Senatus Academicus
Wednesday 7 October 2020 at 2pm
Online meeting

AGENDA

OPEN SESSION
This section of the meeting is open to all members of staff.

1. **Convener's Communications**
   An update from the Convener, Principal Professor Peter Mathieson

2. **Strategic Presentation and Discussion**

   Adaptation and Renewal: Students – Reflections, Lessons and Next Steps
   - Introduction – Professor Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students
   - Building Ongoing Curriculum Resilience – Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary Strategic Planning
   - Student Support – Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience
   - Student Perspectives – Ellen MacRae, President of the Students' Association
   - Internationalising Edinburgh – Professor James Smith, Vice-Principal International

   Followed by discussion

   Closes at 3.50pm

   Break

FORMAL MEETING OF SENATE – from 4pm
This section of the meeting is open to Senate members only

3. **Senate members' feedback on presentation and discussion topic**

4. **Report from E-Senate**   S 20/21 1 A
   To approve the minute of E-Senate held from 15 September 2020 to 23 September 2020

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

5. **Edinburgh University Students' Association Priorities for 2020-21** S 20/21 1 B
   To note

6. **Honorary Degrees Committee report**   S 20/21 1 C
   To approve   **(CLOSED)**

7.	**Senate Effectiveness Review 2019/20** To discuss	**S 20/21 1 D (Appendix 2 CLOSED)**
8.	**Senate Standing Orders – minor updates** To approve	**S 20/21 1 E**
9.	**Senate Exception Committee Remit and Membership** To approve	**S 20/21 1 F**
10.	**Senate Elections 2020/21 – provisional dates** To note and comment	**S 20/21 1 G**
11.	**Senate Standing Committees – upcoming business** To note and comment	**S 20/21 1 H**

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL OR NOTING

12.	**Student Partnership Agreement update** To note	**S 20/21 1 I**
13.	**Research Policy Group update** To note	**S 20/21 1 J**
14.	**Senate Committee Effectiveness Review – Questionnaire Initial Analysis** To note	**S 20/21 1 K**
15.	**Senate Exception Committee report** To note	**S 20/21 1 L (CLOSED)**

Senate

7 October 2020

Report of Electronic Business of Senate conducted between
Tuesday 15 and Wednesday 23 September 2020

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2020 (e-S 20/21 1 A)**
   The minutes were approved.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

2. **Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Reflective Analysis (e-S 20/21 1 B)**
   Comments were received. The comments noted the strengths of the report but made extensive suggestions for revisions to both the structure and content of the report.

   The authors of the report thanked Senate for their engagement and attention, but noted that some suggestions for revision would be counter to format and style of the report required by the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS). Some of the comments on style and editorial detail can be addressed within the scope of the report and these will be fed into the final stages of preparing the Reflective Analysis for submission to the QAAS.

   The Convener reviewed the comments and response, and on the basis that objections were raised by one Senate member, and no other comments or objections were received, deemed the paper approved. The paper has since been approved by Court at their meeting on 28 September 2020.

3. **Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2019/20 (e-S 20/21 1 C)**
   Senate formally noted the report.

   Comments were received and these have been passed to the authors of the report. The report has since been approved by Court at their meeting on 28 September 2020.

4. **Senate Exception Committee call for volunteers (e-S 20/21 1 D)**
   Nine notes of interest were received and two members of the Senate Exception Committee were randomly selected. All nominees have been notified of the outcome and the membership will be presented to Senate for approval on 7 October 2020.

5. **Draft Resolutions: Chairs (e-S 20/21 1 E)**
   Senate considered the Draft Resolutions below and offered no observations.

   - Draft Resolution No. 75/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair Industrial Chair of Organic Synthesis
   - Draft Resolution No. 76/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair Industrial Chair of Data-Driven Manufacturing
   - Draft Resolution No. 77/2020: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Chemical Reaction/Catalysis Engineering

6. **Draft Resolution: Removal of Members of the University Court (e-S 20/21 1 F)**
   Senate considered the draft resolution. Comments were received on clause 4 on non-voting members, and these have been passed to the author of the paper. The draft

resolution is open for consultation until the end of October and Senate's comments will be considered as part of that consultation.

7. **Rector Election Date (e-S 20/21 1 G)**
Comments were received on whether the proposals included sufficient fallback options in the light of a public health emergency, and these have been passed to the author of the paper.

FORMAL APPROVAL OR NOTING

8. **Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita (e-S 20/21 1 H, e-S 20/21 1 I)**
Senate agreed to confer the title of Professor Emeritus on those professors listed in the paper. Senate adopted the Special Minutes, and extended its congratulations to the appointees.

9. **Proposed revisions to the Senate Standing Orders (e-S 20/21 1 J)**
Senate noted the paper.

10. **Communications from the University Court (e-S 20/21 1 K)**
Senate noted the paper.

11. **Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee (e-S 20/21 1 L)**
Senate noted the report and approved two minor amendments to the Committees' terms of reference.

Senate

7 October 2020

**University of Edinburgh Students' Association
Vice President Education Priorities 2020/21**

Description of paper

1. This paper provides an overview of the Students' Association Vice President Education's priorities for the academic year 2020/21.

Action requested / recommendation

2. For information.

Background and context

3. In March 2020, Fizzy Abou Jawad was elected as the Students' Association's Vice President Education for the academic year 2020/21. This paper outlines her priorities for the year ahead, including key areas of work.

Discussion

Over the coming year, Fizzy will be focusing on the following priority areas:

Improving the quality and consistency of teaching and feedback

Fizzy will work with Schools and university bodies to improve the quality and consistency around assessment feedback. Her aim is to build on new practice arising from COVID-19 by continuing to push for online assessment feedback, delivered consistently across all Programmes.

Fizzy will be working on promoting academic representative roles in the wider student body. The Student Association will research effective structures to improve communication between Programme and School reps, so that feedback can effectively be brought to staff.

Ensuring all students have access to high-quality academic support

Fizzy will be exploring ways to give students who are completing joint honours more freedom to 'design' of their academic support structure.

Since implementation of the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review has been delayed until next year, Fizzy will take this as an opportunity to ensure that changes will work for all students and can be adapted to provide sufficient support for all cohorts.

Create an inclusive and accessible learning environment

Fizzy's current focus is on the impact which COVID-19 will have on the learning environment. The Hybrid Model has potential to create a more inclusive environment for all

students long term. Fizzy will working alongside Schools on universal lecture recording and promoting the use of alternative forms of assessment beyond this academic year. Fizzy will be also be supporting BME Liberation Officer throughout the year on their work tackling the BME attainment gap at the university, she will be leading The Student's Association broader work on this as delegated to her by BME Liberation Officer.

4. To be considered if specific actions arise from the paper.

Risk management

5. To be considered if specific actions arise from the paper.

Equality & diversity

6. The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion remain at the heart of the Students' Association's work, and this paper reflects that. Equality and diversity implications will be considered if specific actions arise from the paper.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

7. To be agreed if specific actions arise from the paper.

Author

Stuart Lamont
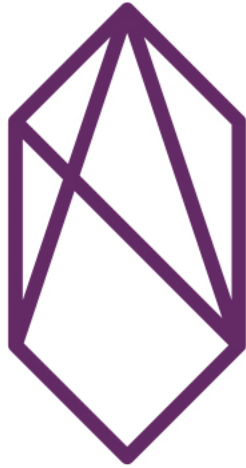*Academic Policy Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association*
22/09/20

Presenter

Fizzy Abou Jawad
Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association

Freedom of Information

This paper is open.

Shared Priorities 2020/21

BUILDING INCLUSION: We are committed to building a University community in which all students feel welcome, respected, and able to participate, with a particular focus on addressing the financial barriers to student life and the negative experience of our Black and Minority Ethnic members

ENSURING SUPPORT: Robust, consistent, and accessible support for all students is vital, particularly in-light of the challenging personal circumstances many of our members will experience as a result of the pandemic.

FACILITATING CONNECTION: It is more important than ever that we ensure that students - no matter which campus they are based at or what their mode of study is - feel connected to each other, to the University, and the wider Edinburgh community.

Edinburgh
University
**Students'
Association**

Ellen MacRae, President

Final year Biomedical Sciences student

***Objective one:* Tackling the affordability of University to ensure that it is accessible to all our students**
- Lobbying for affordable and accessible housing and transport
- Ensuring the Students' Association is a supportive employer for students

***Objective two:* A greater focus on student wellbeing all year round**
- 'Working from my bedroom' campaign
- Resources for students on supporting their friends' mental health without it impacting their wellbeing

***Objective three:* Improving engagement with and the transparency of the Students' Association**
- Supporting students across all University campuses
- Utilising online platforms to communicate with our members and close the feedback loop

Edinburgh University **Students' Association**

Rachel Irwin, VP Activities and Services

Final year History student

Objective one: **Building a greater sense of community through improved communication**
- Connecting student representatives, peer learning and support schemes, and academic societies within Schools
- Regular events for underrepresented and marginalised groups

Objective two: **Addressing physical and financial barriers to the student experience**
- Alternative study space map, with live occupancy updates
- Streamlined financial support and opportunities

Objective three: **A sustainable and socially responsible University**
- More locally-sources, sustainable, vegetarian and vegan food options
- Monthly sustainable club night in our venues

Edinburgh University Students' Association

Amanda Scully, VP Community

Final year International Relations student

Objective one: **Getting students engaged with their local community**
- Supporting local businesses through our vouchers and giveaways
- Creating a guide to community spaces and events

Objective two: **Supporting students on their sustainability journeys**
- Improving waste disposal points within our venues, and becoming a hub for hard-to-recycle items
- Run a campaign enabling students to make sustainable food choices in our venues

Objective three: **Building a University community, and a sense that Edinburgh is students' home**
- Educate students on their rights as tenants and employees
- More student created art on campus, including pieces celebrating marginalised and underrepresented groups

Edinburgh University **Students' Association**

Fizzy Abou Jawad, VP Education

Final year Biological Sciences student

Objective one: **Improving the quality and consistency of teaching and feedback**
- Online assessment feedback delivered consistently across all Programmes
- Promote academic representative roles and improve communication

Objective two: **Ensuring all students have access to high-quality academic support**
- Joint honours students to have more freedom to 'design' their academic support structure
- Ensure the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review will work for all students and can be adapted to provide sufficient support for all cohorts

Objective three: **Create an inclusive and accessible learning environment**
- Universal lecture recording and promoting the use of alternative forms of assessment beyond this academic year
- Supporting BME Liberation Officer on their work addressing the BME attainment gap

Edinburgh University **Students' Association**

Niamh McCrossan, VP Welfare

Final year International Relations and Law student

Objective one: **Making Edinburgh free from sexual violence and hate crimes**
- Clearly articulate our zero-tolerance policy to harassment and discrimination
- Create pre-matriculation training for incoming students on issues including consent and racism, how to report incidents, and accessing support

Objective two: **Supporting low income students and those experiencing financial hardship**
- Improve signposting of hardship and discretionary funding
- Identify students who are working 20+ hours a week and ensure they are aware of the financial support they're entitled to

Objective three: **Empowering students to make healthy lifestyle choices**
- Introduce harm reduction campaigns around smoking and drug use
- Build on the success of the free yoga classes, working with the Centre for Sports and Exercise to offer monthly free gym classes

Edinburgh University **Students' Association**

S 20/21 1 D

Senate

7 October 2020

Senate Effectiveness Review 2019/20

Description of paper
1. Following a light-touch internal Senate Effectiveness Review, analysis of the feedback received from Senate members and proposed actions are presented for discussion.

Action requested / recommendation
2. Senate is invited to consider the analysis and, while recognising the low response rate to the review, to support the recommendations set out in Appendix 1, intended to aid continuous improvement of our approach to academic governance in 2020/21.

Background and context
3. The University is required under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance to carry out an annual internal review of Senate. In summer 2020, Academic Services carried out a primarily self-reflective review: a short questionnaire was sent to Senate members and their responses were collated and analysed by Academic Services. The review was deliberately light touch, taking into account the priority given at the time to responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Discussion
4. Analysis and suggested actions can be found in Appendix 1. The full text questionnaire responses can be found in Appendix 2 (closed paper, provided separately).

Resource implications
5. The recommended actions can be managed within the current resources of Academic Services, as part of their established role in support of Conveners and the cycle of committee business.

Risk management
6. This activity supports the university's obligations under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.

Equality & diversity
7. The review provides an opportunity to identify any barriers to accessibility in the conduct of Senate business.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
8. Academic Services will report to Senate at the end of the current year on progress against actions taken in response to the review.

Author
Sue Macgregor, Director of Academic Services
Kathryn Nicol, Academic Policy Officer

Presenter
Sue Macgregor, Director of Academic Services

Freedom of Information
Coversheet and Appendix 1 can be used in open business.
Appendix 2 is closed.

APPENDIX 1

Report on the Senate Internal Effectiveness Review 2019/21

1. **Context**

    1.1. Under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance, universities are expected to carry out an annual internal review of the effectiveness of their academic board (at the University of Edinburgh, the academic board is Senate). During Summer 2020, Academic Services conducted a light-touch review of the Senate effectiveness.

    1.2. This is the first annual internal review of Senate under this Code: in 2018/19 an external review was conducted. Therefore there is no previous Senate internal effectiveness review for direct comparison, but the outcomes of the Senate external review conducted in 2018/19 and the consultation on the revised constitution of Senate conducted in 2017/18 are considered in section 4 below.

    1.3. The review was primarily self-reflective and took the form of a short online questionnaire to Senate 2019/20 members. The questionnaire was advertised to Senate members by email and was open from 24 June 2020 to 20 July 2020.

    1.4. The review process intended to gather information on and evaluate effectiveness in terms of the:
       i.   Support and facilitation of Senate meetings;
       ii.   Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and the remit of Senate;
       iii.   Impact and strategic relevance of Senate's work.

    1.5. Because the membership of Senate changed significantly on 1 August 2020, Senate composition was not focus of the 2019/20 review, but will be considered in the annual effectiveness review at the end of 2020/21.

    1.6. An internal effectiveness review of Senate Standing Committee members was also conducted in Summer 2020. The response rate was low. One relevant area of feedback was that it would be useful to have a visual diagram of how business flows through committees.

2. **Response rate**

    2.1. The response rate was low relative to the overall Senate 2019/20 membership. 40 responses were received from +850 members. All responses were from members who identified themselves as members of Colleges rather than other areas (i.e. University Secretary's Group, Information Services Group etc.). No student members responded.

3. **Brief summary of comments by topic**

    Q1 During your time as a member of Senate, have you had a clear understanding of your role on Senate? Do you have any suggestions for how this could be better communicated, for example via the Senate Members' Handbook, or the Senate website?

- Mixed response: satisfaction with understanding of role and guidance v's a significant minority of comments (around 12) that the described role of a Senate member does not match the reality.
- Small number of highly critical comments stating that Senate is passive and lacks decision-making power.
- Some comments indicate that Senate's role within the academic governance structure is not clear.
- One comment indicates an erroneous belief that only a very small subset of Senate Standing Committee members are actually Senate members.
- Some specific suggestions that induction / guidance could be further improved – periodic reminders of role; recording of induction made available.

Q2 In May each year, Senate receives an Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees. Does this provide Senate with appropriate oversight of the Committees' work?

- Substantial minority query whether receiving this annual report can be called oversight – not clear if Senate can challenge the report, or how it directs the work of these committees.
- Senate felt to be a passive recipient of information and not part of the decision-making processes of the University: these comments range from highly critical to more reflective.
- Two suggestions that Senate Standing Committee Conveners should present the annual report to Senate in person and respond to questions.
- Two suggestions that more frequent reporting to Senate would be useful.
- One response suggests the 2019/20 report of one committee is not accurate but response does not provide identifiable details.
- Around 14 positive responses.

Q.3 During your time as a member of Senate, do you feel Senate has engaged effectively with the strategic priorities of the University? In what ways? How could Senate engagement with strategic priorities be improved?

- Comments split between strongly negative, positive, and more ambivalent responses, with some 'don't knows'.
- Strongly negative comments focus on the lack of decision-making power of Senate and whether Senate therefore fulfils its role in University academic governance.
- More ambivalent comments share a focus on the lack of clarity of the role of Senate in the broader University governance structure, whether Senate feedback (for example on presentations) leads to any real and specific change, and whether Senate is able to challenge management decisions.
- Positive responses commented that key issues are discussed at Senate and that there is a strong University vision; that Senate's most valuable role is in feeding back grassroots opinion from students and staff; and that Senate presentations provide an opportunity for discussion of current topics with staff from across the Institution.

Q.4 Do you feel that Senate is supported effectively by the Senate Support team within Academic Services? Please comment on what works well, and what you think could be improved.

- 22 responses positive.
- 9 'don't know / no comment'.

- Some comments suggest more could be done to clarify what is being asked of Senate in committee papers and to provide information on how Senate comments have been taken into account.
- Small number of suggestions around online meetings – these felt to be good and should be continued as an option but more opportunities for meaningful discussion required.

4. Analysis and suggested actions in light of responses (combined)

4.1. A small proportion of Senate members responded to the questionnaire and therefore any actions taken in response to the comments need to be proportionate to this evidence base.

4.2. Key areas of concern among some are Senate's role in the academic governance structure and Senate's decision-making power; ensuring appropriate oversight of the activities of the Senate Standing Committees; and making effective use of feedback from Senate in response to Senate presentation and discussions on strategic priorities.

4.3. Key areas of positive feedback were the ability of the presentation and discussions sessions to bring together the views of a wide range of staff; staff who felt the Senate Standing Committees' Annual Report was a useful reporting tool; and support from Senate Services.

4.4. As noted in section 1.2 above, an external review of Senate was reported to Senate in May 2019. The Senate Committee structure was reviewed in 2018/19 and the revised structure and revised remits and membership of Senate Committees were approved by Senate in September 2019. The constitution and membership of Senate was subject to a consultation in 2017/18 and draft Ordinance 212: Composition of Senatus Academicus was approved by Senate in May 2019: this resulted in changes to the Senate membership from 1 August 2020.

4.5. The suggested actions in the table below are intended to be in line with these previous reviews and decisions by Senate.

4.6. In particular, the actions suggested below are intended to be in line with the University response to the 2018/19 external review of Senate, which noted that:

   i. Senate will continue to be primarily a consultative and communicative body, acting as a key forum for discussion, through which the academic community can engage with the senior leadership of the University, and participate in debate on strategic projects and priorities.

   ii. While the size of Senate decreased significantly from August 2020 onwards, it remains unlikely to be an effective forum for the variety, depth and volume of work currently handled by the Senate Standing Committees.

   iii. Senate will continue to host Presentation and Discussion events on key strategic priorities: these provide an opportunity for a substantial discussion on a current project or priority area in an open forum, and these have been very successful in increasing staff engagement with Senate. Senate will also be given opportunities to comment at an early stage on University-wide strategic projects relating to learning, teaching and research, through the formal Senate meeting agenda.

   iv. Academic Services, with the Conveners of the Senate Standing Committees, has established a Conveners' Forum to facilitate planning, coordination and prioritisation of Senate Standing Committee business. This includes ensuring that there is appropriate engagement with and reporting to Senate, and ensuring that there is engagement by the Senate Standing Committees with the annual planning round.

Suggested actions

Area Under Review	Recommended Action	Responsible	Date

Role and remit	1. Update the Senate Handbook, Website and Induction in order to:
	   1.1 Revise the description of the role of Senate to clarify the role of Senate within the University governance structure.
	   1.2 Clarify and 'resurface' the relationship between Senate and the Senate Standing Committees, highlighting remits and ex-officio membership.
	   1.3 Develop visual mapping of flow of committee business in broader University context and make available to Senate / Senate Committee members.
	2. Review compliance with the Senate Standing Orders, in particular Senate Standing Order 22 a) on Senate approval of Standing Committee membership.
	3. Make a recording of the Senate induction available to members on request.
		Academic Services in consultation with Senate Convener and Court Services
		
		Academic Services
		
		Academic Services
			1.1 and 1.2 - complete
			
			1.3 – by beginning of Semester 2 2020/21
			
			2 - By June 2021
			
			3 - complete

Oversight of Senate Standing Committees	4. Senate Standing Committee Conveners to present annual report to Senate in person, and take questions. 5. Add a standing item to Senate formal business agenda: update from Senate Standing Committees on upcoming business. This would be opportunity for Senate to comment in advance on the planned business of the Committees, but not to scrutinise Committee business in detail.	Academic Services and Senate Standing Committee Conveners	4 - By June 2021 (annual report submitted to Senate at 2 June meeting) 5 - complete
Senate engagement with strategic priorities	6. Presenters will be asked to speak to Senate's formal remit to 'superintend learning and teaching and promote research', and to provide information on how the Senate Standing Committees have been or will be consulted on the presentation topic. 7. Presenters asked to provide a short written update on how Senate comments will be fed forward into the project, to be circulated to Senate soon after the meeting.	Academic Services to update guidance to speakers	Complete
Committee Support	8. Continuously review practical arrangements for Senate meetings to prioritise accessibility and opportunities for discussion.	Academic Services	Ongoing

Senate

7 October 2020

Senate Standing Orders – minor updates

Description of paper

1. Minor amendments to the Senate Standing Orders

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is asked to approve the proposed amendments.

Background and context

3. Standing Order 9 describes the constitution of the Senate Exception Committee. In compliance with Standing Order 26, Senate was given notice of the proposed changes via the most recent E-Senate.

Discussion

4. It is proposed that Standing Order 9 be amended to include the Convener of the Research Policy Group as a member of the Senate Exception Committee, in order to acknowledge and strengthen Senate's role in 'promoting research.'

5. It is also proposed that Standing Order 9 be amended to remove reference to the Senior Vice-Principal and to include reference to the Vice-Principal Students, to reflect changes in roles and align with changes made to the Senate Exception Committee Terms of Reference in September 2019.

6. The Standing Orders, with proposed amendments to Standing Order 9 marked, are appended below.

Resource implications

7. None.

Risk management

8. Effective academic governance assists the University in managing risk associated with its academic activities.

Equality & diversity

9. The membership of the Exception Committee is largely a consequence of decisions taken elsewhere to appoint individuals to particular roles. Ensuring that appointment processes support a diverse staff body is part of the broader responsibility of the University.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

10. The approved Standing Orders will be published on the Senate website.

Author
Kathryn Nicol
Academic Policy Officer
7 October 2020

Freedom of Information
Open

APPENDIX 1

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

STANDING ORDERS OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS

MEETINGS OF THE SENATUS

1. Ordinary Meetings of the Senatus shall be held at least three times per session, normally on Wednesdays at 2.00 p.m.; the dates of meetings in any academic year shall be determined by the Senatus at the final Ordinary Meeting of the previous academic year and published on the University's web site or in such manner as the Senatus may decide.

2. Special Meetings may be called by resolution of the Senatus or by the Principal, or on a requisition specifying the object signed by twelve Members. Save in exceptional circumstances, a Special Meeting shall be held within fourteen days of being called, and notice of the time, place, and reason for such a Meeting shall be given to members by the Secretary as far as possible in advance: Special Meetings will not normally be held outside semester.

3. A Graduation Meeting shall precede each Graduation Ceremonial, in order to approve the list of Graduands. At a Graduation Meeting, other business of a non-contentious character may, at the discretion of the President, be transacted.

4. Any Ordinary or Special Meeting may adjourn until a date or time to be agreed.

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

5. In terms of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1858, Section 5, "one-third of the Senatus shall be a quorum, and the Principal shall be the ordinary President, with a deliberative and casting vote". In the absence of the Principal, a Vice-Principal present shall preside, with the same voting power. If at any Meeting the attention of the President be drawn to the fact that a quorum is not present, those in attendance may provisionally deal with such unopposed business as the President shall judge to be of a non-contentious character; but such business shall not in any case include the approval of the Minutes of any previous Meeting. All other business shall be deferred until the next Ordinary Meeting. At a Graduation Meeting, it shall not be competent for any member to draw attention to the fact that a quorum is not present.

6. At the opening of the meeting, the Minutes of the previous Ordinary Meeting, or any intervening Special Meeting, and of any Graduation Meeting and Ceremonial, shall be submitted and approved, except in the circumstances referred to in Order 5. The order of business thereafter shall, subject to the discretion of the President, be as stated in the Billet.

7. The Billet for any Ordinary Meeting shall be established seven days before the Meeting and made available to members at least two days before the Meeting, but the Senatus may consider non-contentious or urgent business which has not been included in the Billet.

8. The Senatus may conduct business electronically under such arrangements as it may from time to time approve.

9. An Exception Committee will under delegated authority, make urgent formal business decisions which would otherwise require the Senatus approval between meetings of the Senatus, on the understanding that any matter so referred can be referred to the full Senatus should this be the wish of the Exception Committee. The Committee shall consist of at least six members. The Principal, the ~~Senior~~ Vice-Principal Students, ~~Principal, and~~ the Convener of each of the Senatus Standing Committees, and the Convener of the Research Policy Group shall be ex officio members of the Committee. Unless otherwise represented the membership of the Committee must also include two Senate members and a representative of the Students' Association (normally the President). The Committee will be convened only if required and much of its business is expected to be conducted through correspondence. The consultation period can be no shorter than a 24 hour period. Four members of the Committee shall be a quorum and will include the Principal or ~~Senior~~ Vice--Principal Students and a Senate member. A formal minute will be kept of proceedings and submitted for approval as soon as practicable to members of the Committee. The draft minute will be agreed with the Convener of the Committee prior to circulation. A report on decisions made by the Committee will be provided to the next available Ordinary meeting of the Senatus. Membership of the Committee will be published on the University's website.

MOTIONS

10. Motions which members wish to bring forward to any meeting must be communicated in writing to the Secretary in time to be entered on the Billet, as provided in Order 7. Motions and Amendments arising out of business on the Billet may be dealt with without being previously notified; before putting such a Motion or Amendment the President may call for it to be placed in his/her hands in writing. All Motions and Amendments must be proposed and seconded.

11. When the Report of a College or Committee on any matter which requires the approval of the Senatus has been presented by or on behalf of the Head of College or Convener, it shall be deemed that a Motion that the Senatus approve the Report has been made, and duly seconded.

12. The Honorary Degrees Committee shall from time-to-time submit Motions for the award of Honorary Degrees in the form of a written report which shall be made available to members at least two days before the Ordinary Meeting at which it is to be presented.

13. An amendment, if moved and seconded, shall be put before the Motion to which it refers; when there are two or more Amendments, they shall be put in the order determined by the President.

14. No amendment shall take the form of a direct negative of a Motion.

15. At any time after a Motion has been made and duly seconded, any Member may propose the Previous Question, viz., "That the Senatus do pass to the next item on the Billet", or move the Closure, viz., "That the Senatus do not proceed to vote on the Motion". These motions, if duly moved and seconded, shall normally be put immediately and without debate.

16. No decision on the Senatus shall be rescinded except on a Motion which is competent in terms of Standing Order 8 or 9.

17. Decisions of the Senatus shall, except as provided in Order 23, be taken by show of hands, unless a secret ballot be demanded. A Member may require his/her dissent from a decision to be recorded.

18. A Member wishing to take part in any discussion shall rise and address him/herself to the Chair.

19. A Member shall not, except by permission of the President, speak more than once to any Motion or Amendment in one debate upon one subject, except to order, in explanation, or in reply as the mover of the resolution under discussion.

20. In seconding a Motion or Amendment, a Member may, if he/she refrain from making observations at the time, reserve the right to speak at a later stage.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

21. The Secretary shall be responsible for preparing Minutes of all Meetings, which Minutes shall normally be circulated with the Billet for the next Ordinary Meeting.

COMMITTEES

22. (a) The Senatus may appoint Committees, which need not be composed entirely of its own members, and delegate to any Committee such powers as the Senatus may think fit; and abolish existing Committees. The Senatus may also appoint members to Joint Committees responsible to both the Senatus and the University Court. All members of Senatus shall be invited annually to submit suggestions for membership of these Committees. Senatus will approve the membership of these committees annually, normally in the second semester, having regard to the principle of rotation of membership where this has been approved by the Senatus, and to other Resolutions concerning appointment to Committees which have been or may be passed by the Senatus from time to time. (See Minutes, Vol. XV, pp.938 f.; Vol. XIX, p.724.)

(b) Committees of the Senatus shall report to the Senatus on an annual basis, either directly or through such other committees as may be approved by the Senatus from time to time, except where the Senatus provides otherwise, and such Reports shall include action taken under powers delegated by the Senatus.

REPRESENTATION ON UNIVERSITY COURT

23. When a vacancy arises in the representation of the Senatus on the University Court, the Secretary shall invite nominations to fill it. Each nomination shall be signed by two members of Senatus who will be deemed to have formally proposed and seconded the nominee.

24. A Committee, to be known as the Scrutinising Committee, shall be appointed by the Senate to scrutinise nominations and confirm the validation of the nominations and hear any appeal against disqualification by the Returning Officer. The Committee shall consist of a representative of the University Court, a representative of the Senatus and a representative of the University Secretary. The decision of the Scrutinising Committee is final.

25. Regulations for the conduct of an election will be approved by an Ordinary Meeting of Senatus and circulated to members of Senatus.

SUSPENSION, AMENDMENT OR REPEAL OF STANDING ORDERS

26. The Standing Order of Senatus, of which this article is one, shall in no case be suspended unless a quorum be present, and then only with the approval of two-thirds of those voting. The Standing Orders shall not be amended or repealed except after notice given in the last preceding Ordinary Meeting of Senatus. Amendment or repeal shall require the approval of two-thirds of those voting on the Motion for amendment or repeal, provided also that at least fifty members vote in favour of such a Motion.

Document control

Date of approval / amendment	Details
18/9/14	Approved by Senate

Senate

7 October 2020

Senate Exception Committee Terms of Reference and Membership

Description of paper
1. Minor updates to the Senate Exception Committee Terms of Reference and Membership

Action requested / recommendation
2. Senate is asked to approve the updated Terms of Reference and Membership, pending approval of minor updates to the Senate Standing Orders (Paper E).

Background and context
3. The Senate Exception Committee operates under delegated authority, to make urgent formal business decisions which would otherwise require Senatus approval between meetings of Senatus.

Discussion
4. The Committee Terms of Reference and Membership appended below have been updated to comply with the Senate Standing Orders (see paper E) and to confirm the appointment of two new Senate members. The changes to the Terms of Reference are in section 2.2 and are highlighted in red.

Resource implications
5. None

Risk management
6. Effective academic governance assists the University in managing risk associated with its academic activities.

Equality & diversity
7. The membership of the Committee is largely a consequence of decisions taken elsewhere to appoint individuals to particular roles. Ensuring that appointment processes support a diverse staff body is part of the broader responsibility of the University.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
8. The updated Terms of Reference and Membership will be published on the Senate website.

Author
Kathryn Nicol
Academic Policy Officer
7 October 2020

Freedom of Information
Open

Senatus Exception Committee

1 Purpose

1.1 Under delegated authority, to make urgent formal business decisions which would otherwise require Senatus approval between meetings of Senatus subject to defined principles and on the understanding that any matter so referred can be referred to the full Senatus should this be the wish of the Exception Committee.

2 Composition

2.1 The Committee shall consist of at least six members.

2.2 The Principal, the Vice-Principal Students, the Convener of the Research Policy Group, and the Convener of each of the Standing Committees of Senate shall be ex officio members of the Committee.

2.3 Unless otherwise represented, the membership of the Committee must also include two Senate members and a representative of the Edinburgh University Students' Association (normally the President).

2.4 The term of office for Senate members, where they are not ex officio members of the Committee, will be no longer than their membership of the Senatus and will be for a maximum of three years.

2.5 Edinburgh University Student Association annually nominate one fully matriculated student to be a member of the Exception Committee; this is normally one of the elected Students' Association sabbatical officers.

2.6 Previous members are eligible for re-appointment up to a normal maximum of two consecutive terms of office.

2.7 The Principal shall be appointed Convener of the Committee.

2.8 The Vice-Principal Students will be appointed Vice-Convener of the Committee.

3 Meetings

3.1 The Committee will be convened only if required and much of its business is expected to be conducted through correspondence.

3.2 The aim will be to circulate minutes, agendas and papers to members of the Committee at least five working days in advance of the meeting or prior to the conclusion of the consultation period. In cases of extreme urgency, which is likely to be the case given the nature of this Committee, and with the agreement of the Convener, papers may be tabled at meetings of the Committee. If being conducted by correspondence the consultation period may be no shorter than a 24 hour period.

3.3 Papers will indicate the originator/s and purpose of the paper, the matter/s which the Committee is being asked to consider and any action/s required and confirm the status of the paper in respect of freedom of information legislation.

3.4 Four members of the Committee shall be a quorum. This number must include the Principal or Vice-Principal Students and a Senate member.

3.5 A formal minute will be kept of proceedings and submitted for approval as soon as practicable to members of the Committee. The draft minute will be agreed with the Convener of the Committee prior to circulation.

4 Remit

4.1 To consider any matter between meetings of the Senatus and with the full delegated authority of Senatus to make a decision on the matter on behalf of the Senatus.

4.2 The Committee in reaching a decision must be satisfied regarding the following:

- there is evidence of the consideration given to the equality impact of the matter under consideration; and
- there is a robust rationale for the proposals or options being presented by the identified lead senior officer or officers including information on the outcome of any consultation undertaken.

5 Other

5.1 A report on issues discussed at each meeting or concluded via correspondence will be provided to the next available Ordinary Meeting of the Senatus.

5.2 Membership of the Committee will be published on the University's website.

Senate Exception Committee membership 2020-21

Name	Position/School	Term of office	Composition Section
Professor Peter Mathieson (Convener)	Principal	Ex Officio	2.2
Professor Colm Harmon (Vice Convener)	Convener of the Education Committee, Vice Principal Students	Ex Officio	2.2
Professor Alan Murray	Convener of Academic Policy and Regulations Committee, Assistant Principal (Academic Support)	Ex Officio	2.2
Professor Tina Harrison	Convener of Senatus Quality Assurance Committee, Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)	Ex Officio	2.2
Professor Jonathan Seckl	Convener of the Research Policy Group	Ex Officio	2.2
Dr David Grumett	School of Divinity	29 September 2020 – 31 July 2021	2.3
Professor David Hay	Edinburgh Medical School	29 September 2020 – 31 July 2023	2.3
Ellen MacRae	Students' Association President	Nominated	2.3

Senate

7 October 2020

Senate Elections 2020/21

Description of paper

1. The paper provides Senate with information on the provisional nomination deadline and election date for academic staff members in 2021.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is asked to note the provisional dates and offer comments.

Background and context

3. Academic staff members are elected annually to Senate. These elections are conducted under the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations.

4. Under the Senate Election Regulations, the nomination deadline and election date will be formally confirmed by Senate at its meeting on 10 February 2021.

5. Election of student members of Senate is managed by the Edinburgh University Students' Association.

Discussion

6. The provisional dates are:

Wednesday 10 February 2021	Senate formally declares nominations open
Wednesday 10 March 2021 (12 noon)	Nominations close
Monday 15 March 2021	Candidate information made available online
Wednesday 24 March (9am) to Wednesday 31 March (12 noon)	Voting open online

7. Possible conflicts and mitigating factors:
    a. Rector elections are likely to take place around 15 February to 26 February 2021, during the Senate nomination period. However, the Rector elections have a very different process and constituency, and clear and distinctive communications should ensure that these elections are understood to be distinct.
    b. Flexible learning week takes place from 15 February to 22 February, during the Senate nomination period. However, the length of the nomination period (one month) should ensure that all staff have opportunities to participate in the process.
    c. It is not yet possible to anticipate Covid-19-related restrictions that may be in place during the nomination and voting periods. However, both nominations and voting will take place online, and therefore will remain accessible to staff working remotely. Nominations will be open for a full month, and voting will be open for a full week, falling across two calendar weeks, which is intended to ensure that all staff are able to access the process.
    d. The nomination and election process will be complete before the beginning of the Spring teaching vacation (5 to 18 April 2021).

Resource implications

8. These will be met primarily within Academic Services.

Risk management

9. The University's Risk Policy and Risk Appetite statement refers to the University holding 'no appetite for any breaches in statute, regulation.' Senate elections are mandated by University Ordinance 212.

Equality & diversity

10. Ordinance 212: Composition of Senatus Academicus was subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (published on the [Equality and Diversity webpages](#)). The EIA recommended publicising elections through a broad range of channels, to ensure that staff in all categories are aware of opportunities to stand for election, and this will be taken into account in planning election communications. Senate membership, including elected membership, will be reviewed as part of the next annual effectiveness review of Senate, in Summer 2021.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

11. Any comments will be taken into consider in election planning. The final timetable will be presented to Senate for approval in February 2021.

Author
Kathryn Nicol
Academic Policy Officer

Freedom of Information
Open

Senate

7 October 2020

Senate Standing Committees – upcoming business

Description of paper

1. This paper informs Senate of activity planned by the Senate Standing Committees between October 2020 and January 2021.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is invited to note the paper, and to make comments.

Background and context

3. In response to the internal review of Senate Effectiveness conducted in Summer 2020, a note of upcoming business from the Senate Standing Committees (Senate Education Committee, Quality Assurance Committee, and Academic Policy and Regulations Committee) has been added to the Senate agenda as a standing item. This is intended to facilitate Senate awareness and oversight of Standing Committee activity.

Discussion

4. See Appendix 1 for the information from each Committee.

Resource implications

5. None - any resource implications related to Standing Committee business will be raised at the relevant Committee.

Risk management

6. This activity supports the university's obligations under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

Equality & diversity

7. None - any Equality and Diversity issues related to Standing Committee business will be raised at the relevant Committee.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

8. Any comments from Senate will be fed back to the Conveners of the Senate Standing Committees by Senate Support.

Author
Brian Connolly, Academic Policy Officer
Kathryn Nicol, Academic Policy Officer
Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer
Philippa Ward, Academic Policy Officer

Freedom of Information
Open

Appendix 1

Senate Standing Committees: upcoming business October 2020 – January 2021

Senate Education Committee (SEC)

Upcoming business:	Brief description and context:
1. Learning Experiences for International Students	A paper outlining the learning experiences the University provides for international students – originating from IAD. *For discussion*
2. Standalone Courses	First discussed by Education Committee in March 2020. The number of credit-bearing, standalone courses offered by the University is increasing, particularly for the purposes of CPD. This is considered a welcome development, but academic governance arrangements, quality assurance frameworks and associated systems need to be aligned to ensure that the provision is supported in a robust, consistent and systematic way. Paper to be produced by Head of Education Administration and Change Management, Edinburgh Futures Institute. *For discussion and approval of recommendations*
3. Student Survey Analysis	Analysis of student satisfaction surveys to ascertain whether any information is available about optimal cohort size – Head of Student Data and Surveys. *For discussion*
4. Update on implementation of Student Mental Health Strategy	An update on the implementation of the University's Student Mental Health Strategy (introduced in January 2017) - Director of Student Wellbeing. *For discussion*
5. Space, Place and Pedagogy: 'beyond digital' learning and teaching (draft title)	Discussion paper from Moray House School of Education and Sport.
6. Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – Approval of new categories of wider achievement	Section 6.1 of the HEAR records information about students' wider achievements. Proposals for new categories of wider achievement are considered annually at the November meeting of Education Committee. *For approval*

[Senate Quality Assurance Committee](#) (QAC)

Upcoming business:	Brief description and context:
1. Annual Review of School and College Quality Reports	SQAC suspended the normal annual monitoring, review and reporting processes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, a light-touch interim process has been put in place with the aim of complimenting ongoing academic contingency work during the coming year. The Committee agreed the following reporting level deadlines with the understanding that there was a degree of flexibility should this be required: • Programme/programme cluster - Friday 30 October 2020 • School/Deanery - Friday 20 November 2020 • College - Friday 27 November 2020 A SQAC sub-group will then meet in early-December to consider the reports and the sub-group's final report will be considered at the next meeting of SQAC on Thursday 17 December 2020. At the conclusion of this interim process, the Committee will take a decision on when and how to return to normal annual monitoring, review and reporting processes, including on any changes to the normal process.
2. Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)	SQAC continues to contribute to preparations for the University's next Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) due to take place in February and March 2021. The Reflective Analysis (RA), a key piece of evidence to support the University's next ELIR, was presented to Senate and Court for approval in September 2020. The RA is a self-evaluation of the University's strategies, policies and practices in support of academic standards, learning and teaching and the student experience. The approved document will be submitted to the ELIR panel, with a supporting Advanced Information Set (AIS), in early December 2020.

3. Examine data and methodological options for the systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data.	In response to the recommendations of the Thematic Reviews [2017-18 mature students and student parents and carers](#) and [2018-19 black and minority ethnic students' experience of support](#) the Committee agreed to implement a new system for monitoring retention, progression, and attainment data.
	The aim of the new system will be to understand how well the University supports different groups throughout the student life-cycle: the likelihood of different student groups continuing or withdrawing from study at the University; the extent to which the University enables different student groups to fulfil their potential during their time at Edinburgh; and how successful the University is at supporting different student groups transition within their programme of study and afterwards to employment or further study. It will be important to understand this data in terms of the 'distance travelled' by different groups to provide a greater understanding of the 'value added' by the University and the extent to which the needs of different student groups have been supported by the University. The new system will allow the University a degree of central oversight whilst also encouraging Schools to engage with the data, reflect on the issues, and seek local solutions.
	The Committee has tasked a small group, led by the Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS) and the Head of Student Data and Surveys (Student Systems), to examine data set and methodological options for monitoring student retention, progression, and attainment. The group will report initial findings to the December meeting of SQAC.

[Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee](#) (APRC)	
Upcoming business:	**Brief description and context:**
1. Individual student concessions	Some actions to address student circumstances require APRC approval. These requests are dealt with as they arise, usually by Convener's action, and the decision is reported back to the relevant College by the Committee Secretary.

2.	Policy and guidance review	For example, the Expected Behaviour Policy that was presented to APRC at the September 2020 meeting (Paper 1A) requires some revision before final approval.
3.	Monitor any requirement for longer term regulatory and policy changes motivated by Covid-19 and take appropriate action as required.	For example, APRC have agreed to make a concession to the Special Circumstances Policy in 2020/21. In 2019/20 the University agreed to extend the range of grounds for Special Circumstances, and reduce the evidence requirements due to Covid-19. In September 2020, APRC members agreed that it would be appropriate and necessary to take similar steps in the current session, and apply these as a concession to the Special Circumstances Policy. Academic Services have agreed to liaise with the Colleges, the Students' Association, and Student Systems to agree some proposals for concessions. These would then be brought to APRC for a decision electronically, in advance of its next meeting in November 2020.
4.	Academic year dates and provisional academic year dates	Regular annual review
5.	Borderlines for Undergraduate degree classification	APRC is aiming to implement a consistent model for dealing with borderlines for classification across the University. The College of Science and Engineering is discussing the adoption of a model, which is compatible with the model already used by the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Senate

7 October 2020

Student Partnership Agreement update

Description of paper
1. The paper provides an overview of Student Partnership Agreement activity during 2019/20 and sets out the arrangements for 2020/21.

Action requested / recommendation
2. Senatus is invited to note the arrangement for 2020/21.

Background and context
3. Senate approved the first Student Partnership Agreement for the University on 4 October 2017. The agreement serves to highlight ways in which the wider University, including all staff and students, can work together effectively to enhance the student experience. It sets out our values and our approach to partnership. Funding has been provided over the last three academic years to support projects focussing on student partnership themes.

Discussion

4. **Overview from 2019/20**
Based on feedback from students, the three priority themes agreed for 2019/20 were: Community, Student Voice, and Social Justice:

Community:
- Supporting staff and students to develop, enhance, and support effective communities that promote a sense of wellbeing and belonging

Student Voice:
- Continue working to enable student feedback to be shared and addressed, in particular exploring innovative ways to use the new student voice feedback diagram or enhancing aspects of existing mechanisms to close the feedback loop.

Social Justice:
- Exploring issues of diversity, sustainability and justice with the aim of empowering students and staff to engage critically and sensitively with the challenges of our contemporary world. This includes engaging with discourses of liberation or embedding sustainability within the curriculum.

Following the launch of the agreement in 2017, funds have been made available for students and staff to submit bids to undertake projects that supported the partnership agreement. The projects have to involve both students and staff, and link to one of the partnership agreement key themes.

In 2019/20, a total of 13 applications were received and approved. Two projects did not start and funds were returned.

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of the projects were unable to complete. It was agreed that these projects could conclude during semester one 2020/21 if feasible.

In addition, it was agreed to suspend funded projects for 2020/21, recognising the additional pressures on students and staff with the move to a hybrid teaching model, although the Student Partnership Agreement and the themes remain as a key reference point for the student experience. Instead, an evaluation of previous projects will be undertaken to review impact and identify where practice can be shared across the institution. We expect to return to funded collaborative projects from 2021/22.

Reviewing the Student Partnership Agreement
5. The Partnership Agreement will continue to be reviewed annually to check on progress and to review the themes following the election of student sabbatical officers and outcomes from major student surveys. If the themes remain relevant, they may continue for a further academic year to allow for greater continuity and impact.

Resource implications
6. Costs involved in staff engagement with the Partnership Agreement will be met as part of ongoing enhancement activity by Schools and Colleges. The Agreement does not require additional work: it mainly emphasises working in partnership on existing activities that are part of student survey action plans and other enhancement activity.

Risk management
7. There is a risk associated with not working in partnership with students to enhance the student experience: the risk is that students act as consumers rather than co-creators of their university experience.

Equality & diversity
8. Equality and Diversity is a key underlying motivation for the Partnership Agreement; to enhance the student experience for all students. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out in March 2018.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
9. Project outcomes and impact will be reviewed and communicated back to staff and students as appropriate.

Authors

- Fizzy Abou Jawad, VP Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association
- Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
- Gillian Mackintosh, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

24 September 2020

Freedom of Information – Open

Senate

7 October 2020

Research Policy Group Update

Description of paper

1. Summary of issues within the scope of Research Policy Group (RPG) that are relevant to the wider University community.

Action requested / recommendation

2. For information

Background and context

3. Since the last Senate meeting in May, two meetings of the RPG have taken place (1 July 2020, 21 September 2020).

4. Over this period, the majority of research has either been re-started or adapted to comply with restrictions and changes in practice related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. This report outlines:
   - REF 2020 Preparations and New Submission Deadline
   - Supporting Research Culture
   - Covid19 and Restarting Research

Discussion

REF 2020 Preparations and New Submission Deadline

6. The UK REF team have announced that 31st March 2021 is the new submission deadline following the recent consultation. The impact case study deadline has been extended to 31st December 2020. The University will use this deadline only for impact cases studies severely affected by COVID-19 and those responding to the pandemic. The REF staff census date has remains 31st July 2020.

7. The Units of Assessments have received their second round reviews. Review Round 3 is scheduled to begin on October 2nd 2020 and will continue on to January 2021.

8. The University will return 2564.28 FTE (2,718 headcount) active members of staff, an increase of 811.2 FTE since REF2014.

Supporting Research Culture

9. Following the University becoming a signatory to Concordat on the Career Development, a draft Concordat Action Plan was developed and submitted to RPG in its on 21st September 2020. The Concordat Action Plan will be reviewed internally and will be brought to RPG for approval in January 2021.

10. In July 2020, a Research Culture Survey was launched to benchmark the University against the results of the UK-wide Wellcome Trust survey. ~1400 responses were received from researchers at all career stages and disciplines, and Professional Services staff from each College. The findings of the survey were presented to the RPG on 21st September 2020, and an action was noted to develop a strategy to prioritise areas where the University should seek improvement for research culture.

Covid19 and Restarting Research

11. Restarting research at the University is well under way. All research buildings have been reopened in CMVM and CSE. One-off-retrievals have been completed in all office in CAHSS, though occupancy is lower due to hybrid working practices.

12. Research conducted outside of lab settings that involves face to face interactions especially with groups that are particularly vulnerable to Covid-19, and field work across and outside the UK remain vulnerable to the effects and restrictions related to Covid-19 although guidance is now available to support these activities where it is possible to restart.

13. The SFC has issued a one-time £23.2M Covid-19 adaption grant (Additional research funding for Universities 2020-21). The Deans of Research in each College, Heads of Colleges, and the Senior Vice-Principal have drawn up a proposal for use of these monies to support career development of ECRs and final year PhD students, support the appointment of up to 30 tenure-track Chancellor's Fellows, address EDI challenges through adaptation funds and additional training and support, and to replace some of the funds that the University had allocated towards research related to Covid-19.

14. UKRI has issued £6.6M Covid-19 Grant Extension Allocation (CoA) to the University to support research affected by the pandemic, and identified a maximum amount of £3.9M of underspent funds on UKRI research grants (Change of Use Funds). The Senior Vice-Principal, in collaboration with ERO, Deans of Research, and Heads of Colleges, has developed governance and guidance that will allow Colleges to extend grants and approve change of use for funds related to relevant projects.

15. At the September meeting of the RPG, the Committee welcomed the announcement of ERO's intention to lead a change programme for end-to-end research support, considering delivery both centrally and within the Colleges. In consultation with senior leaders, the change programme will begin in earnest in the second quarter of 2021, and is aimed at improving the agility and innovation of research support, and to strengthen ties with other research-related programmes such as REF and income due diligence.

Resource implications

16. The University has been able to recoup some Covid-19 related outlay through the SFC monies outlined above (pg 14). Additionally, through the SFC and UKRI allocations, the University has been able to support a number of researchers and PhD students in their final years of research to access extensions to finish their work.

Risk management

17. The University of Edinburgh is closely monitoring the Covid-19 outbreak and liaising with government and NHS agencies to get their latest advice on public health guidance. The programmes funded by the SFC and UKRI monies has helped to support final year research to continue, however preparations are underway to support those currently engaged in early year funded projects to adapt their research over the coming years.

Equality & diversity

18. The SFC and UKRI allocation proposals have been reviewed by EDI leads both within Colleges and through the Adaption and Renewal Team for Research and Innovation. This is underscored by the aspirational goals attached to the Chancellor's Fellows programme (supported by £9M SFC monies) of 30% BAME and 50% women uptake. Additionally, £0.5M of the SFC monies has been earmarked to specifically support EDI issues institutionally.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

19. In the September meeting of the RPG, the Committee welcomed Laura Cockram (Communications Manager, ERO) and Edd McCracken (Head of News). These additional members will assist in co-ordinating communications on decisions made at RPG, and will work with colleagues across the University to ensure communications remain cohesive.

Author
Bridget Mellifont, Policy and Project Officer
24 September 2020

Freedom of Information
Open

Senate

7 October 2020

Senate Committees Effectiveness Review – Questionnaire Initial Analysis

Description of paper

1. This paper provides information to Senate on the light-touch Senate Standing Committee Effectiveness Review conducted in summer 2020.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is requested to note the review analysis and proposed actions below. The report has previously been presented to the Senate Standing Committees for discussion and action.

Background and context

3. The University is required under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance to carry out annual internal reviews of Senate and the committees that carry delegated responsibilities. In summer 2020, Academic Services carried out a primarily self-reflective review with input requested from committee members across the themes of Remit, Composition, Support, Engagement and Impact of the committees' work.

4. Information on the Senate Standing Committees' remits and membership: https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees

Discussion

5. The response rate was extremely low across all three committees (13 replies in total from 54 committee members), so there is little to act on, but there are potentially some common themes such as in relation to committee remits, communication and equality, diversity and inclusion.

6. Overall, committees reported that their remit was clear and that they had adapted well to the change in composition and terms of reference introduced in 2019/20. Members also reported that they had a good understanding of their role and that there is an understanding of how the committee's work relates to the bigger picture.

7. There was feedback across all the committees indicating a recognition that consideration of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) within the committee business and in terms of membership needs to be improved.

Resource implications

8. The recommended actions will require coordination by Committee Secretaries in Academic Services as part of their established role in support of Conveners and the cycle of committee business.

Risk management

9. This activity supports the university's obligations under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.

Equality & diversity

10. The findings of the questionnaire demonstrate a recognition of the need to improve diversity of our committees. It is recognised that as a high proportion of committee members are appointed by virtue of their job/role (*ex officio*) the committees can do little to change the diversity of the membership as this depends upon the characteristics of staff recruited to positions across the university. It is suggested in the report that

committees actively consider their membership and in particular look to the opportunity for co-option of members and the inclusion of a range of non-committee members in task groups in order to diversify the input to business discussions and decision-making. It has been recommended that the committees seek a more active approach from contributors - for example requiring better evidence that EDI has been considered when constructing cover-papers.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

11. The findings of the review have been reported to the relevant Senate Standing Committees and they will discuss and take forward actions in response.

<u>**Author**</u>
Sue MacGregor, Director of Academic
Services

Freedom of Information
Open

Committee Effectiveness Review 2019/20 – questionnaire responses initial analysis

1. **Context**

   1.1. Under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance, universities are expected to carry out an annual internal review of the effectiveness of their academic board (at the University of Edinburgh, the academic board is Senate). Senate Standing Committees operate under delegated authority from Senate. Therefore, during Summer 2020, Academic Services conducted a light-touch review of the Senate Standing Committees (Education Committee, Quality Assurance Committee, Academic Policy & Regulations Committee).

   1.2. The review was primarily self-reflective and the input requested from committee members was intended to be proportionate to the current University priorities, particularly taking into account the ongoing University response to the Covid-19 emergency.

   1.3. The review process intended to gather information on and evaluate effectiveness in terms of the:
       i. Composition of the committee
       ii. Support and facilitation of committee meetings
       iii. Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits
       iv. Impact and strategic relevance of Senate Committees' work

2. **Response rate**

   2.1. The response rate was extremely low across all three committees (13 replies from 54 committee members), so there is little to act on, but there are potentially some common themes such as in relation to committee remits, communication and equality, diversity and inclusion.

3. **Analysis of comments by Committee**

   SQAC

   - **Committee Remit** – respondents felt the remit was clear and the Committee adapted effectively to challenges and changes to priorities. *"The remit is clear. It often has oversight of the work of others which is appropriate given the nature of the committee role."*
   - **Governance and Impact** – the majority of respondents understood how the Committee linked to the wider governance framework and University strategic priorities. However linkages to the University Executive could be better, particularly regarding feedback on recommendations and business passed up to Exec by SQAC: *"I do not feel that the work of Executive is well connected to SQAC (ie academic related business going via Exec)"*
   - **Composition/EDI** – respondents were satisfied that the Committee had the appropriate composition to fulfil its remit but some responders felt that it could be more diverse (in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) – *"I think the composition isn't suitably representative of the diverse population of the University - and certainly not its aims. If we look at the race"*

- **Role** – most of the respondents felt they had a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities.
- **Communications** – respondents felt that the Committee communicates effectively with stakeholders.
- **Support** – all respondents felt that the Committee was effectively supported by Academic Services.

APRC

- **Committee Remit** – respondents agreed that the remit was clear and that the Committee had adapted to changes well. Agreed that there had been very little in the way of formal APRC task groups recently – *"Would be good to use task groups so that others outside the Committee could have opportunities to be part of the work"*. However, the Committee has been focused on other projects/groups that require feedback from APRC at key stages of their work (for example in relation to special circumstances and coursework extensions).
- **Governance & Impact** - majority agreement that there are clear links between Committee business and the University proprieties and that APRC makes the desired impact. Slight disagreement about effectiveness of the flow of business between College Committees, Senate and other Committees – *" membership allows for a good flow of information to Colleges (and so to Schools/Deaneries)". "Would be helpful to have a visual diagram of how the committee link".* It was noted there are a great deal of papers and it's a lot of reading to ask members to get through – *"Maybe use targeted pre reading".*
- **Composition** – respondents agreed that the size and composition was suitable and that *" meetings work well and members are not afraid to discuss difficult issues"*. It was recognised that this is a Committee *" where quite wide representation is important, professional staff and academics".*
- **EDI** –agreed that this could be improved – *"More emphasis should be placed on EDI to embed it into the decision making and discussion".*
- PGR – agree that further thought needs to be given to APRC's role in relation to PGR governance. Members have noted that we also need to better articulate where the Doctoral College will sit within this when it comes to policy and regulations relating to PGR students.
- **Role** – there was majority agreement that members had clear understanding of their role and responsibilities with an appreciation of strong member engagement in the Committee.
- **Communications** – respondents agreed that the Committee communicates effectively with stakeholders and members had clear understanding of their role in cascading information - *"the Senate Committees newsletter has been a big help." "Sometimes there is not enough time between getting the papers and the meeting to undertake consultation".*
- **Support -** all respondents felt that the Committee was effectively supported by Academic Services.

SEC

- **Committee Remit** – respondents felt the remit was clear and the Committee adapted effectively to challenges and changes to priorities. However, some improvements were suggested - *"there needs to be better strategic use of task/workgroups". " We need to explore further how better to join up Student Experience with Senate Committee activity".*
- **Governance and Impact** – all respondents understood how the Committee linked to the wider governance framework and University strategic priorities, including the links between Senate and the Committees. However, some respondents felt that communication to the wider community could be improved e.g. *"…decisions made in Senate Committees [may not] reach everyone and always lead to changes in practice in all Schools."* There was concern that making an impact could be a struggle - *"In the current crisis where the lines of*

governance have been somewhat undermined." Specifically in relation to oversight of PGR (as a result of the disbanding of REC) there was a sense that the SEC should strengthen its consideration of PGR matters within the cycle of business and should ensure clarity of the relationship between the Doctoral College and academic governance.

- **Composition** – respondents were satisfied that the Committee had the appropriate composition *"It has been really helpful to include Heads of School…"* although *"Committees are rather large which makes them less agile."*
- **EDI** – The majority of respondents agreed that the Committee adequately addresses EDI considerations when discussing its business. However, all respondents disagreed that the composition of the SEC is suitably representative – *"OK on gender but no BAME representation". "Cover papers rarely genuinely address EDI and evidence deep and change orientated thinking".*
- **Role** – Respondents felt they had a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and that members engaged fully in Committee business.
- **Communications** – Most respondents felt that the Committee communicates effectively with stakeholders and all said that they had a clear understanding of their role as a representative of their College or Group. However some did not have a clear understanding of their role in cascading information from the Committee – *"I do not believe that Committee members should be expected to deliver decisions and actions unaided".*
- **Support** – all respondents felt that the Committee was effectively supported by Academic Services.

4. **Committees and Coronavirus Covid-19**

    4.1. Academic Services has reviewed Senate Standing Committees' Covid-19 preparedness for 2020/21, in the context of ongoing developments in the governance and management of learning and teaching and the student experience as part of the University's management of the impact of the Covid-19 emergency.

    4.2. Each of the Committees has played a role during 2019/20 in the response to Covid-19 in particular:

      i.   APRC has provided the necessary oversight for concession arrangements and academic guidance and moved its business to online meetings which will continue for the foreseeable future.

      ii. SQAC has done significant work, supported prominently by the team in Academic Services, to ensure that the approach to scheduling and conducting IPRs and other QA processes are streamlined, taken online and that colleagues and externals can carry out their roles safely and effectively either remotely or on campus in 2020/21. Preparation for ELIR has been re-organised to ensure we meet the revised QAA schedule for review in 2021.

      iii. SEC convened additional meetings to ensure it could cover items of business relating to assessment, timetabling & the teaching week and hybrid learning & teaching. The Committee is well prepared to conduct its business flexibly and online during the new academic year.

    4.3. There are cross-overs in the membership and interests of SEC and the ART working groups. It is suggested that SEC strengthens its role in governance of learning & teaching matters in relation to the ART programme and hybrid learning and teaching is fully implemented in the new academic year.

5. Suggested Actions in light of responses (combined)

5.1. Because of the low number of respondents, a combined analysis of the answers to the review questions suggests the following recommended actions:

Area Under Review	Recommended Action	Responsible	Date
Remit	1. Committees to discuss the relevance of task groups for areas of business in particular to enable wider participation and representation which could be beneficial to the Committee in its decision making 2. SEC to consider how to include relevant matters relating to student experience into the cycle of business (while recognising how student experience is handled by Executive). 3. SEC to consider how to strengthen governance of hybrid L&T and curriculum matters in 2020/21 where these are initiated via the ART programme. 4. SEC to consider its coverage of PGR matters and continue to monitor the development of the Doctoral College and its role (if any) in PGR governance.	Academic Services and Senate Standing Committee Conveners SEC Convener SEC Convener SEC Convener	
Composition	5. Committees to consider their membership actively in the course of each year in order to ensure it remains relevant (e.g co-opted members)	Academic Services	
Governance & Impact	6. Paperwork – Committees to consider whether it may be possible to allocate readers for some of the more peripheral items. 7. Presentation of papers - Committees to invite those who submit papers to present them if they are not a member. This seems to happen in some cases but not in others. This would ensure a more helpful discussion and better understanding for those who are putting the proposal forward for approval and understand the issues raised when a paper is not approved.	Academic Services Academic Services	
EDI	8. More emphasis across all Committees on EDI as an integral consideration to all business and decision-making. 9. Committees to request that contributors ensure that cover papers portray more evidence of EDI considerations	Senate Standing Committee Conveners Academic Services	
Role	10. Conveners and Secretaries to introduce continually improved inductions for members 11. Re-set the expectations for the role of members in the cascading of information to constituencies in respect of each Committee's remit and decision making, with specific reference to the requirement for information to be reported to and from relevant College committees.	Academic Services and Senate Standing Committee Conveners	
Communications	12. Academic Services to work with Committees to build on the success of the Committee Newsletter and to support increase in effective cascading of information to stakeholders.	Academic Services	