**Minutes of the Meeting of Senate Education Committee
held via Microsoft Teams at 2.00pm on Thursday 8 September 2022**

1. Attendance

Present	Position
Colm Harmon	Vice-Principal Students (Convener) – Ex Officio
Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (Vice-Convener) – Ex Officio
Sabine Rolle	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Lisa Kendall	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Patrick Walsh	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Jamie Davies	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, UG)
Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, PGT)
Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)
Mike Shipston	Head of Deanery, CMVM
Jo Shaw	Head of School, CAHSS
Jason Love	Head of School, CSE
Sam Maccallum	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice President Education
Shelagh Green	Director for Careers & Employability – Ex Officio
Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Division of Information Services – Ex Officio; Assistant Principal (Online and Open Learning)
Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions – Ex Officio
Tom Ward	Director of Academic Services – Ex Officio
Marianne Brown	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling (Interim)
Philippa Ward	Academic Services (Secretary)
In Attendance	
Teresa Ironside	Director of Data Science Education
Jon Turner	Director of Institute for Academic Development (in place of Velda McCune)
Lucy Evans	Deputy Secretary, Students
Apologies	
Laura Bradley	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)
Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)
Tim Stratford	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Sian Bayne	Assistant Principal Digital Education
Velda McCune	Representing Director of Institute for Academic Development – Ex Officio

Members noted that the Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions would shortly be leaving the role. They were thanked for their considerable contribution to the work of the Committee and the University.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 12 May 2022

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022.

3. Convener's Communications

All relevant matters were discussed at later points in the agenda.

4.   For Discussion

4.1   Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities

Members noted that:

- the Principles had not changed as compared with the previous version of the paper considered at the May meeting of the Committee.
- the Priorities had been expanded to aid implementation and a table of roles and responsibilities had been added to the document so that expectations for involved parties were clear.
- the Principles and Priorities were to be implemented from the start of academic year 2022/23, but Schools were primarily being asked to review current activity and identify gaps in 2022/23. Full implementation was expected from the start of 2023/24.
- principles 1.4, 2.5, 4.2, 4.3, 6.1, 6.4 were previously expected as part of the Taught Assessment Regulations and were not new. As such, these would continue to apply from the start of 2022/23.
- the strict requirement for feedback to be returned with 15 working days had been removed. However, Schools were still expected to aim for this wherever possible and to communicate clearly with students about expected turnaround times.

Committee members discussed:

- the overall value of the Principles and Priorities. They were extremely positive about the document recognising that, in the context of the ELIR recommendations, progress in this area was essential.
- Resource issues:
  - While it was understandable that resource implications had been linked to the Curriculum Transformation Programme, any meaningful engagement with the Principles and Priorities would inevitably require additional time for Directors of Teaching and Teaching Teams, and staff were already under considerable pressure.
  - Were it not possible to deliver the Curriculum Transformation Programme in line with current timescales, this could in turn affect implementation of the Principles and Priorities.
- Communications:
  - Careful thought needed to be given to the way in which the document and its requirements were communicated.
  - It would be beneficial to give Schools agency and not to be overly-prescriptive about the way in which the Principles and Priorities should be implemented.
  - However, it was also recognised that further guidance around some aspects of implementation would be appreciated by Schools.
  - Communications should make clear that while the document was broadly reflective, some aspects were more regulatory in nature.
  - Individual Schools should be responsible for informing their own students about the Principles and Priorities.

- Programme-level assessment:
  o The challenges with this were recognised. It was noted that, at this stage, the expectation was that there should be high-level oversight of course assessment at programme level to ensure coherence.
- Roles and Responsibilities Table:
  o There would be value in mentioning QA reports in the table as a means of allowing Schools to report on progress.
  o It was suggested that there would be benefit in making clear that Course Organisers should fit their assessment and feedback with the requirements of Programme Directors and Directors of Teaching.
  o It was suggested that there would be benefit in making it clear where responsibility lay for coordinating courses shared between programmes.

The Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities were approved by the Committee without any amendments. The Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance agreed to liaise with the representative Heads of Schools on the Committee to seek their feedback on draft communications around the Principles and Priorities.

Action: Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance to liaise with the representative Heads of Schools on the Committee to seek their feedback on draft communications around the Principles and Priorities.

4.2 University of Edinburgh Students' Association Vice President Education Priorities 2022/23

The Students' Association Vice President Education outlined their priorities for academic year 2022/23, namely:

- increasing academic transparency and student academic support;
- working towards a more accessible and inclusive curriculum;
- and improving staff and student engagement with the University's student voice structures.

Member discussed:

- the significant concerns that were being raised by students about a return to in person exams and action that might be taken to address these concerns.
- training for student representatives – the EUSA Vice President Education noted that the Students' Association was looking at ways in which the training for student representatives might be enhanced and also at ways in which student representatives might have their contribution to the work of the University recognised.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Student Experience

The Deputy Secretary Students, who was in attendance at the meeting, noted that the University's default position was to be as open as possible in relation to student experience matters. The content of papers was only closed where this was considered absolutely necessary and in line with permitted Freedom of Information exemptions.

<u>Student Experience Update (taken to 7 June 2022 meeting of University Executive)</u>

The Committee noted that comments had been received from a Senate member about the implementation of the new Student Support model:

- The Senate member was keen to know what monitoring, review and engagement there had been of the staff transition towards the new Student Support roles. Were things going as planned? There appeared to be confusion in the Senate member's home School, particularly amongst Programme Directors, about the new workflow and guidance processes.
- The Senate member noted that they would like to see consideration given to staffing numbers and effectiveness of the current Advisor-Student ratio for Wellbeing Advisors, as this had been a concern raised by Senate.
- The Senate member noted that they had heard concerns raised by colleagues about student access to expert advice on course selection – not just the expertise advisors have on the procedural aspects of course selection, but advice that requires a subject expert to guide the student to mastery of the field appropriate to their intellectual and career goals. The Senate member hoped to see this matter considered as the rollout of the new course selection staffing and workflow were reviewed.

It was agreed that the Convener would discuss these matter directly with the Senate member concerned.

> **<u>Action</u>: Convener to discuss implementation of the Student Support model with the Senate member concerned.**

<u>National Student Survey (NSS) 2022 Results (taken to 9 August 2022 meeting of University Executive)</u>

Members discussed the following in relation to this paper:

- The University had seen improvements in a number of areas, for example in students' comments around course content, relationship with academics and teaching. Where there were improvements, it was important to recognise and acknowledge these.
- The University remained some way off its goal of being equally excellent in both its teaching and research. The Committee agreed that this issue could not be addressed through a 'one size fits all' approach and that tailored action plans were needed for each School. The Vice-Principal Students and Deputy Secretary Students would be working with Heads of Schools and Colleges to develop these plans.
- 'Sense of belonging' remained an issue for the University.

5.2 Doctoral College

The CMVM PGR representative provided the following verbal update on the work of the Doctoral College:

- **UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) stipend increase**

The UKRI was increasing its minimum student stipend by 10% on the previously announced level for academic year 2022 / 2023. The University had taken the decision to provide the same 10% uplift to all students, regardless of their sources of funding. The financial implications of this decision were now being worked through.

- **PGR hardship funding**

Student hardship in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the context of the cost of living crisis remained a concern. The University was hoping to increase the amount of hardship funding available and to encourage more students in need to apply. It was noted that students were often discouraged from applying because the process was felt to be intrusive. Members agreed that there would be benefit in providing students with more information about why such a detailed application process was needed (namely because of audit-related considerations).

The Doctoral College had also agreed that a central fund to help students with visa and NHS surcharges was needed.

- **PhD duration**

The Doctoral College was working through proposals to match funding with PhD duration, with Colleges working together to ensure consistency of application and to map duration to credit-bearing content. The Doctoral College was keen to be involved in high-level University discussions around 'size and shape'.

- **Interaction with new Student Support structures**

The Doctoral College had made contact with the University's new Wellbeing Advisers, who would be involved in the next Doctoral College Forum. The feedback from Schools was that there was some confusion around the role of the Wellbeing Advisors in PGR student support.

- **Doctoral College Forum Meetings**

These were being held bi-monthly with the next meeting scheduled for 22 September 2022.

- **Supervisor training**

Training, including the mandatory course 'Fundamentals of PhD Supervision' and new resources for PhD examiners, was being provided online. There was an appetite to re-introduce in-person supervisor briefing sessions.

- **MScR marking instructions**

The Colleges were working together to update the guidance for examiners and other relevant paperwork to ensure that it was consistent with current marking requirements.

- **Annual Review Policy update**

The Doctoral College had contacted the Convener of APRC to confirm the next steps for review of the Policy.

- **Student Systems**

The following was noted in relation to Student Systems:

- o There was a desire to allow greater visibility of Schedules of Adjustment to improve implementation.

- o The Doctoral College was addressing problems caused by lack of a case management system for PGR.

- o The Doctoral College was contributing to the development of new reporting systems for Leave of Absences of short duration (5 to 30 days).

- o The Doctoral College was contributing to the development of Escalation Processes.

- **Report from the Equality Diversity and Inclusion / Widening Participation PhD Intern**

  This had been received and welcomed by the Doctoral College and the implications were being worked through. Notable findings included:

  - o The supervisor/ student relationship being central to experience.

  - o The environment being central to experience.

  - o Students wanting pro-active pastoral contact from the University / Schools

  - o Students feeling that wellbeing and pastoral support was underfunded (despite recent increases in Wellbeing Services)

  - o More practical support / better recognition (and environment) was needed for students who were parents

  - o The financial landscape was challenging for overseas students.

6. For Approval

6.1 Proposed Changes to Academic and Pastoral Support Policy for Academic Year 2022/23

The Committee approved the proposed changes.

7. For Information / Noting

7.1 Academic Integrity Update

The Vice-Convener provided the Committee with the following update:

- The Institute for Academic Development had been tasked with developing a generic, mandatory course for all students on academic integrity. It was hoped that it might be possible to repurpose and develop a course which was already being used within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. The CMVM PGT representative on the Committee noted that they would be happy to assist IAD with this work.

- The Student Support Model project team were considering the Cohort Lead role descriptor and the role that Cohort Leads might play in providing students with more subject-specific guidance on academic integrity.
- The University's Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures had been reviewed and would shortly be taken to Academic Policy and Regulations Committee for approval. It was recognised that the procedures were difficult for students to understand and as such, additional student guidance would be developed.
- Further work on academic integrity would be undertaken by the Deputy Secretary Students in due course.

7.2 ELDeR Requests 2020-22

The Committee noted the paper.

7.3 Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) 2022-23

The Committee noted that the SPA is negotiated each year between the University and Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), with groups of staff and students consulted about priority areas. The priority areas agreed for 2022/23 were:

- Community, wellbeing and supporting transitions
- Transforming curriculum and engagement with learning and teaching
- Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Committee was advised that the deadline for applications for small project funding related to the priorities was 17 October 2022. Students would be provided with more information once the new semester was underway, and Committee members were encouraged to communicate widely about the funding opportunity.

> **Action: Committee members to advise those in their constituencies about the SPA small project funding opportunity.**

7.4 Committee Administration

Developments from 11 August 2022 meeting of Senate, including new guidelines for Senate Committee operations

The Committee noted the guidelines within the paper on accessing Committee papers and information about the use of oral reports at Committee meetings.

Members were advised that a Senate member had provided comments on the section of the paper that gave guidance on the treatment of resourcing issues within Committee papers. The Senate member was of the view that the information within the paper did not fully reflect what had been agreed at the 11 August 2022 meeting of Senate. The Director of Academic Services indicated that he would update the Committee if it was appropriate to refine the guidance once Senate had confirmed the minute of its 11 August 2022 meeting.

Committee Membership and Committee Terms of Reference 2022/23

Members noted the current membership and terms of reference of the Committee and that these would be discussed further by Senate in the coming months.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services
27 September 2022