

The University of Edinburgh  
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 30 November 2017 at 2pm  
in the Hodgson Room, Weir Building, King's Buildings**

**Present:**

Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (Convener)
Dr Shereen Benjamin	Associate Dean (Quality Assurance) College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science
Megan Brown	Schools Engagement Officer, Edinburgh University Students' Association
Brian Connolly	Secretary to Senatus Quality Assurance Committee
Nichola Kett	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Dr Sheila Lodge	CMVM Head of Academic Administration (Co-opted Member)
Sarah McAllister	School Representative (Geosciences), College of Science and Engineering
Dr Gordon McDougall	Dean (Quality Assurance), College of Science and Engineering
Dr Inger Seiferheld	School Representative (Business School), College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science
Dr Jon Turner	Director, Institute for Academic Development

**In Attendance:**

Patrick Kilduff	President, Students' Association
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**Apologies:**

Bobi Archer	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
Professor Jeremy Bradshaw	Director of Quality Assurance, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, and Assistant Principal, Researcher Development
Brian Green	Deputy Associate Principal (Learning & Teaching), University of Strathclyde
Dr Claire Phillips	School Representative (Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Barry Neilson	Director, Student Systems (Co-opted Member)
Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services

## 1. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 September 2017

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

## 2. Matters Arising

### a) Membership

The Convenor noted that the Vice Convenor, Professor Bradshaw, would demit his role as Director of Quality Assurance (College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine) at the end of January 2018 to take up a position at Bath University. His replacement on the Committee would be appointed in due course. A new co-opted member with expertise in Student Systems was also being sought after Barry Neilson stepped down due to his new role in the Service Excellence Programme. Finally, it was noted that Sarah McAllister would replace John Turner as representative for the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) when she joins the IAD in January. This would require the College of Science and Engineering to identify a new school representative for the Committee.

### b) Review of School Annual Quality Reports

The Convenor reported that in order to formally close the loop on this year's Review of School Annual Quality Reports, the review sub-group had considered the final report from Moray House School of Education (which had been submitted too late to be considered at our September meeting). It was noted the report covered all the key areas in line with other School reports that were reviewed. It was agreed that next year's report should contain a reflection on the Personal Tutor (PT) system and assessment and feedback as these are two areas of further improvement identified in the data analysis section of the report that do not have specific actions.

The Convenor noted that at the previous meeting the Committee had agreed a number of additional actions arising from the annual review of school quality assurance reports and the internal review process during 2016-17. The Convenor confirmed that all the required responses had now been received and could be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SQAC/Thursday+30+November+2017>

## For Discussion

## 3. UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Consultation

The Committee discussed the joint University and Students' Association draft response to the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) consultation on a new approach to the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The Committee welcomed the proposals for simplification, which would help students and staff engage with the Quality Code. However, the Committee expressed disappointed that the proposals did not cover the same breadth of the student lifecycle as the current Quality Code, which was highly regarded internationally, and did not reflect the enhancement-focussed Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework. Ultimately, the changes seemed to be driven by developments and priorities in other parts of the United Kingdom. Members also expressed concerns in regard to the consumerist undertone of the document and the lack of content in relation to student engagement and support.

The Committee noted that the draft response had also been submitted to University Court for comment (at the meeting to be held on 4 December 2017). Comments from the Committee and University Court would contribute to the final response to the consultation which would be compiled by Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards & Quality Assurance. It was noted that the UKSCQA deadline for responses was 13 December 2017.

#### **4. Annual Monitoring, Reporting and Review – Minor Changes**

The Committee approved minor changes to the Annual Monitoring, Reporting and Review Policy and associated templates. It was noted that the changes had been made in response to an evaluation of the first cycle of the new process and in order to place greater emphasis on ensuring that courses and programmes remain sustainable. The changes had previously been outlined at the School Directors of Quality meeting held on 25 October and key stakeholders would be informed when the updated Policy and templates were available on the Academic Services website. The Committee noted that work to support Schools with the annual monitoring, review and reporting processes would continue across the academic year.

#### **5. Undergraduate Taught External Examiner Reports: Thematic Analysis 2016/17**

The Committee considered an analysis of data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) covering undergraduate programmes for the academic year 2015/16. The report noted a high number of commendations across the University and a low number of issues that required attention.

Of the commendations, it was noted that the main theme commended across all three Colleges was the Assessment Process with the sub-theme of Student Feedback most commented on.

**Action: Academic Services to analyse feedback comments as a theme and forward findings to the Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback and discuss at Director of Teaching Network.**

Of the issues highlighted by External Examiners was in relation to internal moderation (that it was sometimes difficult to identify evidence of moderation and that it was not always clear which samples of work had been moderated) and induction of External Examiners (a varied experience of induction with a minority stating that they had received no or minimal induction).

**Action: Director of the Institute for Academic Development to liaise with the Higher Education Academy to discuss External Examiner training options.**

**Action: College Deans of Quality to ensure that the outcomes of the Committee's discussions in regard to the External Examiner Reports are made available to and considered by the relevant College committee(s).**

The Committee noted that two suggestions were escalated to University-level. These were considered and it was agreed that no further action was required.

**Action: Academic Services to ask the relevant School Academic Response Coordinators to inform their External Examiners that their suggestions had been noted by the Committee which had considered them and agreed that no further action was required.**

The Committee commended the author of the report.

## 6. **Annual Reports on Academic Appeals, Student Discipline, and Complaint Handling**

The Committee considered the annual reports on Academic Appeals, Student Discipline and Complaint Handling.

The Committee noted that the Annual Reports on Academic Appeals and Student Discipline were closed papers.

The Committee noted that there were no discernible trends in the complaint handling cases. The Committee discussed the frontline resolution process and the importance of signposting and transparency in order to maintain student confidence in the complaint handling process.

**Action: College Deans of Quality to ensure that the outcomes of the Committee's discussions in regard to the Annual Reports are made available to and considered by the relevant College committee(s).**

The Committee asked for clarification of:

- The percentage of academic appeals in relation to the total student population (for next year's report);
- The status of the read, write, site campaign (for the next meeting); and
- If the student discipline statistics for subcategories with high numbers (6, 9 and 12) be broken down into sub categories (for next year's report).

**Action: Academic Services to progress the above actions.**

The Committee commended the authors of the reports.

## 7. **Report on the Annual Review of Student Support Services**

The Committee discussed the report from the light touch review of Student Support Service annual reports, including an outline update on progress with recommendations from 2015/16. The Committee noted that all services has considered and responded to the recommendations made in the previous year's report. The Committee agreed that the revised reporting template for 2017-18 should be circulated as soon as possible so that review areas could gather information and evidence as they go.

## 8. **Student Voice Policy and Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance**

The Committee approved a new Student Voice Policy which consolidates existing policies and formalises mid-course feedback as a policy requirement for undergraduate courses, subject to one minor change. The Committee also approved the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance, created by separating the policy content (moved to the new Student Voice Policy) from the Principles and Operational Notes for Student Staff Liaison Committees. It was noted that the Policy and guidance would be made available on the Academic Services and Student Voice webpages and key stakeholders would be informed via email.

## 9. **Internal Periodic Review: University Remit, Reflective Report template and guidance 2018/19**

The Committee approved revised versions of the University Remit and Reflective Report template and guidance to ensure compliance with the Scottish Funding Council guidance to higher education institutions on quality from August 2017-2022. It was noted that the

Schools/subject areas to be reviewed in 2018/19 and other relevant stakeholders would be advised of the revised remit and reflective report guidance and template. The documents would also be made available on the Academic Services webpage.

**10. Personal Tutor System Oversight Group**

The Committee received and discussed an update from the PT System Oversight Group in relation to ongoing activities to mainstream the PT system within School QA processes. The Committee noted that the oversight group had agreed actions to examine ways to improve the communication of School Personal Tutoring Statements and to devise an easy reference guide for PTs akin to the 'Here to Help' guide currently available to students.

**For Information and Formal Business**

**11. Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation Committee 2016/17**

The Committee noted the annual report from the College of Science and Engineering Accreditation Committee for Scotland's Rural College (SRUC).

**12. Enhancement Themes Institutional Plan**

The Committee noted the University's institutional plan for the Enhancement Theme: Evidence for Enhancement, Improving the Student Experience.

**13. Quality Matrix**

The Committee noted a matrix of responsibilities across key quality assurance and enhancement processes. It was noted that the document, created by Academic Services, had been well-received by College Quality Officers.

**14. Internal Periodic Review Responses**

The Committee confirmed that it was content with progress in relation to the Taught Programme Reviews for Asian Studies, Design, and Ecological and Environmental Sciences.

**15. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**16. Date of Next Meeting:**

Thursday 8 February 2018 at 2pm in the Raeburn Room, Old College