not in itself have resource implications, but any future ISG projects resulting from it will.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The paper describes the risks associated with the current situation and proposes further action to mitigate that risk. CaptureEd is beyond end of life. It is not possible to source spare parts for existing installations and the software and hardware on which it relies is no longer supported. No new installations are being carried out and some existing installations have had to be taken out of service.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

Lecture capture has benefits to members of the University in providing

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equality of access to learning materials.

**4. Freedom of information**

This paper is **open**.

**Key words**

Lecture capture, student experience

**Originator of the paper**

Melissa Highton. Director, Learning, Teaching and Web Services

## Lecture Capture at University of Edinburgh

### Summary

1. This paper outlines the opportunities and risks associated with a large scale rollout of an automated lecture capture service at University of Edinburgh

### Background:

2. There have been repeated requests to ISG from colleagues in schools, colleges and from EUSA that all university lectures should be available online.
3. A number of peer universities have invested in *university-wide lecture capture systems which record automatically lectures for all subjects where they are scheduled in the central timetabling system and take place in lecture captured enabled rooms*. Recordings are then made accessible to students via a university VLE or similar.
4. The University of Edinburgh is making significant investment in its estate, physical and virtual.
5. In the past, the University has invested in a home-grown lecture capture solution: CaptureEd which is now at end of life. In order to maintain a centrally supported lecture capture service for the schools that already rely upon it, investment in a replacement service is needed. Some schools have invested in local pilot solutions because CaptureEd is unreliable.
6. Commitment to scaling up the lecture capture service would require investment over several years. The market for a replacement for CaptureEd is not clear cut- the technology is changing rapidly. The perceived purposes and pedagogy of lectures and lecture capture are also changing.
7. Student satisfaction levels with lecture capture at other institutions is high and there is evidence to suggest that it is of significant benefit for students who are not native English speakers, or who have particular learning difficulties.
8. Careful thinking about policy, practice and pedagogical return on investment is now needed.

- Is lecture capture at scale a worthwhile investment for University of Edinburgh?
- Can our existing platforms, policies and practice meet students' needs?
- What policies would need to be in place to enable colleagues to opt in or out?
- What needs to be recorded? What needs to be provided (audio, video, transcripts?)
- What should be kept? How long would we keep it?
- How would it be used and shared by teachers and students?
- Would learning and teaching be enhanced?
- Once we have captured lectures associated with a course, would we want to encourage staff to do something different with contact time?
- To what extent does student dis-satisfaction reflect a more general demand for online learning materials that can be accessed flexibly?
- To what extent is this lecture capture likely to promote more engagement and use and sharing of media within teaching and learning in general?
- How should we evaluate current use of CaptureEd and Panopto?

## Proposal

- That ISG actively pursue a replacement for CaptureEd in the 35 rooms currently equipped.
- That ISG extend lecture capture coverage to all centrally managed teaching spaces of a certain size.
- That Colleges are given the option to opt into a new central service.
- That ISG explore costing options over 5 -10 years.
- That a project board is established to oversee investment and delivery.
- That LTC consider and approve the policies associated with use of automated lecture capture by staff and students.

## Current provision

9. Lecture capture is currently used on an opt-in basis, capturing a mixture of academic lectures and one-off events such as guest lectures, conference presentations etc. The decision to use lecture capture or not rests with individual academic colleagues, as do decisions about how and where best to release recorded content.
10. Mobile filming crews are used for bespoke filming. This gives flexibility about where and when content is captured, as well as offering a more personal service

to staff to promote more active engagement with media. Use of film crews is opt-in and charged for cost recovery.

11. There are around 35 rooms currently equipped for lecture capture using the centrally supported **CapturEd** system. These rooms are large lecture theatres and are equipped to capture camera, audio and slides. Use of CapturEd is opt-in and charged for cost recovery. Capturing of lectures is scheduled in advance. There are no reliable reporting mechanisms, so it is hard to say how recorded content is being used by students.
12. CapturEd is also being used to record and stream from one location to another to resolve problems where classes are beyond the maximum sizes that our lecture theatres can accommodate. This area of demand is increasing and is proving difficult to service with the current options available.

## Investment so far

13. ISG carried out a 'Media for Learning and Engagement' (MLE) project during 2014-15. Lecture capture needs were discussed within the project and on the advice of IT Committee the project timescales were extended to allow more user engagement to properly understand this area.
14. The MLE project discovered that whilst the need for a fit for purpose centrally supported lecture capture service was acute, it was specific only to certain courses / Schools. By contrast the need for proper media asset management and creation tools was universal, and cut across learning and teaching, public engagement and research agendas.
15. Our Flexible and Inclusive Learning Policy grants students the right to make a personal audio recording of any lecture.
16. Supplier engagement during the MLE project revealed that many of the media asset management systems that come with established lecture capture systems would not have met our needs. What we do in our teaching and learning spaces will change over time, but the need to manage media assets is ongoing.

17. Working within a limited budget for the MLE project the **Kaltura** system (Media Hopper) was chosen because it best met our needs for media creation and asset management, and also gives us options for lecture capture, rather than restricting us to any one particular vendor.
18. There are a number of rooms in the College of Humanities and Social Science which are equipped for lecture capture using the **Panopto** lecture capture system. Panopto is paid for by the College and relies on a distributed support model within each School. Panopto is used on an opt-in basis, except in the School of PPLS who have chosen to mandate an opt-out model. The current scale of Panopto pilots has kept it below the level at which the University is required to engage in formal procurement exercise.
19. Pilots of Panopto in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine are being run this year and an initial meeting with staff from the College of Science and Engineering has been held to explore interest. The lack of a satisfactory central system offers the opportunity for proliferation of multiple solutions.
20. Scaling up Panopto across 3 Colleges as a service would require a procurement exercise to invite other vendors to show how they meet our institutional requirements.
21. Most use of Panopto requires the presenter to actively start and stop their lecture capture recordings, though some initial trial of a scheduling tool is in progress. Panopto has an integration with Learn VLE. So lecture recordings can be published to students via their module area in the VLE.
22. Media Hopper media asset management service includes software capture tools that are primarily designed to be used in a desktop context. Media Hopper recording tools would not currently be suitable for use in a lecture capture scenario as the short changeover times between lectures does not allow sufficient time for recorded content to be uploaded. Media Hopper provides an excellent solution for mobile media delivery and an institutional media portal with multiple channels. It integrates with Learn VLE and EdWeb.

## Risk

23. CapturEd is beyond end of life. It is not possible to source spare parts for existing installations and the software and hardware on which it relies is no

longer supported. No new installations are being carried out and some existing installations have had to be taken out of service. It is increasingly unreliable, but no quick fix is available.

24. There is risk (but also opportunity) in the volume of estates work affecting teaching spaces. The cost of including cameras and recording facilities in rooms as they are built and refurbished must be planned in.
25. Efficient lecture capture at scale requires integration with the central timetabling and room booking systems.
26. Significant challenges still exist in using automated capture systems to effectively capture teaching done using large chalkboards, flip charts etc.
27. None of the lecture capture products currently include an entirely satisfactory mechanism for creating text transcripts from audio or video capture so the burden of producing (and storing) transcripts carries an additional cost.
28. Integration of lecture capture systems with each additional VLE carries additional cost.
29. Where a significant number of lecturers are from outside the institution, or expect to use their own laptops, software based systems can become more costly and problematic to support requiring the installation of software on laptops in advance.
30. Conference and event organisers often request bespoke filming of guest speakers over and above automated systems available in the room.
31. Some of the content used in lecture slides is not properly attributed and/or cleared for use. This is already a known risk, and increased support for copyright questions and the creation and use of openly licensed resources has been introduced in the last 12 months. The recording and storage of lectures would increase the risk, and potential liability to the institution.
32. We have around 2,900 undergraduate courses. If we assume on average around 15 hours of lecture content per year per course, stored for 2 years and 80% of

courses using the service, we need to have capacity to store and stream 69,600 hours of video ( less for audio plus slides).

## Changing technology

33. More recent definitions of lecture capture move beyond the narrow capturing of traditional lecture theatre activity, and encompass the use of desktop tools or professional recording services to create media content tailored for ease of viewing and maintenance. Often this content is in smaller segments, with a more personal style, and that can be more easily mixed and matched, or updated when necessary.
34. Smartphones and tablets are the norm enabling the practice of 'bring your own device' to record and access rich media content.
35. As technology evolves the 'locked box' approach to lecture capture technology is making way for a new generation of systems thanks to the advent of the IMS Open Video standard.

## Moving forward

36. As market leaders, the suppliers of Panopto and Kaltura do not currently have easy integration for their solutions. Panopto and Media Hopper can however co-exist even without integration. From a user point of view whether media in a VLE is coming from Panopto or Media Hopper would be largely the same. We already have content from YouTube, Vimeo and our captured mixed into courses with no significant issues. Using two systems with no automated integration however, reduces the opportunity for sharing content.
37. The University has the option to continue a more widespread roll out of Panopto and /or to explore other solutions which integrate with Media Hopper.

## Policy and Practice

38. An opt-out model of lecture capture has been adopted at the University of Leeds, Manchester and most recently Newcastle. At both Leeds and Manchester there was significant concern amongst academic staff and local UCU branches.



LTC: 27.01.16  
H/02/25/02

## **LTC 15/16 3 I**

39. Strong academic leadership promoting the benefits within the wider teaching and learning and student experience contexts is essential to achieving high levels of adoption.
  
40. Appropriate policies for retention, licensing, sharing, editing and publishing lecture recordings are now required at university, college and school level.

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Learning and Teaching Committee  
27 January 2016

## **Student Experience Update**

### **Executive Summary**

From November 2015 to early January 2016, the Senior Vice Principal visited all Schools with the Deputy Secretary Student Experience to discuss 2015 NSS results and wider issues in learning and teaching. The paper sets out a number of issues which directly or indirectly appear to be affecting the student experience, together with good practice examples from the various Schools which could be considered and adopted more widely.

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

Excellence in Education; Outstanding Student Experience

### **Action requested**

For discussion

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Key themes will be communicated via the Senate Committees' Newsletter.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

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

Not applicable at this time.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

Not applicable at this time.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

Not applicable at this time.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

This paper is **open**.

### **Originator of the paper**

Professor Charlie Jeffery, Senior Vice Principal  
Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience

## Student Experience Update

From November to early January the Senior Vice Principal visited all Schools together with Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience, to discuss 2015 NSS results and wider issues in learning and teaching. Each visit involved the relevant Head of College and College Dean along with the Head of School and School Director(s) of Teaching. The agenda was NSS; performance management in learning and teaching, personal tutor system, assessment and feedback, and simplification of L&T procedures.

The following sets out a number of issues which directly or indirectly appear to be affecting student experience, together with a number of good practice examples from the various Schools which could be considered and adopted more widely.

### Key Themes and Good Practice

#### a) General Issues

**The estate:** a number of Schools report short or longer term challenges around their estate. Most of these are in the George Square area where Schools have outgrown their current space. Decants add pressure in George Square and KB. Some aspects of the NSS challenge will not be resolved until we are further through our estates plan.

**Joint honours:** Free text NSS comments show that joint honours students (an especially large group in HSS) are unhappy with the inconsistencies (not necessarily shortfalls in quality) they encounter across Schools. We would benefit from frameworks for multi-subject degrees without the full-scale bureaucracy that accumulates around often very small degree programmes. Schools need to pay particular attention to student support and communications in larger joint honours programmes.

*Good practice:*

- *Some schools (eg SPS, HCA) are looking at a dedicated, single SSO or PT who can work across both schools for joint honours students.*

**Student engagement:** While all Schools have formal representation of students through an SSLC or similar, others have developed more sophisticated forms of engagement which support better communications, foster community - and allow issues to be addressed more rapidly:

*Good practice:*

- *In Education students sit on all school committees including school policy and resources. In addition, the Head of School offers a personal reference to those reps who do a good job. She observed that students are typically more involved in their own learning as a result of their involvement in the school's governance.*
- *Informatics have introduced weekly meetings between the Director of Teaching and student reps (and actions resulting are publicised through a regular blog).*
- *Maths use a range of different communications vehicles eg:*
  - *Comments boxes – dealt with by head of school who responds every 2 weeks*

- *Mid course postcards in lectures that staff can respond to. These generated positive messages (which are then fed back to students) as well as areas that students have struggled with (so lecturer can go back over the topic).*

## b) Performance Issues

**Annual review:** Practices of annual review vary significantly. In many schools performance in teaching is not a routine agenda item (as it everywhere is for research), and we lack common understandings of what information might be used to inform a conversation on teaching performance. More generally there are differing assumptions about the role of annual review in informing performance management. Informal advice to Schools should bring more consistency in this year's annual review round, and People Committee will be reviewing formal guidelines. Better data availability from the EvaSys system will bring a standard information base from 2016-17.

### *Good practice:*

- *A number of schools (eg Engineering, Informatics, Vets) have already modified annual review forms to include discussion on teaching. CSE are looking at requiring all schools to do this.*
- *In Maths, all staff are peer reviewed, these peer reviews are then commented on by the Director of Teaching and this forms the basis of the teaching section in the annual review.*
- *With HiSS, staff are asked to define and collate their annual review submission according to a standard template - research plan, Evasys feedback etc. Staff engagement in this process is seen as in itself a form of development*

**Transparency of Data on L&T:** There are divergent understandings of the transparency of information on workload and on course-level evaluation (through EvaSys or other means). I am keen to prompt a wider debate on this point as we move to roll out EvaSys across the University, and to argue that information should generally be open to all academic colleagues.

### *Good practice:*

- *Vets share feedback scores from their current course evaluation and courses are grouped red/amber/green (this analysis is then shared with the teaching committee). They have seen positive results from colleagues keen to improve and get out of red/amber (but noted that staff – including good teachers – may take these sorts of issues very personally).*
- *Informatics publish numeric survey results and staff responses to all students*  
<https://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/admin/ITO/course-survey-reports/>  
*They also use the data to help students choose future courses, eg by publishing answers to the question on their current questionnaire “what would you tell other students about this course*
- *Geosciences publish their Evasys course results very openly (on UoE intranet) and use Evasys as entrance point into a discussion at Annual Review.*
- *Maths: Evasys results are open (not free text) to staff and students – note that poor performers “feel awkward”. Not yet using Evasys in annual review but “students are aware that Evasys counts”.*

**Capability processes:** There is a wide perception that capability processes are cumbersome and may deter action on under-performance. I have begun a dialogue across central and College HR directors aimed at giving Heads of School the support they need to address under-performance.

This will need to consider tutors and demonstrators as well as core academic staff. There are some examples of effective and relatively swift action which suggest the problem may be more one of confidence in procedures rather than procedures themselves. People Committee will be reviewing the capability process.

**Peer observation of teaching:** Use of peer observation to prompt discussion about teaching approach and performance is very patchy. We need to consider whether to move to a more standardised expectation around peer review.

### c) Personal tutor system

Schools take often quite different approaches to personal tutor support, reflecting differences of tradition and culture. There are some concerns that the system is cumbersome. We now have strong evidence from re-analysis of ESES that around 80% of personal tutors in all Schools provide good support and around 20% do not. AP Alan Murray is working on approaches to identifying and addressing performance issues (at both ends of the scale) and is keen that Heads of School begin now to address under-performance to secure improvement including reallocation of workload to other tasks if necessary.

*Good practice examples:*

- *Chemistry has a well-regarded PT system, which relies on the use of specialist staff. A number of schools are interested in exploring this model further. Chemistry stress that their PT system is embedded within a strong culture of building relationships between staff and students.*
- *A number of schools (eg Maths, PPLS, and Chemistry) adopt a cohort approach so that students have (as far as possible) the same PT for three or more years.*
- *Schools are increasingly flexing the PT system to meet students' needs better. Eg Informatics have introduced more frequent PT meetings for first year students.*
- *Moray House have produced Student Support FAQ's which set out clearly where students need to go for support and prevent / reduce the problem of students being passed "from pillar to post".*
- *Several schools (eg Vets / Chemistry / Informatics / Moray House) have mandatory training for all PT's (once a year or more often).*
- *SPS have produced and distributed business cards that clearly show a student's PT and contact details and (on the other side) their SSO.*
- *There is some evidence that support systems work particularly well where the PT and SSO teams are closely linked and mutually supportive. Moray House and Divinity both adopt an inclusive "one staff" approach, eg ensuring that SSO's and PT's are trained together; the Vet School have established a "Student Support and Management Group" that brings together their student support team with senior academic staff and the Chair of Vet Education.*

### d) Assessment and feedback

**Assessment and feedback timeliness:** Schools are generally focused on the 15 day benchmark and in the great majority of cases achieving it (some have established shorter, 10-day benchmarks). There will be a systematic review to confirm compliance rates in the next few weeks. However even when Schools have clear evidence of close to 100% compliance, this is not generally reflected in better 'timeliness' scores in NSS. One explanation is a tendency to bunch deadlines in different courses at the end of a semester so students have the opportunity neither

to feed forward between individual pieces of coursework across courses, nor to feed forward into exam preparation for the same course when the exam follows directly at the end of the semester. Schools should consider approaching assessment on a programme-wide basis, scheduling coursework to enable feed-forward and considering whether traditional assessment patterns are still appropriate.

A number of Heads of School suggested that the low score on assessment and feedback was more symptomatic of wider student concerns about how much contact students have with staff and/or the approachability of staff and are trying to address this as well.

*Good practice examples:*

- *Informatics: work to a 10 day internal deadline, with return of feedback monitored automatically including a dashboard and auto-emails to staff who are behind*
- *SPS use a screen ticker tape to update students on feedback turnaround time*
- *Divinity: get "heads up" from course secretaries who will alert HoS to possibly poor feedback before essays returned. Chemistry have a similar approach, where course secretaries can flag up concerns to course organisers.*
- *HCA have introduced new workload rules to improve student access to staff - new formula is 4-5 contact hrs per week during semester (standard office hours plus one hour per course taught). Engineering have introduced mandatory surgery hours for all staff who teach – "Availability of staff to see students correlates with perceived enthusiasm of staff"*
- *Vets have experimented with immediate feedback and explanation, ie straight after students have completed an MCQ. This has proved popular.*
- *Chemistry have moved to the immediate release of provisional marks subject to moderation – which they believe accounts for significant increase in score for promptness of feedback.*
- *Chemistry have introduced a final year project review mid project - in December (ie just before NSS) which has been positive re quality of feedback responses.*
- *In Chemistry a Student rep was commissioned to produce a leaflet on "what to make of feedback" for students*
- *Biological Sciences run a "Meet the marker" to improve transparency and practice (ie as staff have to justify marks given). It was noted that "students could attend more - esp in early years."*

**Academic year dates and exams:** there is growing recognition that examining S1 courses at the end of S2 is unpopular, especially where widespread use of 10 credit courses produced a large number of S2 exams. There is wide support for a rescheduling of the academic year to accommodate a fuller S1 exam diet (and parallel action in CSE and elsewhere to reduce the number of 10 credit courses aligns well with this aim). The pattern of the academic year will be reviewed this semester.

**Charlie Jeffery  
Gavin Douglas**

**January 2016**

The University of Edinburgh  
Learning and Teaching Committee

27 January 2016

## **Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2016: Institutional Questions**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper presents the proposed institutional questions – those that will be specifically asked of students at the University of Edinburgh – for the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2016.

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

Excellence in Education; Outstanding Student Experience

### **Action requested**

For approval

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Not applicable

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**  
None
- 2. Risk assessment**  
Not included
- 3. Equality and Diversity**  
Not included
- 4. Freedom of information**  
This paper is **open**

### **Originator of the paper**

Thea Farmer, Student Surveys Co-ordinator

## **Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2016: Institutional Questions**

It is proposed that the following questions are asked specifically of students at the University of Edinburgh:

**Question 21:** What are your opinions of the University's library service?

Question 21.1: I am happy with the level of service I have received from library staff, whether by email/telephone or remotely

Question 21.2: I have received adequate help and advice from library staff on using library search and research tools

Question 21.3: The library's electronic collections are sufficient for my needs

Question 21.4: The library's print collections are sufficient for my needs

Question 21.5: I know that when the library does not have a resource that I want, they can help me access it in a different way

**Question 22:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement

Question 22.1: I feel part of an academic community in the University of Edinburgh

**Question 23:** Looking back, what one thing could have improved your experience of the University of Edinburgh?

**Question 24:** I am satisfied with the support provided by my Personal Tutor



The University of Edinburgh

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

27 January 2016

## **University Response to ‘Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice – Consultation’**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper is the University’s response to the UK Government’s Green Paper ‘Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice’.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee’s strategic plans and priorities?**

Excellence in Education; Outstanding Student Experience

### **Action requested**

For information

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

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

To be determined depending on the outcome of the consultation.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The paper does not include a risk assessment.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The equality impact will be assessed once the outcome of the consultation is known.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

This paper is **open**

### **Originator of the paper**

Ms Tracey Slaven, Director of Planning



## Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

### **Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice - Consultation**

You can reply to this consultation online at:

<https://bisgovuk.citizenspace.com/he/fulfilling-our-potential>

A copy of this response form is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice>

The Department may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make available, on public request, individual responses.

The closing date for this consultation is 15/01/2016

Name:	Tracey Slaven
Organisation (if applicable):	Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
Address:	Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh
Email Address:	Tracey.slaven@ed.ac.uk

Please return completed forms to:

Alison Haines  
Higher Education Directorate  
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills  
Level 1, 2 St Paul's Place  
125 Norfolk Street  
Sheffield  
S1 2FJ

email: [consultation.he@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.he@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

Please tick the box that best describes you as a respondent to this consultation.

	Alternative higher education provider (with designated courses)
	Alternative higher education provider (no designated courses)
	Awarding organisation
	Business/Employer
	Central government
	Charity or social enterprise
	Further Education College
<b>X</b>	Higher Education Institution
	Individual (Please describe any particular relevant interest; parent, student, teaching staff etc.)
	Legal representative
	Local Government
	Professional Body
	Representative Body
	Research Council
	Trade union or staff association
	Other (please describe)

## Public sector equality duty

### Question 1:

- a) **What are your views on the potential equality impacts of the proposals and other plans in this consultation?**

There is a significant danger that national analysis of equality impacts may not capture the unintended consequences of policy decisions when enacted in specific geographic areas.

**b) Are there any equality impacts that we have not considered?**

Yes

No

Not sure

Please provide any further relevant evidence.

The geographic distribution of the BME population in the UK is of particular concern in regard to the points made at a).

**Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (Part A: Chapters 1-3)**

**Question 2: How can information from the TEF be used to better inform student and employer decision making? Please quantify these benefits as far as you can.**

The University of Edinburgh welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Green Paper. As the paper recognises, the funding delivered through the Research Councils and some broader elements of Research Policy are reserved matters and thus have a direct impact on Higher Education institutions across the UK. We would, however, stress that while Higher Education teaching is a devolved matter this distinction is not clear within the international view of the U.K. Higher Education brand nor indeed for many prospective applicants. Significant care must therefore be taken to ensure that policy decisions do not have unintended consequences for geographic (and potentially social) mobility for students across the UK or on the international reputation of UK Higher Education.

Whether the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish sectors participate directly in the TEF or not; it is inconceivable that the TEF measures will not be incorporated into the UK league tables, into advice to prospective UK, EU and international students and influence potential collaborative partners. The perception of institutions could then be informed by raw data on measures over which institutions have no quality control or ability to contextualise that data. It is clear that further work must be undertaken to gain a fuller understanding of the range of what genuinely constitutes good teaching, the benefit of the wider student experience in the social development of students and how to provide applicants with a clearer insight into nature of the learning experience. We would suggest that, like the REF, a UK wide TEF should be based on consultation across the devolved nations.

The University of Edinburgh believes that excellence in learning and excellence in research have unambiguously equal priority and that the important link between teaching and research must be recognised. We agree that that Higher Education should deliver lasting value to graduates but emphasise the importance of the wider social impacts of as well as economic ones. Independent learning should take place alongside lectures and group work and our students have a vital role in the co-creation of their learning. High quality teaching facilities, including digital and library resources are also essential.

Further work is also required to understand how prospective students access and use the considerable information which is already available at both course and institutional level and the interplay between that information and the influence of preconceptions held by school advisers, parents and other influencers.

**Question 3: Do you agree that the ambition for TEF should be that it is open to all HE providers, all disciplines, all modes of delivery and all levels?**

Yes

No

Not sure

Please give reasons for your answers.

The University of Edinburgh is supportive of the UK Government's aspirations to improve the standard of teaching and to widen access to Higher Education. We would emphasise the importance of distinguishing between the actions needed to achieve these objectives but would wish to positively contribute to the development of the Teaching Excellence Framework and activities to widening access to Higher Education.

We would however strongly stress the need to consider the unique educational provision in Scotland, the potential impact of an English only TEF on the cross-border geographic mobility of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and on the international reputation of the UK sector.

The University of Edinburgh is particularly proud of the effectiveness of the bursary scheme we introduced in 2012-13 for English, Welsh and Northern Irish students from low income households as a mechanism for sustaining mobility despite the perceived lower cost of living at home.

Our uncapped bursary programme applies to all years of undergraduate study, is automatic (as a result of data sharing agreements with SLC and SAAS) and has a value of up to £7k per annum for those from lowest income households out with Scotland. Almost 1,340 (22%) of our English, Welsh and Northern Irish undergraduate students are in receipt of these automatic bursaries. Almost 600 students, from households with less than £16k income benefit from the £7k per annum maximum award. Our recent evaluation identified that the existence of the bursary had a significant impact on the decision to apply to Edinburgh and accept our offer for over 50% of recipients. In 2011-12, 89 new entrants from England, Wales and Northern had a widening participation characteristic. By 2014-15, the number of entrants with a widening participation characteristic had increased to 513.

**Question 4: Where relevant, should an approved Access Agreement be a pre-requisite for a TEF award? What other mechanism might be used for different types of providers?**

We appreciate and share the desire of the U.K. Government to accelerate progress in social mobility and the widening of access to Higher Education. The University of Edinburgh is a sector-leader in the use of contextualised admissions.

We believe that a commitment to widening access should be pre-requisite for all institutions in receipt of higher education funding through fee loans or other support. However, the TEF itself should be clearly focused on matters of teaching quality.

We would also note that, while Access Agreements with OFFA are unique to the English sector, the devolved administrations have similar arrangements in place which should be recognised in the evolution of a UK wide TEF. Specifically, in Scotland, all fundable bodies are required by the Post 16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 to have an Access Agreement designed to support widening access for prospective students from under-represented groups.

**Question 5: Do you agree with the proposals on:**

**a) what would constitute a ‘successful’ QA review**

Yes       No       Not sure

**b) the incentives that should be open to alternative providers for the first year of the TEF**

Yes       No       Not sure

**c) the proposal to move to differentiated levels of TEF from year two?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

Quality reviews across the UK all assess universities and HE institutions against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. It is important therefore that this equivalency is explicitly recognised and that appropriate UK-wide agreement on cross-border arrangements are in place to support student mobility and access to the tuition fee loans at appropriate levels. The current definition of a “successful” QA review does not achieve this.

We would also explicitly suggest that the Enhancement Led aspects of the ELIR review in Scotland, focused on the institution’ strategic approach to improving the student learning experience, is not simply equivalent to a “successful” QA assessment but may provide positive insights into the future development of the TEF.

In relation to alternative providers without DAP, it may be presumed that the validation process for the degrees awarded by existing fundable bodies should

reflect teaching quality. Given the potential for more than one fundable body to provide degree validation to a single alternative provider, the connection to TEF might therefore be at programme level.

We would encourage further consideration of the options for future development of the TEF levels. We would be concerned that the development of a significant number of levels would be both confusing for student applicants but also potentially undermine the international reputation of the U.K. sector. The ability to operate within the UK sector (without DAP), the base level, must still be viewed as meeting a high, if probationary, quality threshold. Identifying only 2 levels of excellence beyond this level would then equate to successful qualify assessment/advanced proficiency and to specialist expertise in a thematic area such as employability or widening participation.

**Question 6: Do you agree with the proposed approach to TEF assessments on**

**Timing?**

Yes       No       Not sure

**Assessment panels?**

Yes       No       Not sure

**and process?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

We would suggest that a rolling cycle of assessments, aligned/integrated with the QAA process would appear to offer both minimisation of bureaucracy but also recognise the extended nature of the relationship between the institution and the student.

We would strongly suggest that the success of the ELIR review panels is carefully considered in developing the approach to review and the benefit of on-site visits. The approach has allowed both focus on areas in need of additional attention but also allowed the identification of best practice for dissemination across the sector. We would actively advise against the establishment of long-standing fixed membership panels and the establishment of a significant number of subject specific panels. The positive experience of combining REF Units of Assessment should be considered relative to this issue.

**Question 7: How can we minimise any administrative burdens on institutions? Please provide any evidence relating to the potential administrative costs and benefits to institutions of the proposals set out in this document.**

We are concerned that the current approach to TEF, in the absence of developed material on metrics or process, potentially adds significant additional bureaucracy; especially as or when there is a move to subject-level review. Universities already operate internal quality assurance mechanisms, external examiner system, QAA reviews, and audit reviews by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. The design of the TEF must therefore be very clear in terms of the additional benefits to be delivered and ensure that existing systems are utilised whenever possible.

**Question 8: Do you agree with the proposed approach to differentiation and award as TEF develops over time?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

We expect the TEF to offer significant reputational advantage and as a consequence would argue strongly for its operation at a UK level. However, we would also argue that the creation of a large number of tiers has the potential to introduce the potential for reputational damage. We wish to ensure that our international students and competitors recognise the widespread excellence across the sector while emphasising those institutions which are outstanding.

We would also strongly suggest that an iterative approach to the design of future levels of the TEF is adopted. We would suggest that the development of the Athena Swan model offers some insights in this regard. These awards have evolved to encourage best practice and widen the scope of their impact as the sector has responded to the gender agenda.

**Question 9: Do you agree with the proposed approach to incentives for the different types of provider?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.



We would welcome, in principle, the ability to increase fees by inflation from 2017/18. We would however be concerned about further linkages between higher TEF levels and fee increases while the TEF process is in such an early stage of development.

As a Scottish institution, we are of course concerned that the failure to operate TEF across the UK would both unintentionally impact on our reputation and create a funding gap between Scottish and English institutions. It is essential that the Scottish ELIR assessment is recognised as equivalent to/exceeding the minimum TEF requirements and that appropriate increases in student loan availability for English students studying a Scottish institutions with a successful ELIR are put in place.

**Question 10: Do you agree with the focus on teaching quality, learning environment, student outcomes and learning gain?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

It is important that the TEF is seen to have credibility; so it is vital that the measures used are validated, accurately reported and focused solidly on teaching quality and on investment in the learning environment (IT and library resources, fieldwork and other relevant support) which underpins the best teaching. It is also important to recognise that universities are different from school and college environments and that independent learning alongside lectures and group work is a core part of a high quality undergraduate experience. There will also be legitimate and significant variation between higher education institutions depending on the range of options available to the student in designing their own degree programmes and extent to which teaching is research-led. Therefore while we agree with the focus proposed significant work is required on the measures.

**Question 11: Do you agree with the proposed approach to the evidence used to make TEF assessments - common metrics derived from the national databases supported by evidence from the provider?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

Diversity across HEIs should be recognised and encouraged; so it is important that additional evidence can be provided. However, this should not replace the

requirement to invest effectively in a core set of measures focused clearly on teaching quality which have the confidence of the sector.

## Social mobility and widening participation (Part A: Chapter 4)

### Question 12:

**a) Do you agree with the proposals to further improve access and success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

We are strongly supportive of actions to support improved access and success for all students regardless of their background. In addressing these issues, the University of Edinburgh is rightly proud of our sector-leading work on contextualised admissions and the bursary schemes we have introduced to encourage geographical mobility of students from low income households.

We would strongly advise that a focus on specific disadvantaged groups while appropriate at a national level needs also to recognise the importance of locational context. We would suggest that the Equalities Challenge Unit may have insight into this issue which also arose during the pilot assessment round for the Race Charter Mark. We understand that institutions (assessed anonymously) from areas with small BME population levels were initially identified as underperforming in their recruitment of BME staff and students but that the nature of that assessment is now being addressed. Our own experience is that while we recruit a relatively small number of BME UK students, in line with the distribution of BME population across the UK, the differential between the performance of this group and the overall cohort is much less (5% in 2013-14) than at the sector level (10-15% over the last 5 years – HEFCE).

We would however comment that while name-blind admissions processes may be possible to implement, with significant additional administration costs, the initial investigation of the issue with UCAS has not revealed any issues which would be addressed as a result. We are also concerned that any such system could impede our ability to identify widening access students for inclusion in our contextualised admissions process.

**b) Do you agree that the Office for Students should have the power to set targets where providers are failing to make progress?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

The Office for Students is a proposed part of the English regulatory architecture and we are not therefore in position to comment on the effectiveness of the proposals.

We would however comment more generally that addressing widening access and teaching quality are separate issues and should not be conflated. We would expect that challenges/targets for widening participation should be progressed within existing mechanisms. Institutional targets are however more likely to be successful if closely aligned to local circumstances.

**c) What other groups or measures should the Government consider?**

It is clear that under-representation can vary significantly in different geographies and may be localised to specific career paths. It is extremely important that structural issues impacting on access to careers are addressed collectively by schools, universities and employers.

**Question 13:**

**a) What potential benefits for decision and policy making in relation to improving access might arise from additional data being available?**

Information on specific subject requirements for specific degree programmes are available both through UCAS but also through University websites. There is however somewhat less visibility on the extent to which young people and their parents have appropriate choice in the selection of facilitating subjects for access to highly selective institutions and programmes.

**b) What additional administrative burdens might this place on organisations? If additional costs are expected to be associated with this, please quantify them.**

The additional administrative burdens associated with the data collection is likely to fall on the school rather than HEI sectors.

**Opening up the sector to new providers (Part B: Chapter 1)**

**Question 14: Do you agree with the proposed single route into the higher education sector?**

Yes

No

Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer, including information quantifying how the potential cost of entry would change as a result of these proposals.

There is no objection in principle to the opening up of the sector to a wider range of providers. However, there are concerns associated with rapid expansion, in terms of the potential for reputational damage to the sector and for the potential risk to individual student experience in the absence of an appropriate probationary period before institutions are fully validated. It would also be important to ensure that the balance of administrative pressures is not inadvertently skewed in favour of alternative providers for example in terms of FOI and procurement requirements.

**Question 15:**

**a) Do you agree with the proposed risk-based approach to eligibility for degree awarding powers (DAPs) and university title?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

The consideration of alternative options for the validation of degree programmes should give careful consideration to the nature of the intended relationship between the validating body and the need of value attached to the validation by individual student. It is worth noting that degree validation can be a successful and long-established relationship and is not automatically a one-sided or a route to Degree Awarding Powers. Good examples of such relationships relate the Glasgow School of Art and SRUC, both Scottish Fundable Bodies, which have their degrees validated by the University of Glasgow and the University of Edinburgh.

**b) What are your views on the options identified for validation of courses delivered by providers who do not hold DAPs?**

It would clearly be a concern if high quality providers without DAP were unable to find partners and thus enter Higher Education provision in the UK. However, it is not clear that that this is a substantial issue – certainly, we are not aware of significant approaches which have not received a positive response. We would therefore be concerned if an alternative validation process were introduced for those programmes which appear to offer negative exposure to partner bodies. A particular concern would relate to validation provided by entities without direct experience of learning delivery.

**Question 16: Do you agree with the proposed immediate actions intended to speed up entry?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

It would appear entirely appropriate to remove artificial timing barriers in the HER which delay application. We are also supportive of actions which allow increased certainty in planning for institutions and prospective students. However, this should not undermine the initial requirements designed to establish strong evidence of the financial sustainability which will protect provision to students.

## Provider exit and student protection (Part B: Chapter 2)

**Question 17: Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a requirement for all providers to have contingency arrangements to support students in the event that their course cannot be completed?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer, including evidence on the costs and benefits associated with having a contingency plan in place? Please quantify these costs where possible.

It is appropriate that the regulation of the Higher Education sector should include measures to protect students in the event of institutional failure or closure of courses. Established institutions already make appropriate arrangements when considering rebalancing of provision allowing existing cohorts to complete and or transfer to other local providers. We would however strongly argue that an across the board requirement to hold a reserve fund, bond or similar contingency arrangement would mean that vital funding from tuition fee income is held back from teaching and investment in facilities when the risk of exit is extremely low. We would suggest that a risk based approach is required and that that the requirement for formal contingency agreements are associated with accelerated progress through degree validation and DAP processes.

## Simplifying the higher education architecture (Part C)

**Question 18:**

**a) Do you agree with the proposed changes to the higher education architecture?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

We appreciate the desire to streamline the architecture of the higher education sector and to reflect the primary flow of funding for teaching reaching institutions through the choice of students. We would however emphasise the high level of skills developed within HEFCE in relation to the research, international and infrastructural aspects of higher education. The restructuring must aim to secure that knowledge and expertise within the sector.

**b) To what extent should the Office for Students (OfS) have the power to contract out its functions to separate bodies?**

Fully       Partially       Not at all

**c) If you agree, which functions should the OfS be able to contract out?**

Outsourcing of data collection and other functions currently works well and is often undertaken on behalf of all four funding bodies. Each proposal would need to be considered in its own right.

**d) What are your views on the proposed options for allocating Teaching Grant?**

**Option 1: BIS Ministers set strategic priorities and BIS officials determine formula.**

Agree       Disagree       Not sure

**Option 2: BIS Minister sets strategic priorities and allocation responsibilities divested to OfS**

Agree       Disagree       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer,

Option 2 is essentially the current model. It is however vital for all funding bodies to operate as arms-length bodies providing Government with guidance on strategic direction which extends beyond the short-term imperatives of the political cycle rather than simply acting as an agent of government.

**Question 19: Do you agree with the proposal for a single, transparent and light touch regulatory framework for every higher education provider?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer, including how the proposed framework would change the burden on providers. Please quantify the benefits and/or costs where possible.

This proposal is obviously restricted to English institutions. However, institutions in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland may well have concerns where decisions in relation to the English system impact on data collection, monitoring and other regulatory functions across the UK.

**Question 20: What steps could be taken to increase the transparency of student unions and strengthen unions' accountability to their student members?**

The rationale for including this issue within the consultation is not clear. The relationship between EUSA and the University of Edinburgh is one of constructive challenge and mutual support.

**Question 21:**

**a) Do you agree with the proposed duties and powers of the Office for Students?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

We are concerned that the separation of HEFCE's responsibilities for QR funding from support for teaching undermines what should be a productive, innovative and experience enhancing interface between ground-breaking research and teaching.

**b) Do you agree with the proposed subscription funding model?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

A subscription model for funding the Office for Students is a significant departure from current arrangements but reflects models for "regulatory" as opposed to "strategic advisory" entities. In such circumstances, subscriptions should reflect the level of risk associated with the individual institution – i.e. Pre-DAP, new-DAP, financial review concerns etc.

The lack of a strategic advisory function may be long-term concern given the importance of the global education environment.

**Question 22:**

**a) Do you agree with the proposed powers for OfS and the Secretary of State to manage risk?**

Yes

No

Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer.

The proposals for managing risk appears proportionate to the easing of access to the sector.

**b) What safeguards for providers should be considered to limit the use of such powers?**

Given the devastating impacts on both institution and students, it is vitally important that the actions of OfS are subject to independent review.

**Question 23: Do you agree with the proposed deregulatory measures?**

Yes

No

Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer, including how the proposals would change the burden on providers. Please quantify the benefits and/or costs where possible.

The proposal to remove English HEIs from the scope of Freedom of Information legislation is noted with interest. Separate FOI legislation applies in Scotland and therefore the proposed exemption would not automatically extend to Scotland. We are committed to transparency, guaranteed through the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance and many other regulatory requirements. However, they would welcome the removal of FOI obligations, which imposes a high administrative burden on institutions and consequently the diversion of resources away from core educational and research activity. Were such an exemption to apply in England but not in Scotland, this would set Scottish HEIs at a competitive disadvantage. The possible anomalies created by this hypothetical situation should also be considered. For example, given that there are many collaborations between Scottish and English HEIs, this creates the possibility that FOI-exempt



institutions in England could still find information about themselves released under FOI, via requests to partner institutions in Scotland.

## Reducing complexity and bureaucracy in research funding (Part D)

**Question 24: In light of the proposed changes to the institutional framework for higher education, and the forthcoming Nurse Review, what are your views on the future design of the institutional research landscape?**

We welcome the recognition in the Green Paper that Government investment in research is vital, that there is an ongoing commitment to the Haldane Principle and that the intent is to “ensure the integrity of the dual funding system. We endorse both of these principles that have served the UK well. The UK is currently ranked first in the world by field-weighted citation impact, contributes 11.6% of global citations and 15.9% of the world’s most highly cited articles. This is particularly remarkable given that we spend less per capital on R&D than our major competitors (in 2012 the UK’s R&D spend was 1.7% of GDP, compared to 2.8% in the USA and 2.4% across the OECD. It is essential to ensure these key underpinning principles are not undermined in the proposed new structure for research funding and care will be needed to avert unintended consequences.

We note that the Green Paper itself does not confirm whether HEFCE’s current research roles (design and implementation of REF and QR funding allocation) would come under Research UK. On the assumption, that the HEFCE research functions do transfer to Research UK then there is potential for significant streamlining of operating costs allowing such funds to be diverted back into the funding of research. Engagement through the Nurse Review also explicitly recognised that there are opportunities to address some specific process issues by sharing of best practice. It will however be important to understand the balance between Challenge Funds and the focused operation of the individual Research Councils. Given the existing efficiency of research councils we note that additional gains may be modest.

A conspicuous strength of the Research Councils is their capacity to establish and run their own facilities and employ their own research staff. This has supported some of the UK’s leading science (eg LMB, Harwell) by foresighting opportunities and building UK research capacity where individual Universities have lacked necessary skill or resources. It is important that this strength is maintained. It is unclear whether and how this might occur in the new RUK arrangement.

**Question 25:**

**a) What safeguards would you want to see in place in the event that dual funding was operated within a single organisation?**

The University of Edinburgh welcomes the commitment to the dual funding system.

We agree that it will be vital to ensure that responsibility to maintain two separate funding streams, within the dual funding system, is embedded in the purpose of a new single Research organisation. However, given the UK responsibilities of the Research Councils for competitive research, we are concerned at the potential competitive disadvantage created for institutions located in the devolved administrations as English QR policy is informed/aligned with future thinking about UK research policy. We would suggest that this could be addressed by a combined 4 country approach to QR similar to that in the approach to REF with administrative efficiencies by operating through a single body.

The composition of the Research UK Board, given the advisory role to BIS on UK Science and Research policies is extremely important in this context. Recognition of the diversity of experience, expertise and opportunity across the UK in appointments to that Board will be extremely important and therefore equitable representation across the UK will be essential.

**b) Would you favour a degree of hypothecation to ensure that dual funding streams, along with their distinctive characteristics, could not be changed by that organisation?**

Yes       No       Not sure

Please give reasons for your answer

Complete separation of the funding streams is essential given QR is a devolved remit while Research Council funding is a UK reserved function.

QR is an essential funding stream. It allows institutions to plan ahead and invest strategically in proportion to their overall volume of high quality research as assessed by periodic REF exercises. It also provides the flexibility to initiate new strategies and research areas over an extended period; protecting blue skies research work.

An alternative consideration, given concerns expressed in a) above is whether QR functions in the devolved administrations should be combined; reflecting the shared administration model and UK-wide remit of the Research Excellence Framework.

**Question 26: What are the benefits of the REF to a) your institution and b) to the wider sector? How can we ensure they are preserved?**

The benefits are in terms of a nationally and internationally recognised quality endorsement, meaningful benchmarking and driving incentives (and rewards) for the highest quality in research

QR (Research Excellence Grant in Scotland) funding reflecting this assessment of quality should also be one of the benefits of the REF. However, the formulaic changes introduced since REF2014, have reduced our confidence in this benefit. We would wish to see a clear restatement of the focus on world-leading research for both the REF and the associated QR/REG funding.

Peer review is a widely respected element of the exercise and other academic judgements globally. It is vital to ensure ongoing REF credibility with academics and other stakeholders.

### **Question 27: How would you suggest the burden of REF exercises is reduced?**

Frequent (or delayed) changes to the nature of the exercise makes it harder to mainstream processes, increases costs and constrains effective engagement with academic research staff. We would strongly encourage early confirmation of the scope and rules for the next REF. Increased use of metrics might reduce some of the burden on institutions but can not effectively replace peer review, the most widely accepted method to determine research quality. This is particularly pertinent in subject areas (Arts, Humanities) where citations are a particularly poor proxy.

The biggest burdens appear to be associated with impact case studies, selection of staff and outputs, and processing data into forms that are REF-able. The open access requirements are also introducing their own burdens but are now gaining momentum.

The submission of all eligible staff would reduce the burden associated with codes of practice; though not those associated with the disclosure of staff circumstances and might encourage “gaming” in terms of contract classification.

Increasing the time between exercises would also constrain costs. There are only modest changes across the sector between REFs and an exercise once every 8-10 years would be more economic.

Finally, the level of audit queries in REF2014 exceeded 10,000 queries. A filtering process might have reduced the burden of queries on institutions where clarification could have been provided centrally – i.e. Explanation for why CDs would not play on DVD players and the eligibility of staff on maternity leave to apply for promoted posts.

**Question 28: How could the data infrastructure underpinning research information management be improved?**

The alignment of the HESA cost-centres with REF UoAs could reduce requirements to process data separately for the REF – so long as there is broad agreement not to change the REF UoAs again.

Some specific points relate to the Research Fish experience. Academics and research management administrators have shared frustrations about the lack of interoperability with these systems and the difficulty in helping PIs to make their returns. If we want researchers to be unburdened we need to be able to free up their time. Making the Research Council/ Research UK systems link better to the small number of widespread institutional systems would reduce the burden and improve the incentive for the data quality in institutions own systems to improve, which then makes it available for multiple uses. The REF systems (with the possible exception of the audit system) were more user friendly and interoperability worked.

ORCID and institutional IDs have potential to increase data consistency although we need to make it as easy as possible for academics to use them.

**Do you have any other comments that might aid the consultation process as a whole?**

Please use this space for any general comments that you may have, comments on the layout of this consultation would also be welcomed.

Thank you for your views on this consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge receipt of individual responses unless you tick the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

At BIS we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be okay if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

**BIS/15/623/RF**

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Learning and Teaching Committee  
27 January 2016

## **Enhancement Themes – Update**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper provides the Committee with an update on Enhancement Theme (Student Transitions) activity.

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

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Theme of 'Outstanding Student Experience'.

### **Action requested**

Members are asked to **note** the paper.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Information is posted on a [wiki](#) and [website](#). Monthly Enhancement Themes email updates are sent out to Institutional Team members and a distribution list of contacts (to be added to this, please email [Nichola.Kett@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Nichola.Kett@ed.ac.uk)). Institutional Team members are responsible for communicating about Enhancement Theme developments within the constituency they are representing and acting as key Enhancement Theme contact. There is a confirmed reporting structure. Communication and implementation will also operate at individual activity level.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

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

The paper does not have resource implications.

**2. Risk assessment**

The paper does not require a risk assessment.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

This will be considered through individual areas of activity. Where relevant, individual activities would be required to undertake Equality Impact Assessments.

**4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**.

### **Key words**

Student transitions, enhancement theme

### **Originator of the paper**

Nichola Kett, Head of Enhancement Team, Academic Services  
15 January 2016

**Gearing up for Transitions 2016 – Save the Date**

The Induction Team and Academic Services are pleased to announce that the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Gearing Up event will take place on **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016** in the John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls. Registration will open on 29 January 2016.

**Institutional Team Meeting – 4 December 2015**

- The Team heard updates on the project funding granted, the Gearing Up event, and from the Theme Leaders' Group and sector-wide institutional team meetings.
- The Team continued to discuss important student transitions and defined what is meant by resilience. Updates were given by those members of the Team who are undertaking work which fits with the theme of resilience.
- The agenda, papers and minutes of the meeting can be found on the [wiki](#).

**Small Projects Funding Awarded**

Funding from the Enhancement Themes budget has been awarded to six projects on the theme of student transitions from across the University and EUSA. The Panel that reviewed the bids were extremely pleased with the quality and diversity of the bids. See the [wiki](#) for details of the projects.

**Theme Leaders' Group Meeting – 1 December 2015**

The Theme Leaders' Group (TLG) constitutes institutional staff and student members from across the sector, representatives from key stakeholder organisations, and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland members. The main discussion was around the Transitions Skills and Strategies work that QAA Scotland have been taking forward and it was confirmed that three more skills will be investigated during 2015/16, one of which is likely to be resilience. Members were advised that the Student Network will continue to focus on non-traditional students, with the exact nature of their projects still to be confirmed.

**Sector-wide Institutional Team Meeting – 1 December 2015**

The University was well represented at this event, with a record nine members of the Institutional Team in attendance. The focus of the event was collaboration.

**Annual Meeting with QAA Scotland Enhancement Team – 4 December 2015**

The first part of this meeting was a discussion on the work that the University is undertaking as part of the Theme. The second part of the meeting focussed on School student transitions-related activities and three interesting presentations were delivered from Divinity, Mathematics and Biomedical Sciences. The PowerPoint presentations are available on the [wiki](#).

**Contacts**

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Nichola Kett	Head of Enhancement Team, Academic Services	Institutional Coordinator and member of the Student Transitions Theme Leaders' Group (TLG)