



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

**Senatus Academicus**  
Wednesday 9 February 2022 at 2pm  
Online meeting

## AGENDA

### OPEN SESSION

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

- 1. Convener's Communications** **2.00 –  
2.15pm**  
An update from the Convener, Principal Professor Peter Mathieson, followed by Q&A
  
- 2. Strategic Presentation and Discussion**  
  
**The Edinburgh Graduate Vision** **2.15 –  
3.00pm**  
**Introduction**
  - **Colm Harmon**, Vice Principal (Students) – Curriculum Programme current status and looking ahead across 2022 and beyond  
**Progress across 2021 and key Findings from our Workstreams and Groups –**
  - **Amanda Percy**, Programme and Portfolio Manager Curriculum Transformation Programme – Progress overview
  - **Professor Conchúr Ó Brádaigh**, Head of School Engineering, Chair Future Skills Workstream
  - **Professor Tim Drysdale**, School of Engineering, Digital Education Workstream  
**Engagement with the University community and development of the Vision**
  - **Ellen MacRae**, Edinburgh University Students' Association President, with a specific focus on student engagement
  - **Jon Turner**, Director IAD - Broader engagement activity and moving into the consultation phase  
**Followed by discussion** **3.00 –  
3.45pm**  
  
**Closes at 3.50pm**

Break

### FORMAL MEETING OF SENATE – from 4pm

This section of the meeting is open to Senate members only

- 3. Welcome to new student members**
  - Nisha Grewel – PGR Representative
  - Silmee Nowar – PGT Representative
  - Marie-Louise Wohrle – PGR Representative

#### 4. Senate Members' Feedback on Presentation and Discussion Topic

### SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

#### 5. Senate Minutes S 21/22 3 A

To approve:

- Minutes of the Senate meeting held on 12 October 2021
- Minutes of the Senate meeting held on 12 November 2021
- Report of E-Senate held from 12 – 26 January 2022

#### Matters arising

- E-Senate process S 21/22 3 B
- Presentation and Discussion topics - selection process (Senate paper [S 21/22 2D](#) Appendix 1, Suggested actions in response to 2020/21 review)
- Senate Standing Orders (Senate paper [S 21/22 2D](#) Appendix 1, Suggested actions in response to 2020/21 review)
- Senate Standing Committees (Senate minutes [12 November 2021](#), item 2)

#### 6. Senate Assessor Election Regulations S 21/22 3 C To approve

#### 7. Senate Academic Staff Member Elections 2021/22 S 21/22 3 D To approve and for information

#### 8. Senate Standing Committees – upcoming business S 21/22 3 E To note and comment

#### 9. Resolutions S 21/22 3 F To comment

### ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL OR NOTING

#### 10. Research Strategy Group update S 21/22 3 G For information

**Senate**

**9 February 2021**

**Minutes of Senate meetings held on 20 October 2021, 12 November 2021  
and Report of Electronic Business conducted between 12- 26 January 2022**

**Description of paper**

1. The paper provides the minutes of the Senate meetings held on 20 October 2021, 12 November 2021 and report of electronic business conducted between 12- 26 January 2022.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. For approval.

**Resource implications**

4. None.

**Risk management**

5. Not applicable.

**Equality & diversity**

6. Not applicable.

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

7. Senate minutes are published on the Senate website: [Senate agendas, papers and minutes](#)
8. Key decisions were communicated in the Senate Committees' Newsletter to stakeholders on the distribution list: [Senate Committees' Newsletter](#)

**Author**

Senate Secretariat  
2 February 2022

**Freedom of Information**

Open paper

## SENATUS ACADEMICUS

### UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS

held online Wednesday 20 October 2021

#### OPEN SESSION

This section of the meeting is open to all members of staff. Approximately 250 members of staff attended.

#### 1. Convener's Communications

The Convener provided a short update.

The Convener made the key points below:

- The University Court recently held a half-day seminar on the topics of Freedom of Expression, and the University Superannuation Scheme (USS). They received a presentation on USS from a company called Mercer. [Secretary's note: the Court presentation was not available to be shared more widely, but Mercer held a briefing session open to all staff on 4 November 2021, and attendees at this Senate meeting were sent information on how to register for this briefing].
- Improving student satisfaction remains a key priority. The University outcomes for undergraduate student satisfaction in the National Student Survey are disproportionately low in comparison with other institutions. This year there is also information available to the University via the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR), which took place in 2020/21. The outcomes of ELIR include a requirement that the University demonstrates that it can bring about internal change effectively and in a timely fashion, and this includes evidence of effective progress on projects intended to improve student satisfaction. There are inter-related issues around staff experience.
- The University Executive and Court have approved investment into carbon-offset in the form of land and trees. This supports the University pledge on carbon neutrality.
- The implementation of the People and Money system has taken longer and been less smooth than had been hoped. Communications have been sent to all staff, but the Convener particularly wanted to note some changes to the governance of the project, and to thank those who have recently taken on governance roles: Vice-Principal Dave Robertson, Vice-Principal Catherine Martin, and Professor Anthony Finkelstein, acting as an external advisor.
- The University financial situation is better than the worst-case scenarios that were previously modelled, due to positive student recruitment and efforts to control expenditure, and this is thanks to the efforts of a wide range of staff.
- Recruitment processes are underway for four members of the Senior Team, including a Provost post, replacing what was previously a Senior Vice-Principal post.
- The Chancellor of the Exchequer has recently made comments on the role of AI in the future of the UK. The University is widely recognised as a leader in Artificial Intelligence, and has made a statement response to these comments that has been positively received by the sector.

- Building work has begun on the Usher Institute at the BioQuarter (Little France) and there is a proposal to seek a development partner to develop more on that site.
- There is more activity on campus following the beginning of semester, and there is a feeling of the campus 'coming back to life'.

To allow as much time as possible for the presentation and discussion, questions were held over until the main Q&A.

## 2. **Strategic Presentation and Discussion** **Freedom of Expression**

Attendees received six presentations:

### 1. **Introduction and overview of the University of Edinburgh statement** – the Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance and University Secretary, Sarah Smith

Key points:

- Freedom of expression is under debate in society at large, as well as in universities.
- The University has thought deeply about this issue, and a Statement on Freedom of Expression was published last year, which reasserted that freedom of expression is fundamental to the University's purposes.

### 2. **Freedom of expression, academic freedom and other statutory obligations – What does the law say?** – the Deputy Secretary, Governance and Legal, Leigh Chalmers

Key points:

- An overview on the relevant law on freedom of expression.
- Freedom of expression is a universal but qualified right, and a number of legal factors apply to the exercise of the right to freedom of expression.
- Academic freedom and freedom of expression are related but distinct concepts. Academic freedom is defined in the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended). Academic freedom is freedom within the law. The precise definition is subject to debate.
- The purpose of universities to openly debate challenging ideas means that universities can set only limited restrictions on freedom of expression.
- Competing rights and complementary rights (such as the right to protest) may arise and can be challenging.
- Internal policies such as the Dignity and Respect Policy, Code of Student Conduct and HR disciplinary policies are also relevant.

### 3. **Speakers and events – how does the UoE manage higher risk events?** – the Deputy Secretary, Student Experience, Gavin Douglas

Key points:

- The University has a Policy on Speakers and Events. This includes events held under the auspices of the University, including student events, but not the University's normal academic or administrative business, for example a research seminar organised by a subject area.
- The Policy includes an assessment process using established criteria aligned to previous Universities UK guidance.

- There is a strong presumption in favour of allowing events / speakers, with conditions if required to mitigate risks.
- To date, no events have been refused under the Policy.

4. **Freedom of Expression and Dignity and Respect** – the University Lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley

Key points:

- Freedom of expression is not an unfettered freedom, and there needs to be consideration of our responsibilities to each other, to our institution and to society, prompting reflection not just on what we say, but when and how we say it.
- The University Dignity and Respect Policy aims to promote a positive culture, and a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The policy asks us as a University to foster a positive culture for working and studying, which permits freedom of thought and expression, within a framework of mutual respect.
- Issues that arise cannot be settled only through policies, but must be attended to through scholarship and practices, including reflection, dialogue and support. This requires a recognition of inequality and processes of exclusion, taking relative power and context seriously, to find a way to use freedom of expression as an enabler, not an inhibitor, of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Our whole community needs to engage to promote inclusive, yet challenging, dialogue.

5. **Freedom of Expression: the student view** – Senate heard a recorded presentation from Ellen MacRae, the Edinburgh University Students' Association President.

Key points:

- Edinburgh is a global university with a vast diversity of thought and personal experience relating to freedom of expression.
- Students and Student Associations are often a focal point when media and government are talking about freedom of expression. EUSA has never cancelled an event due to a no-platforming policy: there is no such policy. There is a safe space policy, which is simply a code of conduct.
- Three main aspects were explored in this talk: the inclusion of marginalised voices; the recognition of the boundary between explorative discussion and factual analysis; the responsibility of power-holders in this debate.
- Universities are the best place for students to engage in discussion and debate, but we only have truly achieved this when everyone feels comfortable to participate and express their own views, and reflect on their own experiences. Students are at university to learn, and academics hold a lot of power in their platform as teachers

6. **Freedom of Expression and academic freedom** – Professor Richard Andrews, Head of Moray House School of Education and Sport

Key points:

- In consideration of freedom of expression, it is worth discussing the related concept of academic freedom.
- The presentation attempts to define academic freedom, and notes that freedom comes with responsibility.
- Toulmin's The Use of Argument used to diagram the process of making claims, providing evidence, and challenging claims.

- Argumentation is a key element of academic freedom, and argumentative rationality may be subject, in contemporary society, to challenges from narratives that are promoted without reference to argument or evidence.

Following the presentations, attendees were invited to take part in a Q&A. The key points raised were:

- Digital events held under the auspices of the University are also subject to the Policy on Speakers and Events.
- The decision to publish a Statement on Freedom of Expression was an important assertion of the University's values, but it could not be expected that such a statement, though necessary, would be sufficient to address these issues. The University will always need to ensure that it works within the law while also seeking to support colleagues and students. The University is often very constrained in what it can say publicly about individual cases due to duties of confidentiality.
- A suggestion was made that a procedure is required to enable challenges to freedom of expression to be resolved when they do occur. If an event is delayed temporarily to allow issues to be explored, there does not seem to be a process for ensuring that this discussion comes to a conclusion and decision.
- How does the University prevent only one side of an argument being platformed, and avoid the risk of a chilling effect that could lead to self-censorship or marginalisation of some views and people. Could academic freedom champions help to address issues as they arise?
- How do we build student and staff capacity for tolerating difficult discussions and good faith rebuttals and rational discussion of emotional issues: is this a curriculum challenge?
- How do we move to the next phase of the discussion on academic freedom and freedom of expression? Will this process listen to the voices of those who have had their academic freedom curtailed? Should this presentation be the start of a series of conversations, moving on to questions of practical action?
- An unreasonable burden may be placed on marginalised groups to contest ideas. Some argue that the position that it can be 'interesting' to debate some controversial topics is itself a position of privilege. Should the debate move from what academics may be permitted to do, to consideration of what academics should do with their academic freedom, in terms of their responsibilities to marginalised and under-represented groups?
- In the context of institutional partnerships with possible implications for academic freedom, the University has risk assessment and due diligence processes in place, and such issues are taken into consideration in the process of contracting with partner institutions.
- In relation to equipping students with abilities to contest dominant narratives and to counter narratives with argument and evidence, and the tools of academic debate, it was noted that this kind of skills development is key to the thinking involved in the Curriculum Transformation project.
- Are there plans to publicise the Statement on Freedom of Expression more widely to students, and to introduce this topic into the curriculum more broadly?
- The University has adopted the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. The University was approached by the University Jewish Students Society, and the University did not have an existing definition of anti-Semitism. It is understood that the definition may be considered by some as controversial, but in practice to date there is no evidence of academic freedom or events being curtailed by the adoption of this definition.

- A question was raised on whether the University is for 'truth seekers' or 'social justice seekers'. Other attendees suggested that such a binary opposition was unhelpful.
- While this has been a valuable opportunity to share ideas and hear questions and insights, some people may not feel comfortable joining the conversation, and it will be important in the process of developing approaches to the issue of freedom of expression that opportunities are created that are accessible to all members of the University community.

It was noted that following the discussions at both Senate and earlier at Court, a paper and proposals would be taken to the University Executive for further discussion.

A recording of the presentations and discussion is available on request from [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk)

The Convener thanked the presenters and all staff for their contributions to the presentation and discussion.

The Convener closed the open session of Senate, noting that Senate members were invited to join the formal meeting of Senate at 4.00pm.

## **FORMAL MEETING OF SENATE**

This section of the meeting is open to Senate members only.

**Present:** MATHIESON Peter (CHAIR), ANDREANGELI Arianna, ANDREW Ruth, ANDREWS Richard, BARAKAT Ammir, BARANY Michael, BENJAMIN Shereen, BENNETT Stuart, BLYTHE Richard, BRADFIELD Julian, BRANIGAN Holly, BUDD Adam, CALVERT Jane, CAMERON Ewen, CHAN Un Ieng, CHAPMAN Karen, CHUE HONG Neil, CONNOR Andrew, COOMBES Sam, CRANG Jeremy, CRUZ Juan, CUNNINGHAM-BURLEY Sarah, DANBOLT Jo, DONOVAN Kevin, DUNLOP James, EFERAKORHO Jite, ELLIS Heather, EUSA VP Activities, EUSA VP Community, EUSA VP Education, EUSA VP Welfare, EVANS Mark, FERNANDEZ-GOTZ Manuel, FISHER Bob, FRENCH Chris, GORDON Iain, GRANT, Liz, GRAY David, HAMILTON Lorna, HARDY Judy, HARMON Colm, HARRISON Tina, HAY David, HAYCOCK-STUART Elaine, HECK Margarete, HENDERSON Sarah, HIGHTON Melissa, HOLT Sophie, HOPGOOD James, HOY Jenny, HUNTER Emma, IBIKUNLE Gbenga, JACOBS Emily, JENKINS Kirsten, KENNY Meryl, KHATTAR Medhat, KINNEAR George, KIRSTEIN Linda, LAMONT-BLACK Simone, LLORENTE PRADA Jaime, LLOYD Ashley, LORETTO Wendy, MACIOCIA Antony, MARSLAND Rebecca, MAVIN Emma, MCCONNELL Alistair, MCMAHON Sean, MCQUEEN Heather, MEIKSIN Avery, MORRISON Tara, NAVARRO Pau, NGWENYA Bryne, NORRIS Paul, NOVENSON Matthew, OOSTERHOFF Richard, PATON Diana, PULHAM Colin, REYNOLDS-WRIGHT John, SCHMID Marion, SHIELDS Kirsteen, SIMPSON Hamish, SMITH Sarah, SORACE Antonella, STOCK Sarah, STORRIER Rachel, STRATFORD Tim, TAYLOR Emily, TAYLOR Paul, TERRY Jonathan, THOMAS Robert, TRODD Tamara, TUFAIL-HANIF Uzma, TURNER Adam, TURNER Jon, UPTON Jeremy, WAHI-SINGH Pia, WARRINGTON Stephen, WEIR Christopher, WHYTE, Moira, YILDIRIM Alper

In attendance: HUME Roshni, MACGREGOR Sue

**Apologies:** ALIOTTA Marialuisa, BALTARETU Ioana, BOWD Stephen, CACAQUINEAU Celine, CAIRNS John, COOPER Sarah, COX Chris, DAVIES Mia Nicole, DESLER Anne, du PLESSIS Paul, EVANS Jay, EVENSEN, Darrick, EWING Suzanne, FORBES Stuart,



GRAY Gillian, HILLSTON, Jane, HOGG, Martin, HOLLOWAY Aisha, HOLT Sophie, KENWAY Richard, LIKONDE Samantha, MacPHERSON Sarah, MACRAE Ellen, MARTIN Catherine, McARA Lesley, MCKIE Linda, MCLACHLAN Gavin, MENZIES John, MIELL Dorothy, MORAN Nikki, MORROW Susan, NAYDANI, Cynthis, PHILLIPS Claire, REYNOLDS Rebecca, ROBBINS Jeremy, ROLLE Sabine, SECKL Jonathan, STOCK Sarah, TERRAS Melissa

### **3. Senate Members' Feedback on Presentation and Discussion Topic**

Senate members were invited to provide any further comments on the presentation and discussion topic.

## **SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

### **4. Report from E-Senate (S 21/22 1 A)**

The minute of E-Senate held from 21 – 29 September was not approved. Senate approved the motion: "The Principal's determination in item 7 regarding e-Senate paper F be withdrawn and the paper be reintroduced for deliberation and a vote by Senate." It was suggested that further discussion of items 6 and 7 (Senate Standing Committees, and the E-Senate Process) was required before a decision was made on paper F. [Secretary's note: the E-Senate Report and paper e-S 21/22 1 F were discussed at a Special Senate Meeting on 12 November 2021.]

### **5. Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) Action Plan (S 21/22 1 B)**

Tina Harrison presented the paper and explained that two areas of priority were highlighted as a result of the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review. These were Assessment and Feedback and Student Support. It was highlighted that significant changes had to be implemented ahead of the next review in 5 years' time, and evidence of progress on some items is required within a year. Some commented on the fact that the immediate plans focus on studying and formulating rather than acting. It was highlighted that the initial stage of the process would be to consult with all Schools in relation to both areas to see what would be possible.

There was some discussion around the growth in student numbers and the impact that this has had on resources. It was noted that this would be considered as part of the consultation process. There was further discussion around improvements required in relation to Assessment and Feedback, including how to interpret and contextualise NSS results. The discussion was noted by Tina Harrison and Colm Harmon and would be taken into consideration as part of the planning process.

It was noted that in approving the paper, Senate was approving a direction of travel.

Senate approved the paper via a vote.

The agenda was not completed at this meeting, and therefore a Special Meeting was convened on 12 November to complete the business not closed at the meeting on 20 October.

It was agreed that a further review of how Senate meetings should operate was required.  
It was agreed that Academic Services would facilitate discussion in relation to this.

The meeting was closed at 5pm.

## SENATUS ACADEMICUS

### UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS

held online Friday 12 November 2021

**Members Present:** MATHIESON Peter (CHAIR), AFZAL Barza, ANDREANGELI Arianna, ANDREWS Richard, BALTARETU Ioana, BARAKAT Ammir, BARANY Michael, BAXSTROM Richard, BECKETT Chris, BENNETT Stuart, BLYTHE Richard, BOND Helen, BRANIGAN Holly, BUDD Adam, CALVERT Jane, CAQUINEAU Celine, CAVANAGH David, CHANDRAN Siddharthan, CHAPMAN Karen, CHIGUMBA Mukai, CHUE HONG Neil, CONNOR Andrew, CONVERY Alan, COOMBES Sam, CRANG Jeremy, CRUZ Juan, DANBOLT Jo, DESLER Anne, DIMARTINO Simone, DONOVAN Kevin, DUNLOP James, EFERAKORHO Jite, ELLIS Heather, EUSA VP Activities, EUSA VP Welfare, EUSA VP Communities, EUSA VP Activities, EVANS Mark, EWING Suzanne, FRENCH Chris, FRIEDRICH Daniel, GILFILLAN Stuart, GRAY David, HALLIDAY Karen, HAMILTON Lorna, HARDY Judy, HARMON Colm, HARRISON Gareth, HARRISON Tina, HAY David, HENDERSON Sarah, HIGHTON Melissa, HOLLOWAY Aisha, HOLT Sophie, HOPGOOD James, HOY Jenny, HUDSON Andrew, IBIKUNLE Gbenga, HILLSTON Jane, JENKINS Kirsten, KHATTAR Medhat, KINNEAR George, KIRSTEIN Linda, LLORENTE PRADA Jaime, LLOYD Ashley, LORETTO Wendy, MACIOCIA Antony, MACPHERSON Sarah E, MARSLAND Rebecca, MAVIN Emma, MCLACHLAN Gavin, MEIKSIN Avery, MENZIES John, MIELL Dorothy, MORAN Carmel, MORAN Nikki, MORRISON Tara, MORROW Susan, NAVARRO Pau, NEWTON Michael, NGWENYA Bryne, NICOL Robbie, NORRIS Paul, NOVENSON Matthew, OOSTERHOFF Richard, PANTOULA Katerina, PATON Diana, PHILLIPS Claire, RICE Ken, RILEY Simon, SCHWANNAUER Matthias, SCHWARZ Tobias, SHAW Jo, SHEIKH Aziz, SMITH Sarah, STORRIER Rachel, STRATFORD Tim, TAYLOR Paul, TERRAS Melissa, TERRY Jonathan, TUFAIL-HANIF Uzma, TURNER Adam, UPTON Jeremy, WALSH Patrick, WARRINGTON Stephen, WEIR Christopher, YILDIRIM Alper

**Apologies:** BOMBERG Elizabeth, BOSWELL Christina, BOWD Stephen, CAMERON Ewen, CHAN Annie, CONVERY Alan, CRITCHLEY Hilary, CRUZ Juan, DAVIES Mia Nicole, du PLESSIS Paul, EVANS Jay, EVENSEN Darrick, FORBES Stuart, GENTZ Natascha, GOLD Tara, GRAY Gillian, HAYCOCK-STUART Elaine, HUNTER Emma, KENNY Meryl, KENWAY Richard, LIKONDE Samantha, MACKAY Fiona, MACRAE Ellen, MARTIN Catherine, McARA Lesley, MCKIE Linda, MOLE Damian, MORRIS Andrew, MULHOLLAND Neil, MURRAY Jonny, NAYDANI Cynthia, PULHAM Colin, REYNOLDS Rebecca, REYNOLDS-WRIGHT John, ROBBINS Jeremy, ROLLE Sabine, SAKOVICS Jozsef, SECKL Jonathan, SEMPLE Robert, SHIPSTON Mike, SIMM Geoff, STOCK Sarah, TAYLOR Emily, TURNER Neil, TUZI Nadia, WAHI-SINGH Pia, WHYTE Moira

In attendance: DOUGLAS Gavin, MACGREGOR Sue, NICOL Kate

#### **Convener's welcome**

The Convener welcomed Senate members to the meeting, and noted that this was a Special meeting convened to complete the Senate business that was not closed at the Senate meeting on 20 October 2021.

The Convener confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

#### **SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

##### **1. Report from E-Senate (S 21/22 2 A)**

To approve the minute of E-Senate held from 21 – 29 September 2021

At the meeting on 20 October, the membership decided that item 3 below (the E-Senate process) required discussion before the E-Senate minutes could be approved. This was specifically in relation to the E-Senate item on the Knowledge Strategy Committee membership. Therefore, discussion of this item was deferred after item 3, to allow for discussion of the Senate Standing Committees and the E-Senate process. See item 3 below.

## **2. Senate Standing Committees: Discussion (S 21/22 2 B)**

To discuss

The Convener noted that the paper recommends that no substantial changes are made to the Senate Standing Committee remits at this time, and that Conveners are encouraged to continue to improve the effectiveness of the committees. An externally-facilitated review of Senate is scheduled to take place in 2023/24.

Senate members were invited to discuss the paper and made the key points below:

- A proposal was made that there needs to be work on how to effectively review the function and organisation of the Standing Committees, and that work on this now could usefully feed into the upcoming externally-facilitated review. Senate is a very large body, so thought is required on how it can effectively contribute to such a discussion. Senate includes individuals with expert knowledge on governance issues, and this expert knowledge should be put to good use. Could a task group be created, including Senate members, to develop an informed view on the challenges of and solutions to Senate governance, informed by the views of Senate members and the Executive?
- Should some smaller-scale change be put into effect in the short term, to address the risk that change is continually delayed? Some Senate members have expressed concerns for some time about lack of dialogue between the Standing Committees and Senate, and lack of representation of 'at large' Senate members on Standing Committees. Could one 'at large' Senate member be added to each Standing Committee, to act as a member of the committee and to report back to Senate on the work of the committee?
- Senate is given opportunities to comment on proposals and projects via Standing Committee reports and as part of the Senate presentation and discussion sessions, but it is not clear where these comments go or what impact they have: the discussion of the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Action Plan at the 20 October 2021 meeting was noted as an example: Senate provided detailed comments. Will there be information on how these have been implemented or otherwise?
- An issue is that Senate should not be seen as 'rubber stamping' proposals that arise elsewhere, and it is not clear where proposals for new University initiatives and policies come from. These initiatives lose legitimacy unless they are seen to have been considered under the academic governance structure.
- The previous review of Senate Standing Committees was focused on matching individual relevant expertise to the committee remits, which has resulted in the Standing Committee membership being largely ex-officio, and members of Senate who are members of Standing Committees are often ex-officio members of Senate. Has this focus on expertise been to the detriment of the academic governance role of Senate? Senate is composed of set proportions of elected academic staff, elected professorial staff, ex-officio roles, and student members. This composition is set out in the relevant legislation. To ensure academic governance, should Senate Standing Committees have the same compositional structure?

The points below were raised in response:

- It could be useful to create a group to reflect on the current structure and provide advice on continuously improving effectiveness, and this could also feed into the upcoming externally-facilitated review.
- Before any short-term change is made, it is important to understand what the specific issues are, and to ensure that any changes made will resolve these issues. This includes allowing time to identify and consider risks and benefits, and any Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues.
- Is one short-term answer to look at how to strengthen communication between Senate and the Standing Committees?
- The Senate Standing Committees are part of the academic governance structure, because they act under delegated authority from Senate. The committees include members of Senate, key professional services colleagues, and representatives from related College committees.

Paper S 21/22 2 B recommended that Senate Standing Committee Conveners are encouraged to continue to improve the effectiveness of the committees. In this meeting, the Conveners committed to work to improve communications between Senate and their committees, and committed to putting together a group, including members of Senate, to review what future improvements to the structure / function of Senate Standing Committees may be required. Professor Colm Harmon (Convener of the Senate Education Committee) stated that he and the other Conveners will consult, including with Senate members, on how best to proceed and the Standing Committee Conveners will bring a paper forward to Senate at a future date.

Senate voted to support the recommendations in the paper.

No further specific motions were presented by Senate members.

### **3. E-Senate Process (S 21/22 2 C)**

To discuss and approve

Paper S 21/22 2 C and a response were briefly presented. It was noted that the key issues were:

- a) whether treating a nil response from members as approval of an item is an appropriate standard for approval of business by e-Senate
- b) whether e-Senate should take decisions on contentious business.

The paper proposed that in future the only business to be approved by e-Senate should be the appointment of Emeritus Professors. This would represent a significant change to current e-Senate business. An alternative proposal in response had also been tabled by a Senate member that would mean e-Senate could not approve any business but E-Senate could be used to advance a consent agenda for expedited approval in meetings. It was noted that if Senate were to conclude that no business can be approved via E-Senate, the main impact will be on the timely approval of nominations for the award of Emeritus status. This impact is balanced against concerns about counting non-response as presence for the purposes of quorum.

Senate voted on whether to accept the recommendations in the original paper, including an amendment to extend e-Senate deadlines to two weeks instead of one. The recommendations, as amended, were supported.

Senate also voted on the response proposal, including the amendment to two weeks. The response proposal was also supported.

The Convener noted that Senate had now approved two contradictory proposals. This will be minuted and the next steps will be considered outside this meeting.

The Convener now moved to consider item 1 above: **Report from E-Senate (S 21/22 2 A)**

The Convener invited Senate to approve the E-Senate minutes, with an amendment that the approval of item 7, Membership of the Knowledge Strategy Committee, has been rescinded.

Senate approved the minutes without requiring a vote.

The Convener then moved to consider item 7 from the E-Senate agenda, the **Membership of the Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC)** (paper e-S 21/22 1 F). Senate members were invited to make comments on the nominations for a new Senate member of KSC and the nomination of an interim Chair. Senate members considered the paper previously circulated to members via e-Senate.

The points below were made:

- Objections to this paper do not reflect opinions on the individuals concerned, but are about the process for nominating new members to this committee.
- New Senate members of KSC are nominated by KSC. The Convener of KSC is nominated by the Court Nominations Committee, and approved by Court and Senate, because KSC is a joint Court and Senate committee. Therefore, it is not in Senate's gift to propose alternative individuals for nomination. If Senate does not approve these nominations, this will be reported to KSC and new nominations from KSC and Court will be presented to Senate at a future date.
- The arrangements for nomination of KSC members are set out in the KSC Terms of Reference.
- There are 5 Senate positions on KSC, and these are usually filled by the three Conveners of the main Senate Standing Committees, and two Assistant Principals with specific remits that overlap with the work of KSC. This is intended to ensure useful links with Senate Standing Committees.
- Some concerns were raised that all of the Senate members on KSC are ex-officio members of Senate, rather than elected members.

Senate voted on whether to approve the nominations to KSC in paper e-S 21/22 1 F. Senate voted to approve these nominations. 5 members asked for abstentions to be noted.

The decision will be reported to the Secretary of KSC.

**4. Senate Effectiveness Review 2020/21 (S 21/22 2 D)**  
To comment

No comments were received.

**5. Senate Elections 2021 (S 21/22 2 E)**  
To note and comments

A query was raised on whether it would be useful to extend the nomination period, if there were fewer nominations than available positions. It was noted that nominations are open for a month, and that it would be difficult to extend this and complete the elections before

the Spring break. Senate members were encouraged to contact the Senate Clerk with any suggestions on how to advertise the elections more effectively, including how they might use their networks to advertise the elections.

#### **ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL OR NOTING**

**6. Conferment of the Title of Emeritus Professor (S 21/22 2 F)**

To approve

Senate approved the conferment of these titles.

**7. Library Committee membership (S 21/22 2 G)**

To approve

Senate approved the membership. It was noted that the Library Committee should be encouraged to fill outstanding vacancies as soon as possible.

**8. Edinburgh University Students' Association Priorities for 2021-22 (S 21/22 2 H)**

For information

The paper was received.

**9. Student Partnership Agreement (S 21/22 2 I)**

To note

The paper was noted.

**10. Research Strategy Group update (S 21/22 2 J)**

For information

The paper was received.

**11. Senate Standing Committees' Annual Internal Effectiveness Review Report (S 21/22 2 K)**

For information

The paper was received. It was noted that some of the comments made under item 2 above are relevant to the continuous improvement of the Committees, in addition to the action points identified in this report.

**12. Senate Standing Committees – upcoming business (S 21/22 2 L)**

To note and comment

The paper was noted. No comments were received.



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Electronic Senate

### Report of Electronic Business of Senate conducted between Wednesday 12 and Wednesday 26 January 2022

**1. Draft Resolutions: Chairs (e-S 21/22 1 A)**

Comments received were passed to the author of the report.

**2. New student members**

The new membership was noted.

**3. Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita (e-S 21/22 1 B)**

Senate agreed to confer the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita on those professors listed in the paper.

**4. Communications from the University Court (e-S 21/22 1 C)**

The communications were noted.

Comments received were passed to the author of the communication.

**5. Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee (e-S 21/22 1 D)**

The report was noted.

Comments received were passed to the author of the report.



**SENATE**

**9 February 2022**

**E-Senate process – matter arising from meeting on 12 November 2021**

**Description of paper**

1. The paper covers a matter arising from the previous Senate meeting.

**Action requested / Recommendation**

2. Senate is asked to clarify the E-Senate process it wishes to approve: the proposal in Paper S 21/22 2 C or the proposal in response by Dr Barany.

**Background and context**

3. At the Senate meeting on 12 November 2021, Senate considered two proposals for the operation of E-Senate and approved both proposals. These decisions are in contradiction, and therefore a further decision is required.
4. Paper S 21/22 2 C and Dr Barany's proposal are appended below.
5. At the Senate meeting on 12 November 2022, Senate approved that E-Senate should be open for two weeks rather than one, and this change has been implemented.

**Resource implications**

6. As in paper S 21/22 2 C

**Risk Management**

7. As in paper S 21/22 2 C

**Equality and Diversity**

8. As in paper S 21/22 2 C

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

9. As in paper S 21/22 2 C

**Further information**

**Author(s)**

Kathryn Nicol, Academic Policy Officer

**Presenter(s) (if required)**

**Freedom of information**

Open

# APPENDIX 1

## Senate

12 November 2021

### Paper S 21/22 2 C: E-Senate Process

#### Description of paper

1. This paper reminds Senate members of the arrangements for conducting Senate business via E-Senate, and asks Senate members to comment on these arrangements, and affirm these arrangements,

#### Action requested / Recommendation

2. Senate is invited to discuss and approve the recommendations below (paras. 11-14).

#### Background and context

3. Under Senate Standing Order 8, Senate may conduct business electronically under such arrangements as it may approve from time to time.
4. Currently, E-Senate takes place 3-4 weeks in advance of Ordinary Senate meetings. E-Senate is intended to be an effective way to conduct routine business out with the Ordinary meetings.
5. E-Senate is open for one week, during which time members are invited to submit any comments, observations or reservations by email to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk). Any comments received are shared with the Senate membership via the Senate website (EASE protected).
6. For E-Senate, a nil response is taken as assent. This is highlighted in the Senate annual induction, stated in E-Senate papers and in the email notifying Senate members that E-Senate papers are available online.
7. Following the close of electronic business, the Convener considers any comments received and decides, consulting as appropriate, whether the business may be concluded or should be referred to the next Ordinary Senate meeting. Any formal business not resolved via E-Senate is referred to the next Ordinary Senate meeting. The outcome of all electronic business is reported at the next Ordinary Senate meeting.

#### Discussion

8. This is an opportunity to review how business is managed through E-Senate, and particularly the practice of taking a nil response as assent. This paper invites Senate members to discuss the issue and to consider the recommendations below.
9. Treating a nil response as assent has been adopted for E-Senate to enable routine business to be transacted efficiently as electronic business. Senate currently has 213 members. A quorum is one third of the membership; therefore, 71 members are required for a quorum. Requiring a significant number of staff to engage, in order to demonstrate a quorum, reduces the efficiency of E-Senate.
10. Ordinary Senate meetings take place three times per year. Conducting business by E-Senate, as well as Ordinary Senate meetings, goes some way to ensuring that

routine business is not unnecessarily delayed by the infrequency of Ordinary Senate meetings.

11. It is recommended that the principles below are used to define whether business is appropriate to be conducted via E-Senate, on the basis that a nil response equals assent. Business may be conducted via E-Senate if the item is:
  - For information or for formal noting.
  - A routine request for observations by Senate from the University Court. Items presented to Senate by Court have been through considerable scrutiny, for example Resolutions to create new Chairs.
  - A request for observations or comment on a paper that has previously been scrutinised and approved by one of the Senate Standing Committees based on delegated authority.
  - A request for approval of a nomination for the award of Professor Emeritus / Emerita status.
12. On the basis that a nil response equals assent, comments or objections from a small number of Senate members would not necessarily result in the item being referred to an Ordinary meeting of Senate. Referring an item from E-Senate to an Ordinary Senate meeting would be at the discretion of the Convener. This would apply whether an item was for observations, comment, or approval.
13. Any comments or observations received from Senate members will be transmitted onward as set out in the relevant paper. In cases where Senate members comment on papers that are presented for information or noting only, the comments will be communicated to the author of the paper.
14. In any case, E-Senate is not used to seek decisions on new or contentious issues. Going forward, E-Senate will not be used to seek approval of the membership of committees with delegated authority from Senate.

### **Resource implications**

15. Changes to E-Senate processes would have resource implications for Academic Services.

### **Risk Management**

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

### **Equality and Diversity**

17. The paper does not propose any changes that have EDI implications.

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

18. Any policy change would be taken forward by Academic Services.

### **Further information**

#### **Author**

Kathryn Nicol, Academic Policy Officer

#### **Presenter(s) (if required)**

### **Freedom of information**

Open

# APPENDIX 2

## Response to paper S 21/22 2 C E-Senate Process

### Description of proposal

1. This proposal sets arrangements for e-Senate that respect the goals of efficient operation and democratic decision-making, preserving the prerogative of Senate members to determine directly which issues require deliberation. It is proposed as an amendment to paper S 21/22 1D.

### Action requested

2. Senate is invited to amend paper S 21/22 1D to adopt the following arrangements in place of paras. 11-14 of said paper:

3. Pursuant to Standing Order 8 of the Senatus Academicus, this Senate considers the purpose of electronic Senate (e-Senate) agendas as enabling the efficient consideration of matters that by consensus do not require deliberation. The Senate shall conduct such business as it does electronically under the following arrangements:

3.a. Items may be presented “for information” or “for formal noting” or “for comment” to e-Senate where discussion is not anticipated or is planned for another setting. Any member of Senate may propose such an item for discussion at an Ordinary or Special Meeting of Senate and it may be added to the agenda at the President’s discretion.

3.b. Items may be presented “for consideration” to e-Senate where amendments or discussion are not anticipated. If no objections are received, such an item may be added at the President’s discretion to a consent agenda subject to a single vote without discussion at a subsequent Ordinary or Special Meeting of Senate. At such a meeting, any member present may remove an item from the consent agenda, and it may then be considered as an ordinary item at that or a later meeting at the President’s discretion.

3.c. Items requiring approval by Senate must be considered at an Ordinary or Special Meeting, and may be included on a consent agenda per the foregoing procedure.

### Background and Context

#### 4. *Vocabulary*

4.a. the Standing Orders are the official rules that govern how the Senate conducts its business. We must comply with these for our actions to be legal and proper, and they set a framework for our activities.

4.b. in the Standing Orders, the “President” sets the agenda and conducts the meeting. Often in practice we refer to this person as “convener” or “chair” or other language, and the role is typically filled by the Principal.

4.c. Ordinary Meetings are the regularly scheduled live meetings of Senate during the year. The Senate or President or any twelve members of Senate may also call Special Meetings, normally during the academic semester.

4.d. “items” and “papers” are used interchangeably to refer to matters formally presented to Senate. A “motion” is a proposal to decide something as Senate and is usually presented as a paper/item “for approval.”

4.e. a consent agenda is a collection of motions that, for the sake of expediency, are adopted as a group because they do not require discussion.

4.f. “deliberation” refers to a discussion meant to clarify differences of interpretation or evaluation, to consider amendments, and to reach a decision. Not all discussions in a parliamentary setting are necessarily deliberative, for instance taking feedback on a draft document or expressing approval or disapproval when everyone’s minds are made up. Recording disagreements or requests for change without an opportunity for discussion or amendment is not deliberation.

## 5. *Current Situation*

5.a. Senate Standing Order 8 gives Senate a broad authority to conduct business electronically under arrangements it periodically determines.

5.b. The e-Senate process allows the submission of comments and objections but not deliberation.

5.c. E-Senate items are thus restricted to those that the President believes do not require deliberation, with guidelines that these should be items for information, routine requests, approval of items from Senate standing committees (even if members of Senate disagree with the process or conclusions of those committees), and certain other formalities.

5.d. Members are currently expected to submit an objection if they do not assent to any item. A nil response is taken as assent.

5.e. There is no expectation that members read each other’s comments or objections, and thus no formal opportunity to have concerns heard before a decision is made or to change minds, although in practice this sometimes happens.

5.f. In practice, the volume and timing of Senate business can be such that it is impractical for each member to consider each item in detail. If a member withholds comment for lack of opportunity to consider, this too is taken as assent that can be weighed against the views of members who have considered an item and raised specific objections. There is no current distinction between nil responses from considered agreement versus nil responses from lack of opportunity to consider or other reasons.

5.g. Under the arrangements currently in effect, the President has sole discretion to determine whether an issue is ‘contentious’ and therefore whether it is appropriate for e-Senate. The President also has sole discretion to overrule members of Senate who, through their objections or requests for discussion or otherwise, ask for issues to be considered in need of further discussion or deliberation. The President is the sole arbiter of what constitutes a ‘small number’ of comments or objections.

## **Discussion**

6. There are many different frameworks for parliamentary decision-making that emphasize different values and priorities, but a core principle uniting most of these is that decisions should be based on a deliberative process. Participants in a governing body need opportunities to discuss proposed actions, to have their say, to improve proposals, to change

each other's minds. In practice, governing bodies do not always need extensive discussion to conduct much of their business, and parliamentary procedures include a number of mechanisms to expedite and simplify things when everyone agrees it is fine to do so. That last bit is critical: a foundational principle of parliamentary decision-making is that any decision to curtail deliberation must itself be made deliberately, so as to protect the value of deliberation to the efficacy and legitimacy of the governing body. For example, you can cut off discussion, even over the objections of some members, but only by taking a vote to show that enough minds are made up that it won't make a difference to the outcome.

7. Consent agendas are a common parliamentary tactic for expediting consideration of matters that reflect existing consensus and do not need to be altered or discussed. They usually work by collecting a set of uncontroversial motions, inviting any member to remove a motion from the group for separate discussion, and then approving them as a block. We consider a lot of these kinds of items in e-Senate, such as conferment of personal chairs or emeritus status or honorary degrees. In some situations that do require deliberation as a Senate, like setting meeting dates or updating routine policies or approving reports, it is best to reach a consensus among possible options and revisions before it comes to a formal proposal, and provided that informal process was well conducted this kind of motion can also unproblematically be part of a consent agenda. It is possible to take feedback on items in e-Senate and then bring a revision for proper deliberative discussion at a later date, for instance with proposals or reports of committees that are complex or potentially controversial.

8. The key idea is that consent agendas only work when everyone agrees that the items can safely be adopted without deliberation and without any changes; correspondingly, it is essential that everyone has the opportunity to disagree with the judgement that a consensus truly exists. This is precisely what the 'nil = assent' policy undermines. Whenever a parliamentary procedure involves inferring the will of members, for the sake of procedural legitimacy there have to be opportunities for members to say 'hold on, I don't think you inferred correctly.' For instance, when a voice vote is taken and a majority inferred, any member may request a hand vote to confirm the inference.

9. The 'nil = assent' rule denies the parliamentary principle that it is the prerogative of members ourselves to determine whether an item requires deliberation. If an item is presented for discussion and nobody affirms it as written but eight people say they would like to consider changes, it is an extraordinary inference that because a majority did not comment at all a majority therefore support the item unchanged. Parliamentary norms hold that even a single member should be able to ask for a more direct vote to back up the inference that a majority have made up their minds in favour of the proposal; at the point where the convener can singlehandedly overrule even one request (much less eight requests) for deliberation, the governing body's parliamentary legitimacy comes into doubt. More importantly, our efficacy as a governing body able to work together and reach consensus is seriously challenged.

10. The 'nil = assent' rule denies our experience of the actual conduct of e-Senate. We know from our own experience and from conversations with colleagues that not everyone who does not comment has actively considered and assented to each paper. Adopting the fiction that they have done so is parliamentarily dubious as well as uncollegial, attributing sentiments to our colleagues that we know full well they did not affirm. It is suggested in para. 6 of paper S 21/22 1 D that telling colleagues in advance that their nil response will be construed this way makes the fiction acceptable. That paragraph adopts, to say the least, a problematic conception of informed consent.

11. Para. 9 of paper S 21/22 1 D suggests that the 'nil = assent' rule is required to establish quorum to conduct business. This is an extraordinary and unusual conception of the principle of quorum, ruling non-participation as participation. While we have broad latitude in the conduct of our business, we are not legally or morally permitted to proceed as though 'up' equals 'down.' We are on shaky legal ground if decisions of e-Senate are ever challenged on the basis that we were inquorate, and we are on shaky moral ground whether or not we face legal challenge. The alternative proposal here reserves decision-making to meetings where quorum can be properly established while preserving the ability of e-Senate to contribute to the efficient conduct of Senate business.

12. It is suggested at multiple points in paper S 21/22 1 D that the fact of an item having been considered by Senate Committees or University Court obviates or diminishes the need for deliberation by Senate. Were that the case, the power to approve such items would be delegated to such bodies directly rather than reserving approval to the Senate as a whole. A paper presented for approval by Senate should, by definition, be subject to parliamentary norms of deliberation for the Senate, not another body.

13. Ultimately, this is a question about how we form consensus and how we respect the prerogatives of deliberation. I hope we will adopt a procedure for e-Senate that puts authentic consensus and genuine deliberation first.

### **Resource implications**

14. This proposal is effectively neutral relative to the current resource requirement of e-Senate.

### **Risk Management**

15. This proposal substantially mitigates legal and compliance risk associated with questionable standards of quorum currently in force for e-Senate (see para. 11).

### **Equality and Diversity**

16. Re-centring the principle of deliberation in Senate is an important safeguard to equality and diversity insofar as it removes a mechanism by which the President can suppress calls for deliberation by non-executive members of Senate representing the diversity of our academic community.

### **Communication &c.**

17. As in paper S 21/22 1D para. 18.

### **Author**

Dr Michael Barany

## SENATE

9 February 2022

### Senate Assessor Election Regulations

#### Description of paper

1. Draft Senate Assessor Election Regulations and associated arrangements are presented to Senate for discussion and approval.
2. The draft Regulations aim to contribute to the Strategy 2030 outcome: 'we will have more user-friendly processes and efficient systems to support our work.'

#### Action requested / Recommendation

3. Senate is asked to:
  - 3.1. **Consider and approve** the draft Election Regulations and Schedule in Appendix 1, particularly giving consideration as to whether one position should be reserved for a non-professorial academic staff member (set out below); and,
  - 3.2. **Consider and approve** the draft Nomination Form in Appendix 2

#### Background and context

4. The membership of the University's governing body, the University Court, includes four academic staff members. Two of these academic staff members are elected from the Senate membership and are known as Senate Assessors. Both Senate Assessors conclude their terms of office on 31 July 2022 and it is proposed to hold an election for both positions this semester. Those elected will take office for a four year term from 1 August 2022.
5. Since the last Senate Assessor elections in 2018, the composition of both the University Court and the Senate has changed as a result of the implementation of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. Revisions to the Election Regulations are proposed as consequence of these changes, with the key changes explained further in the Discussion section and all changes marked up in the Election Regulations themselves in Appendix 1.

#### The University Court

6. The University Court, or Court, was established by an Act of Parliament in 1858 and has included Senate Assessors amongst its membership from that date. As the governing body of the University, its primary responsibilities include:
  - approval of the strategic vision of the University and monitor performance of associated plans;
  - safeguarding the reputation and values of the University;
  - appointing the Principal and ensuring that arrangements are in place for monitoring the Principal's performance;
  - ensuring appropriate delegation of authority to the Principal and senior management;



- ensuring appropriate systems of control are in place, such as internal and external audit, approving the annual budget and financial statements, stewardship of assets;
  - ensuring legal and regulatory compliance, in particular with the Scottish Funding Council; and,
  - ensuring that Senate has processes in place for monitoring and reporting the quality of education provision.
7. There are usually 23 members of the Court (currently 21 with two vacancies at present) and the membership is drawn from a mixture of individuals who are not current staff or students (known as 'lay members', usually totalling 14) and staff and student members (usually totalling 9, 2 student members, 6 staff members plus the Principal as an ex officio member). Court members are either elected, as the two Senate Assessor positions are, or are nominated (e.g. the University's Chancellor and the City of Edinburgh Council nominate one member each), or are appointed following a openly advertised recruitment exercise on a skills basis, or are appointed following a combination of the above approaches.
  8. Of the six staff members, there are two professional services staff members: one elected by all professional services staff and one nominated by the recognised trade unions; and, four academic staff members: two elected from the Senate membership, one elected by all academic staff and one nominated by the recognised trade unions, with the University of Edinburgh UCU branch having opted to hold an election to determine the holder of the academic trade union nominee position. The current academic staff members on the Court are: Dr Claire Phillips (Senate Assessor), Professor Sarah Cooper (Senate Assessor) and Dr Kathryn Nash (Trade Union Academic Staff Member), with a vacancy for the position elected by all academic staff – a separate election for the latter position is planned in the Spring.
  9. While many of the Court membership are elected or nominated by different stakeholder groups, Court members are the charity trustees of the University of Edinburgh and under the relevant charities legislation and guidance, as well as the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance, act on a collective basis in the interest of the institution as a whole rather than any one stakeholder group. They are not delegates of any constituency and cannot be bound by a mandate from a constituency that has elected or nominated them. Instead, they form their own judgement on any matters for decision on the basis of their understanding of the best interests for the institution and take a collective decision, with collective responsibility.
  10. For those potentially interested in applying, more information, including a role description, will be published on the Senate webpages following approval of the Election Regulations. For any informal queries about the positions please contact Lewis Allan ([Lewis.Allan@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Lewis.Allan@ed.ac.uk)), the Head of Court Services.

## Discussion

11. The draft Election Regulations in Appendix 1 build on those previously approved for the last Senate Assessor elections in 2018, with any proposed amendments marked up. The key proposed changes are set out in this section. These have been drafted with close attention to the consultation with Senate in October 2018 ([Senate paper s 18/19 1 F](#)) on changes to the Court membership as part of compliance with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. This is particularly relevant to the two points covered below: Student Senate members and Professorial / non-professorial members.

### Student Senate members

12. During previous Senate Assessor elections student members of Senate were associate rather than full members of Senate and were not entitled to vote or be nominated in Senate Assessor elections. While the student members of Senate are now full members rather than associate members, it is proposed to maintain the Senate Assessor elections as an election in which only the staff members of Senate participate. The reasons for this are:

i) There is a separate route for student membership of the Court, with two student members nominated by the Students' Association following their sabbatical officer elections – usually the individual elected as the Association's President and one of the individuals elected as a Vice-President. Staff (unless they are also students) are not entitled to vote or stand for election in the Students' Association elections so it is reasonable that the same applies in reverse to elections intended for staff members.

ii) Prior to the changes in the Court and Senate memberships in 2020 there were four Senate Assessors on the Court and this was the sole route for academic staff to join the Court. The Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 created two new routes for academic staff: a member elected by all academic staff and a member nominated by the recognised trade unions. Court therefore proposed to accommodate the two new positions and maintain the number of academic staff on Court at four members by reducing the number of Senate Assessors by four to two – but with the new member elected by all academic staff becoming an ex officio member of Senate, meaning that at least three of the four academic staff would continue to be members of Senate and the trade union nominated member could also be a member of Senate if they stood for election to Senate or already held an ex officio Senate membership position. Senate was consulted on this proposal in October 2018 and was content. The new Court membership was subsequently agreed by the Privy Council on the basis that the number of academic staff members would remain at four. If one or two student members of Senate were to be elected as Senate Assessors this would reduce the number of academic staff on the Court from four to three or two and increase the number of student members on Court from two to three or four. This was not the intention of Court or Senate or the Privy Council when agreeing the new membership of Court so it is proposed that this possibility is not allowed for in the Election Regulations.

iii) Intention of the legislation – the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 required Senate to include student members as full members to increase student participation in matters within Senate's remit. It seems highly unlikely that it was intended to offer a route for student membership of Court as the Act made provision for this separately, with the Act requiring that Court include two student members nominated by the Students' Association. If this had been an intention it would have been specified in the Act or in the explanatory notes for the Act.

iv) On a practical note, the term of office for Senate Assessors is set in an Act of Parliament (the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966) to be a fixed term of four years, which is not a suitable term of office for most students.

### Professorial / non-professorial members

13. Prior to the new membership of Court taking effect in 2020, there was a requirement that at least one of the Senate Assessors would be a non-professorial member. Following consultation with Senate in October 2018, Court removed this requirement and this was agreed by the Privy Council, with the consultation paper to Senate explaining that: "This is a level of detail that is perhaps more appropriate for inclusion in the election regulations rather than in Ordinance. In any case, Senate may feel that,

with a change in the composition of Senate from a body where all professors are ex officio members and are in a large majority over non-professorial academic staff to a body where the balance of professorial and non-professorial academic staff is more evenly matched, reserving one position for non-professorial academic staff is no longer necessary.”

14. Prior to 1 August 2020, all professors were ex officio members of Senate and therefore were in a very large majority (over 700 out of 809 Senate members in 2018/19). Since 1 August 2020, Senate has 100 elected positions for professorial academic staff, 100 elected positions for non-professorial staff academic staff, and up to 80 *ex officio* positions, 55 of which are currently held by professorial staff.

**For discussion and approval:**

15. Would Senate prefer to:
  - a) reserve one Senate Assessor position for a member of non-professorial academic staff (with the possibility that non-professorial staff may be elected to both positions);
  - b) reserve one Senate Assessor position for a member of non-professorial academic staff, and one for professorial academic staff, or;
  - c) make both positions open to all academic staff members of Senate?

**Resource implications**

16. These will be met primarily within Academic Services from existing budgets.

**Risk Management**

17. The University's Risk Policy and Risk Appetite statement refers to the University placing “great importance on compliance, and has no appetite for any breaches in statute, regulation, professional standards” and the Election Regulations have been drafted to meet the requirements and expectations of the Court membership approved by the Privy Council following consultation with Senate.

**Equality and Diversity**

18. On the basis of the current staff membership, Senate has approximately 60% male and 40% female members. Across staff categories (ex officio, professorial staff and non-professorial staff), the highest proportion of female members is in the professorial category, with approximately 50% female professorial members, while around 35% of non-professorial members are female. Therefore, the decision on whether to reserve a Senate Assessor seat for non-professorial academic staff does not have clear EDI implications in terms of gender equality and diversity.
19. Information on the proportion of white and BAME members of Senate is very incomplete, but the data available does not suggest that there is significantly more diversity in terms of ethnicity in any of the three staff membership groups. Therefore, the decision on whether to reserve a Senate Assessor seat for non-professorial academic staff is unlikely to have EDI implications in terms of ethnicity.
20. The current membership of Court is 57% female and 43% male. Information on the other protected characteristics is collected but not published given the small numbers involved and the Court is keen to increase the diversity of its membership in all forms.

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

21. If approved by Senate, the Election Regulations, call for nominations, candidate information and election arrangements will be communicated to the Senate membership by the Deputy Returning Officer via email and the Senate webpages.

**Consultation**

22. The paper and draft Election Regulations have been drafted with close attention to the October 2018 consultation with Senate on the proposed new membership of Court, now in effect.

**Further information**

**Author(s)**

Kathryn Nicol, Academic Policy Officer  
Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services

**Presenter(s) (if required)**

Sarah Smith, Vice-Principal Strategic Change & Governance; and, University Secretary

**Freedom of information**

Open

Appendix 1: Draft Senate Assessor Election Regulations

Appendix 2: Draft Senate Assessor Nomination Form

*[Drafting Note: these are the 2018 Election Regulations with proposed changes for the 2022 elections marked up]*

University of Edinburgh

Regulations for the Conduct of the election of ~~antwo~~ Assessors from amongst their own number of the Staff Members of Senate to the University Court ~~to be held from 21 to 22 March 2018~~, governed by Ordinance of the University Court No. 187211 (Composition of the University Court)

1. The Senate Assessor Election/Elections shall be held from 9.00 am on ~~213~~ March 201822 until ~~12 noon 7.00pm~~ on ~~3022~~ March 201822.

*Role of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers*

2. ~~Leigh Chalmers, Deputy Secretary Governance & Legal Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary, Student Experience~~, shall be the Returning Officer. The Senate Clerk has been designated Deputy Returning Officer and shall be responsible for the management of the election and the declaration of the result of the election.
3. The Deputy Returning Officer shall publicise the election/elections and voting procedure to Senate members and make arrangements as appropriate to secure the good conduct of the election.
4. The Deputy Returning Officer shall provide nomination forms calling for nominations and draw attention to the correct form of procedure for making nominations. The call for nominations shall be published by the Deputy Returning Officer via Senate members' email ~~and~~ on the University website and the Senate webpages.

*Electoral Roll*

5. The compilation of the electoral roll for the Senate Assessor Elections shall be ~~12 noon on 24 January 2018~~ February 2022.
6. The Electoral Roll will consist of all staff members of Senate, as of ~~24 January 2018~~ February 2022. Members of Senate who are elected via the Students' Association elections are not included on the electoral role regardless of whether they also hold a staff appointment. The electoral roll ~~shall be available for inspection in the Deputy Returning Officer's office, Reid Room, Old College from 24 January 2018 during normal working hours.~~ will be available on the Senate webpages, and members of staff may request access to the Electoral Roll in an alternative format.

*Nominations and Validation of Candidates*

7. The call for nominations shall commence ~~at 12 noon~~ on ~~24 January 2018~~ February 2022. No nominations shall be accepted before this date and time.
8. The Deputy Returning Officer shall provide nomination forms and call for nominations by email and on the University-Senate website. The Deputy Returning Officer will draw attention to the correct form of procedure for making nominations as well as advising that failure to comply with the procedure shall invalidate a nomination.
9. The call for nominations shall also be published in appropriate issues of the Staff News and on the University website.
10. All nominations must be submitted on the approved form and lodged with the Deputy

## APPENDIX 4

- Returning Officer by 12 noon on Wednesday ~~28 February 2018~~ March 2022. No nominations shall be accepted after this date and time.
11. Only members of the electorate, as defined in paragraph 6, shall be eligible for nominations and nominations may be made only by members of the electorate.
  12. Each nomination must be subscribed by no fewer than two members of the electorate. Members of the electorate must only make one nomination each. Reciprocal nominations are not permitted.
  13. Nominations must be received ~~in hard copy~~ by the Deputy Returning Officer by email. ~~Nominations received by any other means including electronic mail, by proxy, or orally shall be not be valid. In exceptional circumstance and with the prior consent of the Deputy Returning Officer, an emailed nomination form shall be accepted but only if an original written document is presented within a reasonable timescale as agreed by the Deputy Returning Officer.~~
  14. If the Deputy Returning Officer believes there is any cause for concern regarding the validity of a nomination, this matter shall be drawn to the attention of the nominee/candidate, who shall be given the opportunity to address the cause for concern, if practicable, prior to the meeting of the Scrutinising Committee.
  15. The Deputy Returning Officer shall acknowledge receipt of the nomination to each nominee indicating the date and time the nomination was received.
  16. ~~The~~ Senate Assessors is/are eligible to stand for no more than two consecutive terms of office.
  17. The following 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:  
~~Sheriff Principal Edward Bowen~~ Sheriff Principal Alastair Dunlop QC -  
Representative of the University Court  
Dr Paul Norris Professor Tina Harrison – Representative of Senatus Academicus  
Dr Lewis Allan - ~~R~~epresentative of the University Secretary  
The decision of the Scrutinising Committee is final.
  18. As soon as practicable, each nominee shall be notified of the outcome of the Scrutinising Committee's deliberations and the list of candidates for the election shall then be confirmed and published.
  19. ~~If more than two valid candidates are nominated for the two ordinary term vacancies, the Deputy Returning Officer will invite all candidates to supply brief biographical details for consideration by members of the Senatus as part of the election process.~~  
[Drafting Note: proposed deletion of this paragraph as the nomination form (Appendix 2) asks for a candidate statement at the point of nomination as is done for the elections to Senate itself – this will help ensure that the Senate Assessors election can run on the same timetable as the Senate Members election.]
  - 19.20. In the event of there being only one valid candidate for each vacancy and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer shall declare and publicise as soon as practicable and no later than 48 hours after the meeting of the Scrutinising Committee the name of the valid candidate elected for each vacancy.

### Conduct of election process

20-21. Each candidate shall receive from the Deputy Returning Officer a copy of these Regulations. In order to assist in the interpretation of these Regulations a meeting with candidates may also be held if required.

21-22. Canvassing in the form of poster campaigns is not allowed. Candidates should not seek to influence their colleagues by behaviour that may be perceived to be bullying, harassment or intimidation. If these prohibitions are breached, it may lead to disqualification.

22-23. If the Deputy Returning Officer has reason to believe that a breach of these Regulations may have occurred the Deputy Returning Officer shall request a written explanation or clarification from the candidate. If the Deputy Returning Officer concludes that a material breach has occurred the Deputy Returning Officer shall inform the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer has the authority to disqualify a candidate subject to the right of appeal by the candidate to the Scrutinising Committee within 48 hours of receiving written notification of the disqualification. The decision of the Scrutinising Committee shall be final.

23-24. The validity of the election shall not be affected in the event that a candidate is unavailable to continue for any reason prior to the results of the election being announced and where there are more than two candidates remaining the election shall proceed as planned. In the event of there being only one remaining candidate for each vacancy and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer shall declare and publicise as soon as practicable and no later than 48 hours after confirmation of the uncontested election status the name of the valid candidate(s) elected.

24-25. After the declaration of the elected candidate(s), arrangements to hold a new election shall be undertaken only in the event of that declared elected candidate being unable for whatever reason to continue to hold the position of Senate Assessor.

25-26. The Deputy Returning Officer shall distribute to each member of the electorate via email a link to the voting system along with a link to the relevant web page to view the candidates' biographies for information. The emails shall be required to comply with the University's computing regulations and the Deputy Returning Officer shall reserve the right to require amendments to be made to the content particularly if the text contains inappropriate comments about other candidates.

### Voting arrangements

*[Drafting note: the text below will vary depending on what Senate decides in terms of whether or not to reserve one of the positions for a non-professorial member or another formulation. The marked-up text below is drafted on the basis that both positions are open to all categories of staff member.]*

26-27. ~~Since a non-professorial member of the academic staff must be elected to at least one of the vacancies, election arrangements will vary according to the nominations received. If multiple nominations are received both for professorial and non-professorial candidates, or a single professorial and multiple non-professorial nominations are received, the election will be conducted by means of the Single Transferrable Vote, Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (STV WIGM). In both these instances, the non-professorial~~ The two candidates with the greatest share of the vote will automatically be elected. ~~If a single nomination for a non-professorial candidate and multiple nominations for professorial candidates are received, the non-professorial candidate will be automatically elected, and the election of the professorial candidate will be conducted by means of the Alternative Vote (AV).~~

27-28. Voting shall be conducted by staff on-line using a secure University portal. All those on the electoral roll for the Senate Assessor Election shall be permitted access

## APPENDIX 4

and shall be able to vote on the on-line voting system from 9.00 am on ~~21~~<sup>13</sup> March 20~~18~~<sup>22</sup> until ~~12.00 noon-7.00 pm~~ on ~~30~~<sup>22</sup> March 20~~18~~<sup>22</sup>.

### Counting

~~28-29.~~ All votes cast on-line shall be counted together using an electronic counting system.

~~30.~~ ~~In the event of a draw, the successful candidate shall be determined by the toss of a coin. As the Returning Officer tosses the coin into the air the candidates shall be invited to choose either 'heads' or 'tails', the candidate choosing the upper side when the coin lands shall be declared the winner.~~ In the event of a tie, the successful candidate or candidates will be determined by the drawing of lots. The Returning Officer will draw lots from the pool of candidates whose votes are tied until the available vacancies are filled. [Drafting note: this is proposed to follow the same procedure used in the event of a tie for the elections to Senate itself. This is an improvement on the previous approach as it better allows for a resolution of a three way or greater tie, unlikely as this may be.]

### Declaration

~~29-31.~~ The Deputy Returning Officer shall ensure that a notice of the result of the election is ~~posted on the Old College Notice Board,~~ communicated to Senate members via email and posted to the Senate webpages as soon as is practicable after the result has been declared.

~~30-32.~~ The successful candidate shall be required to confirm in writing that they are not disqualified under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from acting as a Trustee of a charity.



### Election of Senate Assessors on the University Court

#### Nomination form for ordinary term vacancies

This form is valid only in respect of the election to be held by Senate from 23 March 2022 to 30 March 2022 for two vacancies for Senate Assessors on the University Court (term runs 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2026). Only staff members of the Senate are eligible to nominate or to be nominated.

Further information, including the Senate Assessor Election Regulations and relevant Privacy Notice, is available on the Senate website – [\[link to be added\]](#)

#### Deadline

Nominations must be received by the Deputy Returning Officer by **12 noon on 9 March 2022**.

#### Process

Please add the full name of each person in the spaces below. The form must then be sent by email (as a Word document) to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk)

**The email MUST be sent from the University email address of the nominee, and MUST be copied to the University email addresses of the proposer and seconder.** If this process is not followed, the nomination will not be considered valid. Please note that the Election Regulations state:

“12. Each nomination must be subscribed by no fewer than two members of the electorate. Members of the electorate must only make one nomination each. Reciprocal nominations are not permitted.”

When a valid nomination is received, confirmation will be sent by email to the proposer, seconder and nominee.

#### 1. Declaration of the proposer and seconder

We, named below, declare that we are members of the Senate, and that we nominate the person named in section 2 as a candidate for election as an Assessor on the University Court.

Full name and University email address of proposer

Click or tap here to enter text.

Full name and University email address of seconder

Click or tap here to enter text.

## 2. Declaration of the nominee

I declare that I am a member of the Senate and that I consent to the above nomination.

Full name and University email address of candidate

Click or tap here to enter text.

## 3. Candidate information and statement

To be completed by the nominee

Preferred title

Click or tap here to enter text.

Full name

Click or tap here to enter text.

School / Unit

Click or tap here to enter text.

College / Unit

Click or tap here to enter text.

### **Candidate statement (maximum 500 words)**

Please enter a statement supporting your candidacy for the role of Senate Assessor to Court. This statement, along with your name and School / Unit, will be made available to Senate members in advance of the election date via the Senate website.

Click or tap here to enter text.

## SENATE

9 February 2022

### Senate Academic Staff Member Election Arrangements 2022

#### Description of paper

1. This paper requests actions from Senate in order to implement University Ordinance 212 (Composition of the Senatus Academicus) and the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations.
2. The paper also informs Senate of minor factual corrections to the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations.

#### Action requested / Recommendation

3. Senate is asked to **approve**:
  - 3.1. The appointment of a Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer for the Senate election;
  - 3.2. The opening of the call for nominations for members of academic staff to stand for election to Senate;
  - 3.3. The deadline for the submission of nominations and the date of the election.
4. Senate is asked to **note** minor corrections to Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations, appended below. The corrections are marked in track changes.
5. Senate members are encouraged to make themselves available if colleagues contact them wishing to discuss potentially standing for Senate.

#### Background and context

6. Under University Ordinance 212 (Composition of the Senatus Academicus) academic staff elect from their own number 200 members of the Senatus Academicus.
7. Under the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations, the call for nominations will normally be made at the first Senate meeting after 31 January. At this meeting, Senate will annually agree a deadline for the submission of nomination forms and the date on which the election will be conducted, and will appoint a Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer.
8. The provisional Senate election dates were provided to Senate for comment on 20 October 2021. No comments were received. The proposed dates below are the same as the provisional dates previously advised.

#### Discussion

9. Sue MacGregor, Director of Academic Services, is nominated as the Returning Officer of the Senate Elections. Kathryn Nicol, Academic Policy Officer, is nominated as the Deputy Returning Officer. Senate is invited to approve these nominations and appoint these candidates under paragraph 25 of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations.

10. Senate is invited to approve the dates of the nomination and election process set out below, under paragraph 24 and 25 of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations.

Wednesday 9 February 2021	Nominations open
Wednesday 9 March 2022 (12 noon)	Nominations close
Wednesday 23 March 2022 (9am) to Wednesday 30 March 2022 (12 noon)	Voting open online

11. For information, a table of the positions open for election in 2021 is provided below.

Position	Total open for election 2022	Total positions
CAHSS Academic Staff (non-professorial)	11	34
CAHSS Academic Staff (professorial)	18	34
CMVM Academic Staff (non-professorial)	19	33
CMVM Academic Staff (professorial)	21	33
CSE Academic Staff (non-professorial)	19	33
CSE Academic Staff (professorial)	21	33
Total	109	200

12. Two minor factual corrections have been made to Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations. These are corrections to ex officio titles and Student membership roles. Under paragraphs 4 and 6 of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations, Senate is not required to approve these changes.

### Resource implications

13. The cost of the Senate elections will be met from within existing budgets.

### Risk Management

14. 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 and Diversity

15. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted and is available on the [Equality and Diversity webpages](#).
16. Senate Election advertising materials highlight the University's commitment to improving the diversity of key University committees, and encourage all academic staff to consider standing. The Senate elections will be advertised widely through multiple channels.

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

17. Senate elections will be managed by staff within the Academic Services team.
18. Information is available on the [Senate webpages](#).

19. Following approval by Senate, the opening of nominations for candidates to stand for election to Senate will be announced through multiple channels including the Senate website, all-staff email, and social media.

**Author**

Kathryn Nicol  
Academic Policy Officer

**Freedom of information**

Open



## Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations

### Composition of the Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 1-3 and 5)

1. The Principal of the University will preside at any meeting of the Senate.<sup>1</sup>
2. The Senate model will comprise the following categories with numbers apportioned as follows<sup>2</sup>:

Table 1

Position	Membership
Principal	1
Heads of Schools	21
Heads of Colleges	3
Other <i>ex officio</i> appointments	Approximately 50
<b>Total <i>ex officio</i></b>	<b>Approximately 70 (maximum 80)</b>
Elected academic staff (Professorial)	100
Elected academic staff (Non-professorial)	100
Elected students	30
<b>Total elected</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Total Senate membership</b>	<b>Approximately 300</b>

3. The elected membership of Senate will be broken down as follows:

Table 2

Position	Membership	Membership Breakdown
Elected academic staff (Professorial)	100 <sup>3</sup>	34 Professors from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
		33 Professors from the College of Science and Engineering
		33 Professors from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Elected academic staff (Non-professorial)	100 <sup>4</sup>	34 academic staff members from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
		33 academic staff members from the College of Science and Engineering
		33 academic staff members from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Elected students	30 <sup>5</sup>	See Appendix 2

<sup>1</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 2, 3, and 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3a.

<sup>4</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3a.

<sup>5</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 5.

4. Staff *ex officio* roles are detailed in Appendix 1. This list may be amended by the University Secretary from time to time, to reflect changes in organisational structures and job titles. Any changes will be notified to Senate at the next meeting of Senate.
5. The Students' Association will determine the office holders whose roles will entitle them to take up Senate membership and will be responsible for appointing these students to Senate.
6. The Students' Association must inform the Senate Support team if it is necessary to make any alteration to the list of office holders in Appendix 2 whose roles entitle them to Senate membership. Any changes will be notified to Senate at the next meeting of Senate.
7. Should a relevant Students' Association position become vacant for a period of time or a relevant student office holder be otherwise unavailable, the Students' Association will identify another appropriate elected student office holder to fill the vacant Senate position.
8. Election of Senate Assessors to the University Court operates under separate regulations relating to election to University Court. Senate Assessors on the University Court will comprise one Joint Academic and Senate Assessor and two Senate Assessors. Assessors are elected for a four-year term on Court; they retain Senate membership as *ex officio* members for the duration of their term as Court members.

## Term of Office (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 4 and 6)

### Elected academic staff

9. Elected academic staff will stand for a term of office which will not exceed three years from the first day of August of the year of election.<sup>6</sup> Elected academic staff will demit office on 31 July of their final year in office.
10. There is no cap on the number of terms of office for which academic staff members may stand; academic staff members will be eligible for re-election for the same term of office provided that they demit office on ceasing to hold a contract of employment with the University.<sup>7</sup>
11. Elected academic staff members may resign membership at any time.<sup>8</sup> Their membership will remain vacant until the next scheduled Senate election.

### Elected students

12. The term of office for undergraduate student members will be one year, starting on the first day of August in the year of election. The terms of office for postgraduate student members will be one year, starting on the first day of November in the year of election. Students will be eligible to stand for multiple terms of office consecutively. There is no cap on the number of terms of office for student members.

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<sup>6</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4a.

<sup>8</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4b.

13. A student member will demit office on ceasing to be a student at the University. Student members may resign membership at any time.<sup>9</sup>

## The Electoral Roll (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 3 and 5)

### Elected academic staff

14. Academic staff members who are eligible to stand for membership of Senate and elect members from their own number will hold appointments from the University Court, as attested by a contract of employment issued by the University.<sup>10</sup> In practice, 'Academic staff' will apply to all members of staff who are categorised as 'academic' in the University's Human Resources records.
15. All members of staff who are categorised as 'academic', and who also hold a personal or established chair, will be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (professorial)' category. All members of staff who are categorised as 'academic,' and who do not hold a personal or established chair, will be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category.
16. Members of the academic staff who hold a personal or established chair will not be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category. Members of the academic staff who do not hold a personal or established chair will not be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (professorial)' category.
17. Academic staff members who hold any of the posts or offices which qualify them for *ex officio* membership will not be eligible to stand for membership of Senate in either of the elected academic staff categories,<sup>11</sup> but are entitled to vote in the election for the academic staff category relevant to their role.
18. The electoral roll will be compiled from Human Resources' records on 31 January preceding the call for nominations meaning that nominees for the elected academic staff places will need to have been in their posts from this date in order to be eligible for nomination. Academic staff members who are allocated to the University Secretary's Group or Information Services Group will be included in the electoral roll for College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
19. Academic staff in both elected categories will be eligible to stand for the places which have been allocated to the College of which they are a member. If an academic staff member is a member of multiple Colleges, they will stand in the College where they work a greater proportion of their time (based on full-time equivalent). If an academic staff member works for equal amounts of time across multiple Colleges, they will be permitted to select the College in which they intend to stand, on condition that they only stand for election in one

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<sup>9</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 6a, 6b.

<sup>10</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3

<sup>11</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3b



College, and that they declare in writing to the Senate Support Team in which College they intend to stand.

#### Elected students

20. The eligibility for students to stand for offices which can entitle them to Senate membership will be determined according to the eligibility criteria used by the Students' Association to appoint students to official roles. All students who are registered on credit-bearing courses, or who hold sabbatical offices, will be eligible for student membership.

#### Election of Academic Staff Members to Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraph 7)

21. Elections for academic staff members will be held annually and will be run by the Senate Support team. There will be two elections for each College each year, one for eligible professorial staff vacancies and one for eligible non-professorial academic staff vacancies. Both elections will usually be held on the same day.
22. The Senate Support team will inform Colleges of the number of vacancies in each elected academic staff category and will report on an annual basis the members of each College in each category who will continue in office. Senate Assessors will be included in the count of College elected members throughout their term of office as a Senate Assessor.

#### Election Dates

23. The call for nominations for each election will be made after 31 January each year, normally at the next Senate meeting. No nominations will be accepted before this date. At this meeting, Senate will agree a deadline for the submission of nomination forms.
24. The elections will be conducted on a date which will be determined by the Senate in each year and all elections to Senate will usually take place on the same date in a given year. The elections must take place in time to communicate the results to Senate before its final meeting of the academic session, and the results must be communicated to Senate no later than 30 June each year.

#### Role of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers

25. On an annual basis, Senate will appoint a Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer, who will be responsible for the management of the elections and the declaration of the results of the elections.
26. The Deputy Returning Officer will provide nomination forms calling for nominations and will draw attention to the correct procedure for making nominations. The call for nominations will be published by the Deputy Returning Officer and advertised via agreed channels.

#### Nomination and Validation of Candidates

27. Only members of the electorate in each category, as defined in paragraph 15, will be eligible to stand for election in that category. Eligible individuals will be entitled to nominate themselves as a candidate using the process specified in the call for nominations.
28. All nominations must be received by the deadline agreed by Senate. No nominations will be accepted after this date and time.

29. If the Deputy Returning Officer receives a nomination from an individual who is not eligible to stand for election under the terms defined in these regulations, the Deputy Returning Officer will contact the individual to inform them that their nomination will not be accepted. Where the individual whose nomination has not been accepted wishes to challenge the rejection of their nomination, they may do so by contacting the Returning Officer. The decision of the Returning Officer is final.
30. In the event of there being only one valid candidate for each vacancy and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer will declare and publicise as soon as practicable the name of the valid candidate elected for each vacancy.

#### Conduct of election process

31. Each candidate will receive from the Deputy Returning Officer a copy of these Regulations.
32. If the Deputy Returning Officer has reason to believe that a candidate may have breached these Regulations, the Deputy Returning Officer will request a written explanation or clarification from the candidate. If the Deputy Returning Officer concludes that a material breach has occurred, the Deputy Returning Officer will inform the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer has the authority to disqualify a candidate, subject to the right of appeal by the candidate to the University Secretary (or specified delegated authority) within two working days of receiving written notification of the disqualification. The decision of the University Secretary (or delegated authority) will be final.
33. The validity of the elections will not be affected in the event that a candidate is unavailable to continue for any reason prior to the results of the election being announced and, where there is a greater number of candidates remaining than vacancies in any category, the election will proceed as planned. In the event of there being only one remaining candidate for each vacancy in any category and therefore an uncontested election in that category, the Deputy Returning Officer will declare and publicise as soon as practicable, and no later than two working days after confirmation of the uncontested election status, the names of the valid candidates elected.
34. The Deputy Returning Officer will distribute to each member of the electorate via email a link to the voting system along with a link to the relevant web page to view information about the candidates.

#### Voting arrangements

35. The elections will be conducted by means of the Single Transferrable Vote, Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (STV WIGM). The candidates with the greatest share of the vote will automatically be elected.
36. Voting will be conducted by staff online. All those on the electoral roll will be permitted access and will be able to vote on the online voting system on the election date(s).
37. Members of staff who are formally employed in more than one College will be entitled to vote in all Colleges in which they are employed.

#### Counting

38. All votes cast online will be counted together using an electronic counting system.

39. In the event of a tie, the successful candidate or candidates will be determined by the drawing of lots. The Returning Officer will draw lots from the pool of candidates whose votes are tied until the available vacancies are filled.

**Declaration**

40. The Deputy Returning Officer will ensure that a notice of the result of the election is posted on the Old College Notice Board and posted to the Senate webpages as soon as is practicable after the result or results have been declared and communicated to Senate at the first meeting following the elections.

**Election of Student Members to Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraph 8)**

41. Elections for student members will be held annually on dates to be determined by the Students’ Association. Elections for student members will be conducted by the Students’ Association in accordance with election regulations determined by the Students’ Association, and with section 16 of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

**2 December 2019**

**Document control**

<b>Date of approval / amendment</b>	<b>Details</b>
2/10/19	Approved by Senate
2/12/19	Approved by University Court
5/2/20	Amended under section 4 by the University Secretary, Senate informed 5/2/20
27/1/21	Amended under section 6 by the Edinburgh University Students’ Association, Senate informed 27/1/21
9/2/22	Minor corrections to Appendix 1 and 2, made under sections 4 and 6, Senate informed 9/2/22

## Appendix 1

### Senate *Ex Officio* membership

(See regulations 2 and 4)

Position	Membership	Membership Breakdown
Principal	1	<b>(Required under Ordinance 212)</b>
<i>Ex officio</i> appointments	Approximately 70, with a maximum 80 <i>ex officio</i> members in total.	Heads of Schools <b>(Required under Ordinance 212)</b> and Heads (Deans) of the Deaneries of the Edinburgh Medical School.
		Heads of College <b>(Required under Ordinance 212)</b>
		Vice-Principals
		Assistant Principals
		Director of Library and University Collections
		Director of the Institute for Academic Development
		University Leads on Climate Responsibility and Sustainability; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
		Up to 5 College-level office holders per College nominated by that College who hold academic posts (for example, Deans and Associate Deans)
		Office-holders who are specifically entitled to Senate membership under the terms of collaborative agreements.
		<a href="#">2 Senate Assessors on the University Court (1 Joint Academic and Senate Assessor; 2 Senate Assessors)</a>
		<a href="#">1 Academic Staff member on the University Court</a>

## Appendix 2

### Student membership

(See regulations 5 and 6)

Position	Membership	Membership breakdown
Elected students	30	5 Sabbatical Officers
		8 Section Representatives
		5 Liberation Officers
		6 Undergraduate School Representatives
		<a href="#">65</a> Postgraduate School Representatives
		<a href="#">1</a> <del>Activities Representative – Academic</del>

**Senate**

**9 February 2022**

**Senate Standing Committees – upcoming business**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper informs Senate of activity planned by the Senate Standing Committees between February 2022 and June 2022.

**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  
Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer  
Philippa Ward, Academic Policy Officer

**Freedom of Information**

Open

## Senate Education Committee (SEC)

The following business will be considered electronically by SEC between 13 and 20 January 2022:

<b>Upcoming business:</b>	<b>Brief description and context:</b>
1. 2021 UG and PGT / Online Entrants Reports	SEC will be asked to consider (for information and comment) the content of this annual report provided by Communications and Marketing (CAM).
2. Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022 Questions	SEC will be asked to approve the optional questions for the PTES 2022 survey. SEC approves the optional questions in January each year.
3. Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – Proposal for an Additional Recognised Activity	SEC will be asked to consider a proposal for an additional recognised activity to be included in section 6.1 of qualifying students' HEARs. See <a href="#">HEAR   The University of Edinburgh</a> for further information.
4.	
5. Standing Items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Curriculum Transformation</li><li>b. Student Experience</li><li>c. Doctoral College</li></ul>	The Committee will receive updates on progress.
<b>Business to be considered at 10 March 2022 meeting:</b>	
6. CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching	The Framework is due for reaccreditation in 2023, and the Committee will be asked to discuss future direction.
7. Standing Items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Curriculum Transformation</li><li>b. Student Experience</li><li>c. Doctoral College</li></ul>	The Committee will receive updates on progress.

## Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

<b>Upcoming business:</b>	<b>Brief description and context:</b>
1. Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)	The Committee will continue to monitoring progress against the recommendations of the 2021 ELIR and, together with the ELIR Oversight Group, will advise University Executive of progress and any concerns. The University's response to the ELIR recommendations is being coordinate via the ELIR Action Plan.
2. Degree Classification Data	In April each year the Committee receives an annual report on degree classification outcomes of successfully exiting undergraduates, including sector trends in undergraduate degree classification outcomes. Any subject areas considered to have diverged substantially from either the University average or comparators in their discipline are then asked to specifically reflect on the issue, and any proposed remediation, in their School Annual Quality Report. The Committee then continues to monitor progress via these two annual reporting processes until the issue is considered to have been resolved. This approach ensures systematic University oversight whilst also encouraging Schools to engage with the specific data on attainment, reflect on the issues and context, and then seek local solutions.
3. Examine data and methodological options for the systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data.	The Committee will continue to consider options for a new system for monitoring retention, progression, and attainment data in response to the recommendations of the Thematic Reviews <a href="#">2017-18 mature students and student parents and carers</a> and <a href="#">2018-19 black and minority ethnic students' experience of support</a> .
4. Thematic Review	The Committee will receive progress updates on the implement the recommendations from the Thematic Reviews <a href="#">2017-18 mature students and student parents and carers</a> and <a href="#">2018-19 black and minority ethnic students' experience of support</a> .
5. External Examiner Reporting System	The Committee will consider the annual analysis of data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) covering undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. The report highlights themes that emerge from External Examiner commendations and any issues that required attention.
6. Student Support Services Annual Review	The Committee will receive the annual report monitoring process, policy and guidance information from each of the central University student support services.

7. Student Discipline Annual Report	The Committee will receive the annual report on the number of breaches of the Code of Student Conduct over the course of the academic year 2020-21.
8. Complaint Handling Annual Report	The Committee will receive the annual report on the handling of complaints to the University for the academic year 2020-21.
9. Quality Processes and Digital Maturity	The Committee will continue to consider the extent to which quality processes have been adapted to operate effectively and meet stakeholders' expectations in the context of both the Covid pandemic and an increasing digital world. As part of the Digital Maturity initiative (setup by the Digital Transformation Programme) quality processes were evaluated with the aim of enhancing the way outcomes are communicated to and used by staff and students across the University.
10. Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)	The Committee will receive the annual report of the accreditation committee of SRUC for the undergraduate programme, "Environmental Resource Management (BSc)".
11. Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs)	The Committee will continue to monitor the progress of the review of the approach to gathering student feedback across the University from CEQs.
12. Internal Periodic Review (IPR)	The Committee will continue to receive and approve final reports and responses to IPRs.

### **Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)**

Planned business for January/March 2022

<b>Upcoming business:</b>	<b>Brief description and context:</b>
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. Proposals for non-standard PGT programmes	Consideration of requests for approval of changes to existing Master's programmes, which involve alternatives to the traditional dissertation component.



3. Extensions and Special Circumstances	Coursework extension update for Semester 1 2021/22, and consideration of an amendment to the deadline for late submission of special circumstances applications. Initial discussion of potential options for broader changes to the existing policy regarding coursework extensions.
4. Academic Year Dates	Approval of academic year dates 2023/24 and provisional academic year dates 2024/25 and 2025/26.
5. Centre for Open Learning	Consideration of proposals in relation to resits for the International Foundation Programme.
6. Support for Study Policy	Consideration of proposals for minor amendments to policy.
7. Student Support	Consideration of amendments required to regulations and policies to respond to the changes to student support arrangements arising from the Student Support and Personal Tutoring review.
8. Regulations review	Periodic review of College proposals for essential changes to Taught Assessment Regulations, Postgraduate Assessment Regulations, Undergraduate Degree Regulations, Postgraduate Degree Regulations.

**Senate****9 February 2022****Resolutions****Description of paper**

1. This paper is presented to Senate for consultation in accordance with the procedures for the creation of Resolutions as set out in the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966.

**Action requested / Recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to make observations on the following attached draft Resolutions:
- No. 5/2022: Creation of a Personal Chair of Translational Cognitive Neuroscience
  - No. 6/2022: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Accounting

**Background and context**

3. Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 enabled the University Court to exercise by Resolution a wide range of powers, including the creation of Chairs. The Act sets out the procedure for making Resolutions and stipulates that Senatus Academicus, the General Council and any other body or person having an interest require to be consulted on draft Resolutions throughout the period of one month, with the months of August and September not taken into account when calculating the consultation period.

**Discussion**

4. Attached to this paper is a draft Resolution establishing a Personal Chair of Translational Cognitive Neuroscience and a draft Resolution to alter the title of the substantive Chair of Accounting. These are presented for consultation in line with the statutory process.

**Resource implications**

5. The approval processes include confirmation of the funding in place to support the Chairs.

**Risk Management**

6. There are reputational considerations in establishing Chairs which are considered as part of the University's approval processes.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals**

7. N/A

**Equality and Diversity**

8. Equality and diversity best practice and agreed procedures are adopted in appointing individuals.

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

9. Via Court's report to Senate.

**Consultation**

10. The statutory process for the creation and renaming of Chairs requires consultation with both Senate and the General Council and the General Council will also be consulted prior to Court consideration of the Resolutions.

**Further information****Author(s)**

Kirstie Graham  
Deputy Head of Court Services  
January 2022

**Freedom of information**

Open paper

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

**Draft Resolution of the University Court No. 5/2022**

**Foundation of a Personal Chair of Translational Cognitive Neuroscience**

At Edinburgh, the Twenty fifth day of April, Two thousand and twenty two.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to found a Personal Chair of Translational Cognitive Neuroscience:

THEREFORE the University Court, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1966, with special reference to paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby resolves:

1. There shall be a Personal Chair of Translational Cognitive Neuroscience in the University of Edinburgh.
2. The patronage of the Chair shall be vested in and exercised by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh.
3. Notwithstanding the personal nature of this Chair, the terms and conditions of appointment and tenure which by Statute, Ordinance and otherwise apply to other Chairs in the University shall be deemed to apply in like manner to the Personal Chair of Translational Cognitive Neuroscience together with all other rights, privileges and duties attaching to the office of Professor.
4. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 June Two thousand and twenty two.

For and on behalf of the University Court

SARAH SMITH

University Secretary

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

**Draft Resolution of the University Court No. 6/2022**

**Alteration of the title of the Chair of Accounting**

At Edinburgh, the Twenty fifth day of April, Two thousand and twenty two.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to alter the title of the Chair of Accounting founded by Resolution No. 53/2016;

AND WHEREAS paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, provides that the University Court may, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and with the consent of the incumbent and patrons, if any, alter the title of existing professorships;

AND WHEREAS the Chair dealt with in this Resolution is in the patronage of the University Court itself:

THEREFORE the University Court, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1966, with special reference to paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby resolves:

1. The Chair of Accounting shall hereafter be designated the Chair of Accounting, Sustainability and Governance.
2. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 August Two thousand and twenty one.

For and on behalf of the University Court

SARAH SMITH

University Secretary

## Senate

9 February 2022

## Research Strategy Group

**Description of paper**

- 1 Summary of issues over the period, October 2021 to January 2022 that are within the scope of Research Strategy Group (RSG), which are relevant to the wider University community. RSG's strategy responsibility for research policy are directly relevant to the achievement of the following outcomes set out in Strategy 2030:
  - i We will see our research having a greater impact as a result of partnership, international reach and investment in emergent disciplines.
  - ii We will be a global leader in artificial intelligence and the use of data with integrity.
  - iii We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.
  - iv Edinburgh will become the Data Capital of Europe. We will deliver inclusive growth, provide data skills to at least 100,000 individuals, and create new companies and solutions for global challenges.

**Action requested / recommendation**

- 2 For information

**Background and context**

- 3 Since the last Senate meeting in October 2021, RSG has met twice: 18<sup>th</sup> October and 13<sup>th</sup> December. RSG will meeting three more times in 2021/22 9<sup>th</sup> February, 18<sup>th</sup> April; 8<sup>th</sup> June. A meeting focussed on the REF results and subsequent material supplied by UKREF will be held in late August/ early September to consider what the results mean for University research policy.
- 4 This report outlines:
  - How University research is contributing to the battle against COVID19
  - The University's recent research successes
  - UK and Scottish government budgets: what they mean for public funding for research
  - Research culture, ethics and integrity developments at the University
  - Recent UK and Scottish consultations that are relevant to research funding and research assessment

**Discussion**How University research is contributing to the battle against COVID19

5. Research in each of University's Colleges is contributing to the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. Of the many Covid-related research projects a few examples below illustrate the breadth of the contribution both in terms of outcome and academic discipline as well as the fact that the researchers involved range from students to researchers with world leading reputations.
6. College of Science and Engineering: Undergraduate Aleksander Trakul (School of Engineering) was jointly crowned National Winner (Poland) of the prestigious James Dyson Award 2021 for an innovative face mask recycling solution. While the efficacy of wearing a face mask to limit the spread of the virus is well documented, the environmental impact of non-biodegradable face masks presents a huge challenge. The XTRUDE ZERO system works by melting face masks down to create a solid block of plastic that can be cut into pellets. These pellets can then be made into other useful

materials, through engineering methods such as injection modelling, additive manufacturing and 3D printing. The James Dyson Award is a prestigious international award scheme for current and recent graduates, celebrating the next generation of design engineers

7. College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine Dr Alan Carson (Centre for Clinical Brain Sciences) is leading the Edinburgh Long Covid Study. People with Long Covid have described experiencing cognitive problems, including problems with memory, concentration and judgement. The aim of this study is to produce clinical explanations for cognitive impairment in Long Covid, which can enable the provision of effective treatment. By using a variety of clinical assessments and testing, this study will provide detailed clinical descriptions and diagnoses to effectively plan and use appropriate treatment pathways.
8. College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Professor Soledad Garcia Ferrari & Dr Kathi Kaesehage, (Edinburgh College of Art), in collaboration with Heriot-Watt University and Universidad Nacional de Colombia, have been exploring the role of communities at the local neighbourhood level, particularly in highly vulnerable informal areas in growing Latin American cities. Their research is now adapting and growing in both Medellín and Puebla demonstrates to show that increasing the adaptive capacity of informal and low-income urban communities in the face of climate change entails empowering them to use their knowledge and resources to understand and monitor risk. These actions and new forms of the 'collective' can help tackling climate change-related risks and develop adaptation strategies, contributing to negotiated policy and action that is more meaningful to local needs and capacities.
9. The University's Data Driven Initiative, which is part of the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Deal Region Deal, is providing vital digital resources for researchers in the battle against Covid-19. The DDI DataLoch has supported a number of research studies with de-identified COVID-19 data through the Safe Haven research environment tackling a variety of COVID-19 questions including:
  - Can we identify patients and treatments for a post COVID care clinic?
  - How effective is serology testing in diagnosing COVID?
  - How does the timing of serology testing impact accuracy?
  - What effects does COVID have on acute cardiac care?
  - How effective is the combined nasal and throat swab in diagnosing COVID?
  - Can we understand predictors of mortality in COVID patients?
  - Can long-COVID treatment pathways be improved?
  - Is deprivation a COVID risk factor?

#### The University's research successes

10. Despite the constraints of COVID-19 and the personal and professional challenges this has brought to University staff, The University has managed to continue to expand its research activity and deliver more innovation. Indeed in 2021 the University's researchers published 15% more outputs than the 5 year average: an extraordinary achievement during the pandemic.
11. Four months into 2021/22, the University's researchers (supported by professional service colleagues) have submitted 1041 applications and have already won £78m in research funding, with much more in final negotiations. The University is now in the UK top 6 in terms of the number of awards from each of the UK Research Councils. Overall, the number of awards this year are similar to the 3 year average, but achieved under exceptional circumstances.

12. Edinburgh founded 102 companies last academic year. This is a record for the University and the highest in the Russell Group. Moreover, these companies persist, with over 80% still trading in some form after 20 years. This is quite an achievement as 60% of start-ups in UK fail within five years of establishment. The University's research awards from industry have been rising more steeply than from other sources and Edinburgh is now in the top 5 in the UK rankings for industry engagement and commercialisation. Five years ago the University was 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### UK and Scottish government budgets: what they mean for public funding for research

13. The UK Government's Autumn Budget and Spending Review gave UK Research and Innovation a rise of 7% per annum for the next 3 years, plus extra money for the Advanced Research Invention Agency<sup>1</sup>. This is a substantial rise in funding for research that is commissioned by UK Government departments. The Chancellor forecast that funding for international development could return to 0.7% of Gross National Income during this Parliament. A portion of this funding, known as Overseas Development Assistance, addresses pressing problems in the developing world, such as emerging infectious diseases, by building collaborations with researchers overseas. Thanks to this funding stream the University was working with researchers in a number of developing nations and so was particularly badly affected when this funding was cut in early 2021.
14. There will be an increase for HE and FE in the Scottish Budget for 2022/23. However the uplift is already committed to fund commitments already announced. A multi-year budget framework will be published in May. At the time of writing, it expected that the budget will result in cut in real terms of funding for Research and Innovation activities in Scottish HEIs.
15. The UK Government's Budget also put £1.3bn towards EU programmes for UK applicants this year, rising to £2.1bn by 2024-25. At the time of writing the UK Government has not signed the agreement for association with Horizon Europe. Whether the UK will sign the agreement remains uncertain as it is dependant ongoing trade negotiations with the EU. The UK Government has stated that 'in the event that the UK is unable to associate to Horizon Europe, the funding allocated to Horizon association will go to UK government R&D programmes, including those to support international partnerships<sup>1</sup>.

#### Research culture, ethics and integrity developments at the University

16. The co-chair of Research Ethics and Integrity Group, Professor Malcolm Macleod, is leading the planning of a week to celebrate good research practice at Edinburgh. The intention is to encourage sharing within and across colleges as to what constitutes good research practice, how we promote it and how we challenge poor practice. The event will tie-in with and complement other events such as Open Research week. The date has not been finalised but likely to be May/June.
17. The newly established Research Cultures Working Group has met twice since it was set up. Having received a presentation from CMVM colleagues, has initiated wider discussions about training for those who are new to the university and/or are new to a Principal Investigator role that could cover topics such as determining authorship for outputs and applying University policy on the responsible use of research metrics in recruitment and promotion.

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<sup>1</sup> The UK legislation enabling ARIA to be set up will have received Royal Assent by the time of this Senate meeting



### Recent UK and Scottish consultations that are relevant to research funding and research assessment

18. In early January, the University made its submission to the SFC's consultation on changes to the SFC formula for allocating its Research Excellence and Research Postgraduate Grants. The REF results are used in the REG formula. Currently, it is not expected that the size of the REG funding pot will increase. The University receives the largest share of both funding streams.
19. The University will have made its submission to the UK wide consultation commissioned by Future Research Assessment Programme by 26 January. Through dialogue with the Higher Education sector, the programme seeks to understand what a healthy, thriving research system looks like and how a future assessment model can best form its foundation. Having obtained a set of views about REF2021 from a number of 'by invitation only' events that the FRAP has held, the purpose of the consultation is to determine the extent to which the picture of REF2021 is shared by the UK HE sector

### **Resource implications**

20. No direct implications arise from this paper however it outlines developments that will affect the UK and Scottish funding available for research.

### **Risk management**

21. RSG are always mindful that, being at the leading edge in the creation of knowledge and making a positive difference to society, means also ensuring University staff understand the inherent risks and take sensible measures to mitigate them in line with the University's threefold appetite for risk in respect of reputation, compliance and finances. The Research Ethics and Integrity Review Group is key to this.

### **Equality & diversity**

22. The extension of RSG's responsibilities is strengthening its objective of becoming an exemplar of good research practice and stewardship of university-wide research policies, including those relating to researcher development and research ethics and integrity. The RSG Research Culture Working group has specific objectives of establishing policies and mechanisms to promote a positive research culture at the University of Edinburgh across all stages in an individual's research career regardless of ethnicity, gender and ableness

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

23. RSG will take an inclusive approach in order to ensure that the lessons to be learnt from the REF2021 submission and results are widely communicated. To facilitate greater and more effective dissemination RSG membership now includes representation from Communications and Marketing as well as having a Research Engagement subgroup. The new template for RSG papers for discussion explicitly asked for information about communication plans.

### **Author**

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Edinburgh Research Officer  
12 January 2022

### **Freedom of Information**

Open