<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>

Senate Education Committee
Thursday 9th May 2024 2-5pm
Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and via Microsoft Teams

A G E N D A

* Standing item   + Committee priority

1.	**Welcome and Apologies**	
2.	**Minutes of the previous meeting** To approve • 7th March 2024	SEC 23/24 5A
3.	**Matters Arising** • Convener's communications	
4.	**SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**	
4.1	**Student Experience Update*:** 'Watch That Gap' Project Report For information and discussion	SEC 23/24 5B
4.2	**Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030: Update on Development** For discussion and approval	SEC 23/24 5C
4.3	**Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report** For discussion Paper closed due to the inclusion of unrounded data and protected characteristic data.	SEC 23/24 5D Closed
4.4	**Update on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Learning and Teaching** For discussion	SEC 23/34 5E
4.5	**Postgraduate Research Culture Action Plan** For information and comment	SEC 23/24 5F
4.6	**Student Partnership Agreement 2024-25** For approval	SEC 23/34 5G
4.7	**Senate Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review** For comment	SEC 23/24 5H
5.	**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING**	

5.1	**Committee Priorities 2024/25** For noting	SEC 23/24 5I
5.2	**Membership and Terms of Reference 2024/25** For noting	SEC 23/24 5J
5.3	**Tutors & Demonstrators update** For noting	Verbal update
5.4	**Assessment and Feedback Groups+** For noting	Verbal update
5.5	**Generative AI** QAA event: [Addressing the anxiety of assessment in an AI world](#)	Verbal update
6.	**Any Other Business**	
7.	**Date of next meeting** Thursday 12th September 2024, 9am – 12noon Venue TBC	

Senate Education Committee

Thursday 7th March 2024 14:00 – 17:00
Hybrid meeting: Liberton Tower Room, Murchison House, King's Buildings
and via Microsoft Teams

1.   Attendance

Present	*Position*
Colm Harmon	Vice Principal, Students (Convener)
Tina Harrison	Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) (Vice-Convener)
Sian Bayne	Assistant Principal Digital Education
Laura Bradley	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)
Mary Brennan	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Marianne Brown	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling
Shane Collins	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions
Jamie Davies	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, UG)
Lucy Evans	Deputy Secretary, Students
Shelagh Green	Director for Careers & Employability
Carl Harper	Vice- President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association
Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, PGT)
Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Division of Information Services; Assistant Principal (Online and Open Learning)
James Hopgood	Senate Representative
Lisa Kendall	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Nichola Kett	Director of Academic Services
Jason Love	Head of School, CSE
Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)
Velda McCune	Representing Director of Institute for Academic Development
Callum Paterson	EUSA Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator
Jo Shaw	Head of School, CAHSS
Tim Stratford	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Tamara Trodd	Senate Representative
Patrick Walsh	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Sinéad Docherty	Committee Secretary, Academic Services
In Attendance	
Jon Turner	Curriculum Transformation Project Lead, Institute for Academic Development
Apologies	
Nikos Avramidis	PGR Student Representative
Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)
Susan Morrow	Senate Representative
Mike Shipston	Head of Deanery, CMVM

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 18th January 2024

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2024.

3. Convener's Communications and Matters Arising

- **Learning & Teaching Strategy**

The Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) provided a verbal update on the development of the Learning & Teaching Strategy. Dates have been arranged with the Colleges to present the draft and discuss with colleagues. The Directors of Teaching Network will also be involved in further consultation.

- **Tutors & Demonstrators**

Following discussion of committee priorities at the previous meeting, the Convener took the action to consult with colleagues in HR around minimum training standards for T&Ds. It has been confirmed that the Guaranteed Minimum Hours Agreement is one of the matters that rest solely with UCU and has been discussed in meetings held this academic year.

A proposal is pending from UCU on their considered minimum training standards for Tutors and Demonstrators. The next meeting is 13 March 2024, after which an update on actions will be provided to this Committee.

- **Lost Learning**

Following the discussion of lost learning at the previous Committee meeting, in the context of setting priorities for the Committee to focus on in 2024/25, the Convener consulted with HR to understand the impact of industrial action.

It was reported that the impact varies across Schools and Colleges. The Committee would recommend that affected Schools consider the additional support and financial resource available to bridge gaps in learning. Schools are also encouraged to focus on where additional support is best applied, which may be towards new incoming students who are embarking on University level education.

4. Substantive Items

4.1 Curriculum Transformation – PGT Framework

This item was presented by the Curriculum Transformation Project Lead, with several key questions asked of SEC members in relation to the proposed framework. Discussion included progression points, the importance of flexible routes into study and models within the framework that best support international students who are new to the UK University experience. The Committee highlighted the additional requirements of accreditation that will be relevant to some programmes.

It was recognised that the PGT market is changing and there is a need for all programmes to be developed with an elongated option in mind. The block teaching model already in use within the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) was highlighted as a template which may work well for Mode 3 stackable archetype. It was noted that this archetype may be of particular interest to candidates in industry or working towards continuous professional development (CPD).

In response to a question about the timeframe for the proposed framework, the Committee were informed that the intended validation window would be academic year 2024/25 and the roll-out period in 2026/27. A proposal for the validation process is in development, and will include guidance and illustrated examples. Workshops and consultation will continue in order to test out the proposals and archetypes in accordance with different requirements. The Committee did note their interest in further clarity on the curriculum design principles and how these will be shaped in the next 5 years.

The views of the Committee were noted by the CTP Lead and will feed into the revised framework proposal, which will be presented to Senate during its May 2024 meeting.

4.2   Committee Priorities 2024/25

The Committee discussed the proposed priorities for academic year 2024/25. These had been informed by previous discussion held by the Committee and feedback from members and the Convener. It is intended that priorities will be deliverable pieces of work within the remit of the Committee.

The Committee discussed assessment & feedback and turnaround times for feedback. Members highlighted that nuanced discussion is needed around student expectations of timely feedback and student concern around the quality of feedback provided. It was felt that data would help to understand assessment & feedback performance across the University, as well as the relationship between performance and student survey results.

It was noted that the recommendation following the Quality Enhancements & Standards Review (QESR) provides a sector perspective, and work in the area of assessment & feedback area is not solely responding to student survey results. External requirements inform the need to prioritise assessment & feedback turnaround time, and the role of this Committee is to be assured that work is happening across the institution to respond to external recommendations.

During discussion, Committee members identified several additional areas of focus, including the Widening Participation Strategy, Estates & Space, awarding gaps, staff development, the changing student profile and employability. Whilst these areas are not all within the remit of the Committee, these will be added to the forward agenda to inform further work.

> **Action:** Committee Secretary to share revised draft of priorities on the Committee SharePoint page for any further comments.

4.3 Student Support Framework Revisions

The Deputy Secretary, Students presented the updated framework to the Committee. The Committee advised that more emphasis on some cohorts of students, such as joint-degree students and study-abroad students, would be helpful in ensuring that the support required for these students is explicitly captured.

There was discussion of the role of Cohort Leads and the importance of academic events included as a timetabled activity. Cohort Leads are responsible for academic guidance and community building, and members were reminded that Schools are expected to define the Cohort Lead role in the best way for their students. It was acknowledged that ongoing work is needed to ensure the role is supporting the student experience as intended.

It was noted that the framework will be influenced by the logic model review which is to evaluate the Student Support Model. The Committee welcomed the review taking place in 2025, and were supportive of the work to streamline activity and documentation around Student Support, to ensure that documentation is concise and work is appropriately focused and effective.

The Committee approved the revisions to the Student Support Framework ahead of academic year 2024/25.

4.4 School Accessibility Reviews

The Committee were presented with an annual update on the accessibility results via the Learn Ultra project. This reviews accessibility across documents, course pages, URLs and audio/video content and is also shared with all Heads of Schools. The Committee were informed that the sample size reviewed is increasing each year, which does present a challenge when comparing progress year-on-year.

There was discussion of the current level of captioned materials, with 65% of files and videos having subtitles. The Committee were advised that captioning technology has improved in recent years and the technology can indicate its level of confidence in the generated subtitles. There was discussion of how to assist Schools to improve their accessibility rate with the aim of all material being fully accessible, and it was noted that training and additional support is available to Schools.

The Committee were supportive of the expectation that all Schools should participate in accessibility activity with the aim of increasing the rate of compliance. There was recognition of the resource implications for Schools, although it is expected that the improved captioning technology now available will alleviate some of the workload.

Action: Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Division of Information Services; Assistant Principal (Online and Open Learning) to continue to provide updates on the performance of automatic captioning.

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5. For information/noting

5.1   Learn Ultra Evaluation

The Committee noted the update in relation to the Learn Ultra Evaluation project.

5.2   Assessment & Feedback Groups

The Committee noted the revised Terms of Reference for the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group.

5.3   Quality Enhancement & Standards Review (QESR) Oversight Group

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference for the QESR Oversight Group, set up following the report of the review. This group will report in to both SEC and Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 9th May, 2-5pm. This will be a hybrid meeting, taking place in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and via Microsoft Teams.

Senate Education Committee

9 May 2024

'Watch That Gap' Project Report

Description of paper:

1. On behalf of Lucy Evans (Deputy Secretary Students) and with endorsement from the University Secretary and the Vice Principal Students, Lindsay Jack (Director of Student Experience, Law) carried out a short-term research project, 'Watch That Gap', exploring the learning and assessment needs of students with caring responsibilities.

2. This project report and its findings cut across many areas of Strategy 2030 with a focus on Teaching and Learning, specifically the commitment to offering 'accessible, responsive and efficient educational services.' In understanding and responding to the broad picture that students and staff have painted for us we have been able to offer recommendations, both immediate and longer-term, that will address perceived inaccessibility and add a layer of efficiency to the experience of students with caring responsibilities.

Action requested / recommendation:

3. This paper is brought for information and for comment. A brief accompanying presentation will be given at the meeting.

Background and context:

4. This project was undertaken at 0.2 FTE over 7 months between August 2023 and March 2024.

5. 'Watch That Gap' sought to capture the needs of students who are parents and carers and do not fit into the short-term purpose of the Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) Services and/or disability needs provided for by the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) (There will be some students who are parents and/or carers who will also be eligible for ESC and DLSS adjustments based on other factors, but this report sought to identify potential solutions that lie outwith those mechanisms) The recent year-long review of the Extensions and Special Circumstances Policy suggests this is likely to be Student Carers and Student Parents.

6. 'Watch That Gap' took into account the experiences of multiple stakeholders including students, and those who support and teach students. It encompassed one-to-one interviews, focus groups, surveys, and attendance at relevant events and committee meetings.

7. We sought to better understand the experiences of students, and listen to staff and student suggestions on what they thought might improve these students' time at university. The report presents the issues staff and students identified, codified into broad themes. Solutions have been suggested, including recommendations for short- and longer-term work that is needed. The recommendations have been endorsed by the Senior Leaders who commissioned the report, and are currently being progressed.

Discussion

8. The immediate recommendations are currently being worked on with a view to implementing in time for semester one 2024/25 at the earliest.

9. The longer-term objectives will sit broadly within the Student Experience Services remit.

Resource implications

10. Work is ongoing with Student Experience Services and other relevant colleagues to plan the detail and implementation of the recommendations.

Risk management

11. Eligibility for the suite of modifications outlined in the main recommendations part of the report will be assessed by trained staff.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

12. N/A

Equality & diversity

13. As this is not a policy, an Equality Impact Assessment may not be necessary, but issues of diversity, equity and inclusion have been core to the development and will inform planning and execution throughout.

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

14. Colleagues working to implement these changes will do so in collaboration with Colleges and Schools to ensure smooth embedding of these changes. Student Communications will be considered carefully, in a timely manner, and in conjunction with existing student communications that are both general, and specifically tailored to these particular groups.

Author
Lindsay Jack
24th April 2024

Presenter
Lindsay Jack

Freedom of Information: Open

The University of Edinburgh

'Watch That Gap' Final Report

A Student Experience Project. March 2024

Watch That Gap: A Student Experience Project

Contents

Watch That Gap: A Student Experience Project

1. Overview, and scope

On behalf of Lucy Evans (Deputy Secretary, Students) and with endorsement from the University Secretary and the Vice Principal Students, Lindsay Jack (Director of Student Experience, Law) carried out a short-term research project, 'Watch That Gap', exploring the learning and assessment needs of students with caring responsibilities.

In this project, Lindsay sought to capture the needs of students who are parents and carers and do not fit into the short-term purpose of the Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) Services and/or disability needs provided for by the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) (There will be some students who are parents and/or carers who will also be eligible for ESC and DLSS adjustments based on other factors, but this report sought to identify potential solutions that lie outwith those mechanisms) The recent year-long review of the Extensions and Special Circumstances Policy suggests this is likely to be Student Carers and Student Parents

'Watch That Gap' took into account the experiences of multiple stakeholders including students, and those who support and teach students. It encompassed one-to-one interviews, focus groups, surveys, and attendance at relevant events and committee meetings.

We sought to understand the experiences of students better, and listen to staff and student suggestions on what they thought might improve these students' time at university. This report lays out all the issues staff and students identified, codified into broad themes. Solutions have been suggested, including recommendations for short- and longer-term work that is needed.

This project was undertaken on a 0.2 FTE basis between August 2023 and February 2024.

2. Executive Summary

Researching this report has brought, in almost equal measures, pride, frustration, and hope. There is much to be proud of as we hear of pockets of transformative practice that improves students' lives[1].

In the granular, and when students can identify who to talk to and what they need to ask for, we see innovative and positive things happening but that comes at a cost of inequity of experience; of local knowledge being used to patch cracks in bigger frameworks. Even the premise of the project itself suggests we know there are gaps, and we have an idea of who is falling through.

"It's the policy that falls through the cracks, not the students." (Staff interviewee)

While the report at times does not offer uplifting reading, its messages are vital to further our understanding of the experiences of students who some have described as 'forgotten.' There is rich narrative and data, with direct feedback from staff and students. We need to listen and to hear what they are telling us, and we need to make it worth their while having given up time to open up to an institution that has told them it cares.

We can honour this open sharing of lived experience by seeing this report as a line in the sand; this is when we as an institution start to consider student experience more holistically. This is when student experience is viewed through the lens of the most vulnerable, most marginalised students. If we can get it right for them then we get it right for the whole population.

"Give us room to breathe and offer options and alternatives." (UG student)

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[1] "My supervisor has always been extremely accommodating and allowed me to prioritise family needs and fit my working hours around this." (PhD candidate). "Mails are answered regularly, and they help you at every step of the road. Professors are empathic; they know it is difficult for us. As I said, well done for everybody." (UG student)

"Sometimes we have to treat people differently to treat them the same" (Staff interviewee)

In seeking to move away from what could be described as a deficit model of finding workarounds within (and sometimes outwith!) our frameworks, we can start to reframe our thinking. By opening ourselves up to what staff and students are telling us, we need to see that we have created embedded inequalities that require particular consideration and targeted intervention.

If students go through their university experience in 'crisis' mode, accessing 'exceptional' support and 'special' dispensations then how can they feel accounted for in our institution? If we tell them the reality of their day-to-day lives is different from what our structures and processes have been designed for then what message does that send? At what point do we stop and consider perhaps the deficit lies with our systems and processes, our priorities, our broader culture?

Culture changes slowly; it is almost intangible to those it includes by default, and it is defined by the very best of our actions as well as the very worst of the ways in which students experience the institution. Every person in the University has a part to play.

In relating this work to Strategy 2030, it is clear that it cuts across many areas of our ambition. We might think of our mission in Teaching and Learning, offering 'accessible, responsive and efficient educational services' as just one example.

Across this whole piece of work is a strong acknowledgment that in all our activities we must include and take account of the circumstances, experiences, identities, cultures, and backgrounds of our students; to do so we need a serious shift in our culture.

"It's like Edinburgh uni is plastered into an old and inadequate mould and it wants to force fit us there." (UG student)

"We need all students with all skills and all versions of cultural capital; that would enrich us all. That would be the way forward, the way to truly make the university both a civic and a global institution." (Staff interviewee)

While we work at this culture change there are explicit steps we can take to positively impact the experience of our students with caring responsibilities and these are detailed in the recommendations.

The recommendations in this report are the beginning of what we could do. We have scratched the surface of these issues and there remains a lot more to do to uncover the plethora of students whose lives do not sit neatly in our modes and means of delivery not to mention aspects of intersectionality - how aspects of identity overlap to create multiple patterns of discrimination or privilege.

If it feels uncomfortable then it is because we know that we should do better. This report lays out concrete ways in which we can do better, and in doing so we can change the lives of hundreds of students.

Initially, our focus is on students with caring responsibilities. It is time for them, and the staff who work with them, to tell their stories.

Lindsay Jack, February 2024

3. Definitions

We used the University of Edinburgh's definition of **carer -** "As a student carer, you give emotional or practical care to someone who would not be able to look after themselves otherwise. For instance, you

may need to help someone for the following reasons: they have ill health (including mental health conditions); they have a disability; they have an addiction." [2]

Population: Identifying student carers is complex. In academic year 2023/24, there are 196 verified student carers on programme across the institution (including UG, PG, aged 25 and under, and aged 26+). We know that this is not the entire picture of our carer population for many reasons, including, among others; students not seeing themselves as carers; students who do recognise their situation as one of a carer then not identifying themselves to the institution as carers; students not following up with verifying their status. The landscape is complicated and although actions seem to lie with the student, it is not a clear picture of their experience, and speaks to the broader issues of culture that will be covered in this report. The Edinburgh Cares team point to a more helpful 18% statistic[3], which represents the national figure of carers across the general population. This would indicate that we only really have data on a fraction of who our carers are.

The university does not define **student parents**, so for the report we used the Edinburgh University Students' Association definition - "A student parent is any student who will be either pregnant or taking care of a child alongside their studies."[4]

Population: We do not routinely collect data on student parents, so there is not a reliable way to count this group however a previous EUSA Student Parent Representative estimated in 2023 there were between 2,000 and 3,000 student parents across the institution.

4. Methodology

Students and staff were asked four almost identical questions, with the wording changed according to their perspective.

1. What difficulties have you seen students face/have you faced in learning and assessment that you would consider fall between the scope of the ESC Policy and the DLSS Adjustments process?

2. Does your department/school/area currently do anything outwith that scope to support these students/you?

3. What is working well about how (the university, your school, your department, a particular course) supports carer/parent/other status, and why?

4. What do you wish the university did to support these groups of students/you in relation to learning and assessment, and why?

37 staff, and 47 students participated in this project.

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[2] *from UoE Edinburgh Cares Student Carer pages:* https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/access-edinburgh/edinburgh-cares/student-carers
[3] From The Scottish Government website: Scotland's Carers Update Release: December 2022 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
[4] *from Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place pages:* https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace/money/benefits/studentparents

5. Summary of the main themes

Students who have caring responsibilities may face multiple challenges during their studies at the University. The challenges have been broadly themed and expanded on in the report. Alphabetically, they are:

- Academic, of their academic skills, and assessment;
- Attendance, at classes, and at extras;
- Contacts and relationships, with colleagues and staff;
- Data, in knowing who our student parents and carers are;
- Estate, and how it is a barrier to their inclusion;
- Finance;
- Identity and belonging;
- Resources;
- Systems and processes, and
- Trust; students and staff have talked about wanting 'the institution' to trust students the way it trusts staff. Trust also comes up in the sharing of information – who do they share it with, when, and why?

While pockets of good practice exist, and there is a lot to celebrate, these are ad-hoc and rely too much on

- The onus being on students to communicate those issues and
- staff finding 'workarounds'

Emerging keywords

These words came up in one form or another in almost every interview: Ad hoc; Assumptions; Bureaucracy; Culture; Flexibility; Timetabling; Personal.

Additional considerations

Any student could at any time face the types of difficulties described in this report, and some of the challenges encountered may also disproportionately affect other groups of students. We have sought to consider how the issues raised might affect others. When we talk about students who we recognise have compounded responsibilities we cannot help but consider who else might fall into this broad categorisation.

These additional 'groupings' of students and their experiences are important, but they fall outwith the scope of the current project, which is very specific and focused. It is vital that students and staff know we do not dismiss those issues but rather that we hear them, and have included them in our suggestions for wider work that the university might want to consider undertaking.

6. Issues Raised, by theme

Question 1: What difficulties have you seen students face/have you faced in learning and assessment that you would consider fall between the scope of the ESC Policy and the DLSS Adjustments process?
This question was asked so we could gauge the types of issues students face that they think fall between these two forms of support. It also allowed us to pick up issues faced by students who are not parents or carers, but who might also be ineligible for ESC or DLSS. The insights below are paraphrased from interview participants' answers.

Summary of staff and student answers

Overall

The major themes that came through were around **attendance** and the **lack of flexibility** in options for attending. Missing one or two classes had a snowball effect as the pressures on non-university time meant the students might have less time to catch up, which then knocks into **assessments**. Having less flexibility to cope with last-minute changes was another strong theme. **Lack of connection** owing to being unable to take part in the 'other' things. **Data** also came up a lot from a staff perspective as we do not ask students to tell us they are parents, and so this data is not collected. Some staff were also unsure about which students were carers and what they would do if they did know, but it is noted that the central Widening Participation Team is putting more training in place, and that alongside the new Student Support Model might close some of this knowledge gap.

Curriculum

At UG level, more likely to be a mature student or an adult learner, or adult returner, therefore may be **more likely to need confidence boost in academic skills and in the academic setting**.

Over-assessment in some courses.

Mis-match between what we 'sell' in terms of courses and university as (flexible, fitting around life and work), and the reality.

Attendance

When circumstances (short-term or longer) prevent **attendance at class**, and how we treat those situations. Additionally, the knock-on that missing classes can have on assessments in not having the requisite knowledge from those classes.

Lack of attendance, or gaps in attendance, is exacerbated if we consider that increasingly assessment is now linked to being present and engaging since more and more assessment includes a **participation component**.

Attendance at 'extras' e.g., anything outwith the timetabled class time, including **groupwork, socials, summer exam diets, academic skills, career opportunities** etc.

Ability to take up (or not) **placements** as part of course owing to not being able to be away from family home. Any workarounds put in place by the university (paying for alternative accommodation, hire cars) are expensive and ad hoc.

Illness of the cared-for child or person – no university provisions in place for longer-term situations other than Authorised Interruption of Study, and financial implications thereof. Student might not be able to afford to take the time out, so might drop out instead.

Being less able to cope with changes to classes, sessions, venues. They have less flexibility therefore change is hard if not impossible.

We need to have **teaching and exam timetables provided** as early and as accurately as possible. Currently this then clashes with the need for students to have adjustments put in place given the increasing volume of students who require adjustments.

Lack of flexibility in learning and teaching arrangements – lectures may be recorded but workshops/tutorials/practicals not.

Contacts and Relationships

A lot rests on students' **relationships with staff**, and with students building knowledge of how the university, college and/or school works.

The **dialogic 'checking in'** with students is gone (replaced by the central ESC system). It relies on students telling their story again to someone different unless it is something that would be 'flagged' by the central ESC team. Note that the Student Support model addresses this to some extent but also relies on the relationship and rapport built between Student Adviser and student, and so can be different across the institution.

Too much currently lies on **goodwill** and staff doing additional things ad hoc.

Differences in PhD supervision, e.g., some supervisors including a pastoral element to their support therefore greatly affecting the **consistency of approach** across the institution.

Data

If it's not on EUCLID, how can staff know about it? **How do we identify**?

How do we know who needs what support? How can we tailor on a more whole-scale basis than requiring every individual student to come and (repeatedly) tell us their story? Lack of ability of current ESC system to tell a story but rather patch things up.

Estate

Lack of child-friendly spaces on the campus. (Note the new carer and child space in the library as an example of travel in the right direction in this area, but only the start).

Staff and students gave examples of students told they **can't bring children onto campus**.

Finances

These groups of students are more likely than not to be 'commuter' students, defined broadly, may be more likely to be working alongside study and more likely to be managing multiple household bills.

Groups of students not eligible for tax-free childcare and while we note this is not a 'university' issue, it could be that the university should review any further support available.

International PhD students are ineligible for some forms of financial support, including childcare[5].

Identity and Belonging

The **impact all of this has on self-belief** when they know they're not performing to the right standard and can't demonstrate their abilities, skills, knowledge in ways they want. It affects them being able to view themselves as a student, affects their enjoyment of university experience, their learning.

Not wanting to be seen as difficult, but different, and their care and advice at university should be highly personal. Why do we not offer **more part-time from point of entry** rather than as a measure taken as a last resort?

Lack of chance to build a connection to other students – feeling and being treated as 'other'.

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[5] "Because I am (an international student), I do not qualify for any assistance in childcare. This has meant that I am both a full-time caregiver to my children while doing a PhD full time. Because I am unfunded, my partner works full time, so I am responsible for all of the care tasks with little time to work on my research during the day. This means that I have to wake up early (5am) and work all evening and all day on the weekends." (PhD candidate)

Students who have less time to join the 'other' bits of university and as a result may **miss out on that social and cultural capital development** that might then impact on careers and future decisions.

If students go through their whole university experience in 'crisis' mode, accessing 'exceptional' support and 'special' dispensations then how can they truly feel accounted for in our institution?

"(we have a) public duty to make our education accessible to this population of students. Reason some not doing well in the system is we make it quite difficult for them. We very much use a deficit approach of they need they need they need instead of looking at our systems." (Staff interviewee)

Feeling like a fish out of water, describing being in an alien environment.

Resources
Having **less space and time to study**. **Carers and parents are the two groups for whom potentially time and resource are most scarce.** In addition to time and space to prepare for class and study, it can be challenging to apply for the 'thing' they need – in essence, time can be a barrier to applying for the exact help they require.

Systems and processes

"You're here to study, these are the rules, get on with it but the rules are out of date." (Student participant)

Having to re-express and re-tell their story to justify absence or performance. Although this is mentioned elsewhere in this report, a big part of students feeling they have to share their information multiple times is the idea that systems and processes do not align in a way that supports sharing where they need it, e.g., having to tell Student Advisor even though they 'told' UCAS, having to tell Course Tutors, Wellbeing etc. Whether this is perception, communication or something else, it came up a lot in the context of systems and processes.

Also sometimes **having to share someone else's information**; the mental health, addiction, long-term condition, health of the person they care for. Might be reluctant to do so.

Not seeing their own situations as exceptional, or special, or a one-off as they might be a continuation. They always have that situation but **the only flex in our system is within ESC**, but they don't feel it fits them and in many cases it doesn't.

The 'patching' effect that ESC has doesn't allow a holistic look and staff can't then advise on e.g., how to proceed across a pattern of assessment and a few courses.

Flexible and part-time study can be available through College processes but not all students know that, nor do they have the time to apply and go through those procedures.

University's evidence requirement means we are often 'medicalising' things that don't have to be to fit our systems.

Trust[6]
We should trust our students but on the whole we don't – not in the same way we trust staff. Do we ask for too much evidence? Could we take more of a risk-based approach to the way we use certain types of adjustments?

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[6] "I know these students; I have worked with them and I know their lived experiences and I as a professional member of staff should be trusted to make the right judgement" (staff interviewee).

7. Current Practice
Question 2: Does your department/school/area currently do anything outwith that scope to support these students/you?
This question allowed us to get a sense of student and staff knowledge of what support was available, and what was broadly known about parent and carer provision within the university. The insights below are paraphrased from interview participants' answers.

Summary of staff and student answers

<u>Overall</u>

Edinburgh Cares featured a lot in the answers to this question, owing to their exemplary work with Student Carers. Creative use of regulations again tells a story - partly celebration of the colleagues willing to work on making the systems fit, and partly a call to make our systems fit better in the first place. Work of individual staff also features, which tells us there are pockets of great practice but also speaks to the inequity of experience if those individuals don't happen to be staff those students know or work with. Edinburgh Cares role working with and for Student Carers; might offer to do things for them as they might be time- and resource-poor. Instead of just signposting they offer to proactively do things for them, and are very transparent keeping the student involved and informed.

Edinburgh Cares excellent knowledge of external support to point students towards to: 1) Help them to stay at the university and 2) Improve their time here. That can make a huge difference whether that is direction towards external support providing respite care or a stream of funding through the resources they can pinpoint.

Edinburgh Cares: Identifying carers and their 'category' whether under 21, under 25, eligible for different levels of e.g., financial support.

University of Edinburgh Student Parent Group is an open, active listening space.

EUSA Student Parent Representative runs a Facebook Group and What's App Group, Student Parent Representative (currently Brenda Cundy) who can advise and signpost student parents.

University's **partnership with Togetherall**, who have developed a group for parents – not just for students, though – but that's an anonymised peer support but they have specific chat groups and support aimed at parents.

(**Individual staff**) often undertake advocacy work with student advisor, or the DLSS. Very often lead to the networks to contact. Very often get a response once staff involved where there were no replies to the student themselves. Consistency is needed.

Individual Schools using **mailing lists** for certain groups of students to highlight particular opportunities.

Alternative assessments a good example of an outcome of special circumstances that Colleges can approve.

IAD mindful of start and finish times of workshops, people with school runs, other caring etc, and extending the day is not helpful. Run some in morning, some lunch, some afternoon. That flex is quite important as is mixing online and in person.

Potential within the new **Curriculum Transformation** work – could be seen as a huge opportunity for openness and programmes can be stacked and part-time and full-time, and students can switch.

ESC teams picking up issues that require further signposting and support, e.g., linked to financial issues.

Schools being supportive and creative, and sometimes see them trying to work around regulations.

Use of **extensions**, and having extensions granted.

8. What is working well?

Question 3: What is working well about how (the university, your school, your department, a particular course) supports carer/parent/other status, and why?

This question allowed us to get a sense of good and best practice in this area. The insights below are paraphrased from interview participants' answers.

Summary of staff and student answers

Overall

Edinburgh Cares features as examples of best practice.

Edinburgh Cares' Weekly Newsletter[7] with' figuring out' opportunities in the uni and outwith.

Cross-university partnerships, e.g., those Edinburgh Cares team has built with The Advice Place, Wellbeing, Student Advisors, Academics, Accommodation and more.

Edinburgh Cares Committee, and their various events.

Authorised Interruption of Studies good for leave of absence and flexibility (but see financial implications, and using this as a solution to a system that doesn't fit every student).

Supportive implementation of policies by Colleges.

Working in **collaboration** across services and between schools.

Delivering on some of the **Working with Student Parents**, and Steve Anderson's (previous EUSA Student Parent Representative) work being transformative.

Colleagues being **understanding and flexible**, individual staff members helping people out, e.g., any flexibility around hand-in dates. Understanding and not being rigid.

Knowing that Student Advisors know what support is available for groups of students; training for our staff on these issues to increase awareness (though ongoing and difficult task in reaching everyone who needs training – training the managers.)

Advocacy on behalf of individual students.

Individual staff members **'working' the system** – using the flexibility that is built into the system. There are ways to be flexible around student policies and see what can be put in place but that requires confidence and understanding.

Drop-ins work well for students to be able to share concerns and ask questions.

Financial and emotional support[8]. Ease of applying for extensions[9].

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[7] "The 'Edinburgh Cares' emails are very helpful as sometimes the mental load of classes, caring, commuting and keeping in touch with friends means I am less likely to notice little events popping up, and can sometimes struggle with key dates which these emails are a great reminder for." (UG student)

[8] "I greatly value the financial and emotional support given to me by my university and have found that it has aided me throughout my caring duties." (UG student)

[9] *"They helped me apply for special circumstances when I needed. Once I was allowed to work on my own rather than in group. It was my highest 'group' mark. This should always be a possibility."* (UG student)

9. Recommendations

Question 4: What do you wish the university did to support your carer/parent status in relation to your learning and assessment, and why?

This question allowed us to come up with recommendations compiled from a broader understanding across all interviews and research. Interviewees and attendees were encouraged to be as bold as they liked and not to feel constrained.

They have been separated into two categories:

1) Recommendations for how we approach 'teaching adjustments' for students – immediate and longer term, and

2) Recommendations the findings provide for support for students beyond the perceived ESC gap.

Recommendation 1: how we approach 'teaching adjustments' for students – immediate and longer term:

Immediate: Implementation of a set of 'adjustments' applicable to students with caring responsibilities, allowing ease of application and supporting better data collection
In this scenario, eligible students would have access to a curated set of modifications (*essentially, adjustments but deliberately not using the word adjustments*) that they can apply to their courses as and when they need them.

Students would have their eligibility for these assessed once, by staff members in one or two (dependent on anticipated volume) newly-created roles who sit within Student Experience Services (SES) and work closely with colleagues from appropriate areas of the university, e.g., DLSS and Edinburgh Cares, and schools, including Student Advisers. There is overlap with work currently done by Edinburgh Cares in assessing student carers, so there is a need to coordinate and the role-holder would need to work closely with them It might be that this rollout of modifications packages causes more student carers to come forward to be identified. In that case it might be that the new roles in SES would help with the assessment of carers if the workload became more than the Edinburgh Cares team could take on. Data on student parents is not currently collected and verified so this would be a new collection and can sit with the one or two new roles. Student parents could show a birth certificate, or some form of formal documentation to show guardianship or adoption, for example.

Once verified the students have access to a suite of modifications that are appropriate for this group to use at their discretion. This will involve work with and across DLSS, EUSA and Edinburgh Cares, as well as central Student Experience Services, to get a sense of how this works in practice.

There is fairness built into this recommendation as we seek to rebalance the student experience for those who need these modifications in place. There is also in-built transparency in that the student carers and those with parental responsibilities are all eligible for this 'package'.

It is envisaged that we can pilot it with this group – those with caring responsibilities - while other background work goes on to identify other groups whose university experience would be made more equitable as a result. The adjustments available to them to be applied whenever they might need them include, e.g., extensions, flexibility in tutorial attendance, bookable room for study, arrangement of placements close to home, not sitting exams on consecutive days, requesting materials for unavoidable periods of absence, and more.

Broadly speaking, it could cover some adjustments the institution has experience of implementing, including under the headings of Extra Time, Information, Scheduling, Placement, Absence, Study Room and Teaching Practice. While these exist as sub-categories of adjustments used by the DLSS, it should be clear that there is no conflation of disability and other experiences. These 'modifications' as applied to students with caring responsibilities are ones that have been identified in collaboration with the relevant teams, and would require further fine-tuning if the recommendation is to be implemented

This would address some of the issues raised around the following:

- **flexibility** of **attendance**, and impact of missing classes
- the need for students to keep telling their story (and in some cases someone else's story), which causes undue stress and upset
- **data**, as we would have a place for students to declare their status
- **identity and belonging** as we have what the students need ready for them, rather than as an after-thought
- **contacts and relationships** as there is a clear place for students to go
- **resources** in terms of not having **space** at home to study
- **confidence** in academic skills as we would have a model that could be tailored a little more to students' needs. Sometimes just knowing we have the support waiting removes some of the stress.

This support package would to be developed in dialogue with Schools (and Colleges) as to the suitability of some modifications for certain programmes and courses, not just limited to the restrictions on professionally-qualifying courses but also taking into account practical attendance requirements and legislative regulations among other potential sticking points. It should be noted here that this package would need to be developed with Home Office regulations for sponsored students in mind and that there remain some limitations outwith the University's control.

There also needs to be a piece of work with central Student Services teams to think more broadly about the potential need to decide if there was a limit to how many times students can use e.g., extensions per academic year or semester. Additionally, it will be necessary to work with the Timetabling Team to get a sense of how the new timetabling system and its increased functionality could work alongside improved data collection to bring some of the 'modifications' to life, e.g., not sitting exams on consecutive days.

Taken even further, this package could seek to address some of the issues around student finance if we build in collaboration between the Financial Support Service and the roles suggested above; greater working between those teams might lead to more tailored and specialist support for these groups of students.

Longer term

- **Earlier release of timetables**, and less changing of teaching and exam timetables once set in place.
- **Recording of all lectures** to allow students to keep up with their studies where unavoidable life events prevent them from attending class. Some courses do this by default, and some do not; provision could be described as patchy in places. It would be good to work with schools to get a sense of what is recorded and what is not, and work out how to utilise the lecture capture function where it is lacking.

Recommendation 2: How can we provide support for students "Beyond the gap"?

- **Continuation and development of training** around what it means to be a carer or a student with parental responsibilities, and a **shifting of the perception of the responsibility** for 'looking out' for those groups from the Widening Participation team to all staff in our university community.

- More **funding** for childcare for students, and/or enhanced communication of what exists[10].

- Improve data collection, and explore the communications students currently receive about when and how to provide and/or update information related to their carer status. Related to that, explore the possible use of MyEd or the student record to prompt students to provide and/or update this information.

- Consider whether the imminent student case management tool might more broadly negate the need for students to have to retell their 'story.'

- **Cultural change,** and an overhaul of the way the institution (broadly) thinks about students.

  "Feels like we focus a lot on separate groups of students but broader changes are much harder to do and think about. Take a step back and look at the big picture. I do sometimes wonder if there are changes that could be done at that level?" (Staff interviewee)

- Provision of a drop-and-go, short-term stay (often described as IKEA-style) **creche facility** where children can be dropped off for short periods of time so that a student can go to class or get some work done. This came up in more than half of the interviews, and people described its life-changing possibilities. It can be the difference between a student attending class and not. It could involve students from Moray House who might require work experience for teaching qualifications (again, this has the potential to address its own issue of placements and needing to stay local).

- Reconsideration of the policy that prevents children from being brought onto campus.

- **Priority allocation of tutorials** and other classes outwith lectures.

- (Re?)Encouragement for Schools and Course Organisers of the power they have in tailoring modes and number of assessments etc to cater to their student demographics.

- Look into the overall assessment picture in terms of number of assessments, and the level to which the 'over-assessment' some interviewees spoke of exists across the institution.

- An extension of this piece of work looking into who else may be affected by the 'sticking plaster' approach we currently use, including detailed analysis and understanding of the experiences of a much wider range of students across multiple social and other identities. Building on this idea that the deficit model is no longer fit for purpose, and we must take stock, and look forward.

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[10] "Funding would make all of the difference. All of my issues could be solved with money. Funding for childcare would mean that I would have time to do my research during the day, have meetings, attend lectures, etc. It would have changed my life; being able to afford childcare would have alleviated stress, given me time to attend meetings/lectures, and allowed me to do more research, submit more publications, and engage with my peers." (PhD candidate). "I wonder if there is any recognition of the fact that students are not entitled to tax free childcare. This means we have to pay more for childcare than working parents." (UG student)

"Sometimes it's not about changing the light-bulb; sometimes you have to rewire the whole house."
(Staff interviewee)

10. Thanks, and acknowledgements

My thanks go to the students and staff who so generously gave of their time, and trusted me enough to share their experiences. I am indebted to you, and I hold your trust gratefully.

Students were represented across all areas of the university, and from undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research, part-time and full-time.

Separate thanks to the EUSA Sabbaticals and Representatives.

Staff represented all three colleges, and included College staff, College Office Bearers, and school staff. I also interviewed colleagues from university-wide services who represented areas including, Student Wellbeing teams, Institute for Academic Development, Registry Services and Widening Participation.

Thanks to Lucy Evans for coming to me with a problem and biting my hand off when I said 'Would you like a paper on how I would approach it?!' Let's make change together!

Brenda Cundy, EUSA Student Parent Representative, for the generous sharing of her survey data and summary report. Thanks for your flexibility, and your support.

Steve Anderson, previous EUSA Student Parent Representative, for informing some of my thinking without knowing it. What an influencer!

My critical friends for their insights and direction; you know who you are.

Acknowledgements and thanks to everyone who was the first to do anything; you have led and now others can follow. We see you.

Senate Education Committee

9 May 2024

Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030: Update on Development

Description of paper
1. This paper provides an update on progress with the development of the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030.

Action requested / recommendation
2. SEC are asked to discuss and approve the current direction of travel for the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030, and make recommendations for its continued development.

Background and context
3. The QAA ELIR 2021 review recommended: *"… in view of the current transition between the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2017 and future plans, the University should provide institutional oversight, and ensure clarity for staff, on the strategic direction underpinning current learning and teaching developments."*

4. The QAA QESR 2023 review strengthened the recommendation to develop a University Learning and Teaching Strategy requiring that: *"the University should expedite the final drafting, approval and implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy to help staff and students understand how major strategic projects work together and provide clarity on the strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching"*

5. This version of the Learning and Teaching Strategy takes into account discussions and suggestions from two workshops that took place at the end of 2023 with invited members of Senate Education Committee and the VP Students Leadership Portfolio Group. From those discussions, there was clear feedback that the Strategy should focus on the curriculum broadly and not only CTP as a project (recognising that CTP is a major project delivering on our ambitions for the curriculum); that staff needed to be more prominent in the Strategy (recognising that our staff are key to enhancing the curriculum and delivering inspiring teaching). Three key areas emerged as important: the curriculum, staff, students. The current version of the strategy has been developed around these three key areas.

6. Since the start of 2024 we have held discussions/consultations on this version of the Strategy with GaSP, IAD, Directors of Teaching Network, VP Students Portfolio Leadership Group, CAHSS Education Committee, CAHSS Quality Assurance Forum, CSE Education Committee, CSE Directors of Teaching Network, CMVM PGT Learning and Teaching Committee (including members of the CMVM UG Learning and Teaching Committee), Edinburgh Global Management Committee.

7. Further discussions/consultations are planned with EFI, Learning Technology Teams, Careers Service, Space Advisory Group, and the Curriculum Transformation Board. There will be opportunities for others not listed here. In addition, while student reps have been present at some committee meetings, we would like to engage with students further. There have also been suggestions to include employers in discussions, which we envisage can be facilitated via discussions with the Careers Service and Development and Alumni.

8. Responses from the discussions/consultations to date have generally been very positive, whilst noting there are still details to be developed, including how the Strategy will be implemented and evaluated. Overall, there appears to be support for the Strategy and endorsement of the three overarching purposes of the Strategy.

9. The remainder of this paper provides an overview of the current draft of the Learning and Teaching Strategy and outlines in brief the three key areas of focus and the corresponding sub-sections, which are being presented to SEC for approval to allow us to continue to develop the direction of travel, specifically focusing on details of implementation and evaluation.

Discussion

10. The Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030 is being developed to provide a roadmap to achieve the learning and teaching focused purpose of Strategy 2030, specifically that: **our teaching will match the excellence of our research. We will improve and sustain student satisfaction and wellbeing.**

11. The Learning and Teaching Strategy aligns with and supports the goals of Strategy 2030, that:
    a. We will support and promote teaching that focuses on experience, employability, and an understanding of the value of creativity, curiosity,

and even failure. We will encourage discussion and engagement with staff, students, and partners.

b. We celebrate our students making the world a better place. We will keep attracting and retaining ambitious students, maximising their potential to ensure that our graduates go on to achieve success in whatever they do, wherever they go.

c. We will widen participation so that students from any background can come to study with us. We will offer accessible, responsive and efficient educational services as well as personal, pastoral and professional support. We will encourage a culture of lifelong learning and attachment to our University community, letting every student know how much we value them, from the first time we meet them, to their graduation and for the rest of their lives.

d. We will not grow for growth's sake. We will improve our student experience while aiming to keep our undergraduate community at a stable size. In reshaping our teaching for the future, we expect to expand interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, postgraduate and digital education.

12. The purpose of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is to stimulate developments to our educational offer ensuring it remains fit to equip our students for the futures they will be entering, to promote and support inspiring teaching, and engage and empower our learners. These three core purposes of our Learning and Teaching Strategy are shaped by our institutional values set out in Strategy 2030 and underpinned by a set of enablers that support our learning and teaching processes, our students' wellbeing and academic development, and the development of our teaching staff.

13. **A Curriculum for the 21st Century:** As the external environment rapidly evolves, so too must our approaches to learning and teaching to ensure that our students are equipped with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to thrive in an

increasingly complex and changing world. Our curriculum will serve as a vehicle for transformation; a catalyst for personal growth, innovation and societal change. This includes a focus on:

a. **Disciplinary depth** (which may also be inter or multi-disciplinary) as the foundation of our degrees.
b. **Research led** ensuring that our teaching benefits from our research and our students are engaged in research.
c. **Challenge based** providing opportunities for our students to become immersed in real-world problems and address society's most pressing issues.
d. Underpinning our teaching with meaningful and **authentic assessment for learning** by aligning assessments closely with real-world challenges and tasks.
e. Increasing our opportunities for **experiential, reflective, and practice-based learning** where students are engaged in "doing"
f. **Embracing and harnessing digital and data** in both our delivery of teaching and in development of our students' skills.

Learning & Teaching Strategy 2030
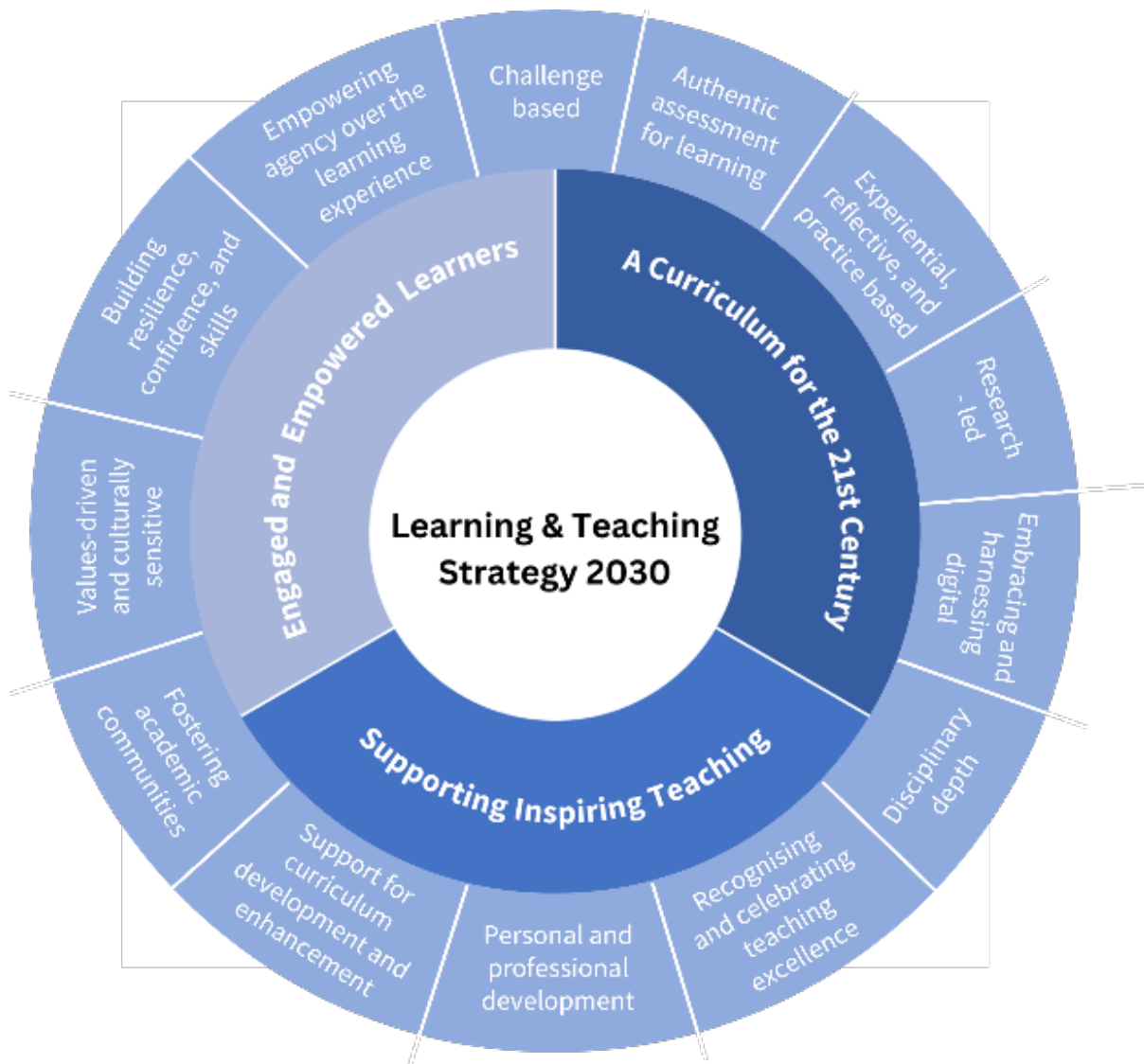
14. **Engaged and Empowered Learners:** To engage and empower learners we will support students, and promote and enable more student-centred active learning approaches where students have increased agency over their learning experience. This includes a focus on:

   a. **Empowering agency over the learning experience** enabling our students to become active participants in their own learning journey.
   b. Providing opportunities for **challenge-based** learning that equip our students to become agents of innovation and change.
   c. **Building resilience, confidence, and skills** to equip our students to develop the attitudes, skills and attributes they need to succeed academically and professionally.

     d. Fostering **values driven and culturally sensitive** learners prepared to navigate an interconnected world with empathy, respect, and integrity.

     e. **Fostering academic communities** both peer-to-peer and student-staff to support personal and academic growth and cultivate a sense of belonging and inclusion.

15. **Supporting Inspiring Teaching:** Our staff are key to delivering an inspiring learning and teaching experience. We will create an environment where they are supported to succeed, empowered to be creative, and provided with opportunities for professional development and growth. This includes a focus on:

     a. Opportunities for and engagement in ongoing **personal and professional development.**

     b. **Recognising and celebrating teaching excellence** and sharing insights to inspire others.

     c. **Fostering academic communities** to create a vibrant, collaborative and supportive learning and teaching environment.

     d. Providing **support for curriculum development and enhancement** to enable our colleagues to develop their teaching and be innovative.

     e. Harnessing the **disciplinary depth** (also inter- and multi-disciplinary) and expertise of our staff and their research to inspire and challenge students.

16. A more detailed version of the Strategy can be seen at the following link. This is for information. We are not asking SEC to approve the detailed paper, which requires further development, including linking to other University strategies, and further consultation. SEC is being asked at this stage only to approve the three core purposes of the Strategy and the priorities underneath them: https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/TeachingLearningStrategy2030

Resource implications

17. Currently, there are no significant resource implications in the development of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. However, there will be resource implications in considering the implementation of the Strategy. These will be considered in the further development of the Strategy and will determine the implementation plans for the Strategy.

Risk management

18. There is a risk to learning and teaching and the student experience in not having a Learning and Teaching Strategy in place. Without a Strategy the University lacks a unified direction in its education goals and we may fail to achieve our ambition set out in Strategy 2030. A lack of a Strategy may also result in ineffective resource allocation. There is a further risk that without a Strategy we fail to meet the recommendations from the QESR leading to consequences in our next external review.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

19. Once completed, the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030 will contribute to the following SDGs:

 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
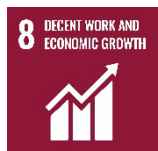
 Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

Equality & diversity

20. Equity, diversity and inclusion have been, and continue to be, major considerations of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. EDI is a core value underpinning Strategy 2023 and the Learning and Teaching Strategy. An EqIA will be conducted for a fuller version of the strategy.

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

21. Following approval of the current direction of travel, the following timeline will be implemented:
    a. End of May – finish first round of meetings with University departments, including with EFI, Learning Technology Teams, Space Advisory Group, and the Curriculum Transformation Board.
    b. Late June – all feedback will be consolidated and a revised Strategy will be drawn up.
    c. Mid-August – consultation will be conducted across the University in the implementation and evaluation of the Strategy.

    d. September – all consultation feedback will be consolidated and a final version of the strategy will be presented to the first SEC of AY 25/26.

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25/04/2024

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Freedom of Information
This paper is open, and the draft strategy documents are available on the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030 Sharepoint. We are encouraging staff across the institution to read through the current documentation and provide feedback at each stage of the process.
https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/TeachingLearningStrategy2030

Senate Education Committee

9 May 2024

Update on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Learning and Teaching

Description of paper
This paper provides an update for information on the participation in the University's CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching. This Framework was reaccredited by AdvanceHE (formerly Higher Education Academy) in 2023 against the new Professoinal Standards Framework. The period of accreditation runs until 2027. Participation in all elements of the CPD Framework (Postgraduate certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP), Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA) and Introduction to Academic Practice (IntroAP)) stalled during the pandemic but has picked up again. While we have capacity to increase numbers on the PgCAP, the University level EdTA is running at full capacity with waiting lists.

The Framework supports participants to work with students to meet the following outcomes from the Strategy 2030:

- The undergraduate curriculum will support breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it.
- Multidisciplinary postgraduate education pathways will support flexible whole-life learning.
- Our teaching will match the excellence of our research. We will improve and sustain student satisfaction and wellbeing.
- We will support and promote teaching that focuses on experience, employability and an understanding of the value of creativity, curiosity, and even failure. We will encourage discussion and engagement with staff, students and partners.

Action requested / recommendation
The Committee is asked to note the paper and comment on the requests of the committee (under looking ahead).

Background and context
This paper provides an update on participation in the University's Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching. This Framework was requested by Learning and Teaching Committee in 2012, accredited by AdvanceHE in 2013, and reaccredited in 2017 and 2023. The 2023 accreditation was the first to use the updated Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (PSF). The accreditation period runs until 2027. The provision within the Framework is intended to provide relevant and flexible professional development for all University staff involved in teaching or supporting learning at any point in their careers. The Framework is delivered in collaboration with Schools and Support Services. Gaining professional recognition

from AdvanceHE provides national recognition for colleagues of their commitment to core knowledge, areas of activities and professional values expected of colleagues involved in teaching and learning in higher education. The three main pathways by which this recognition will be achieved are the Introduction to Academic Practice (IntroAP), the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP) and the Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA). A fourth pathway in Clinical Education is available to participants in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. An overview of our entire CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching is provided in the Figure 1 below.

Fig 1. UoE Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching
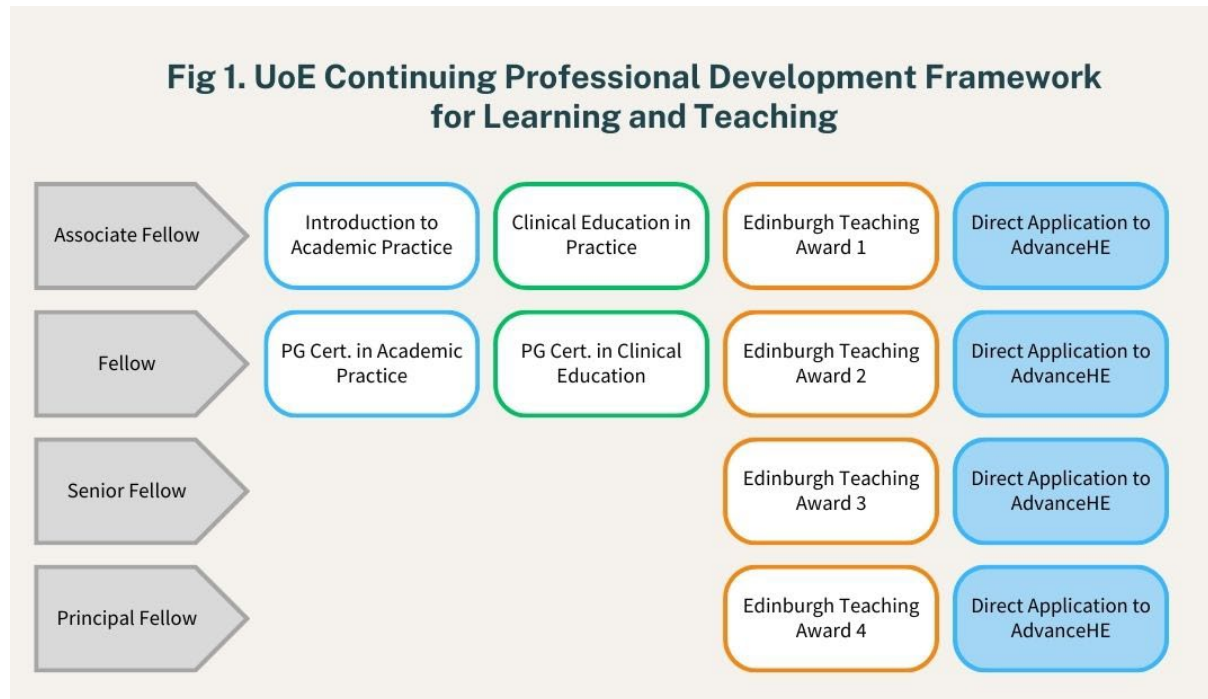
The Framework

IntroAP provides a non-credit bearing taught route to Associate Fellowship of AdvanceHE for experienced tutors and demonstrators as well as technicians and other staff involved in supporting learning.

The PGCAP provides a credit bearing route to Fellowship and is aimed at academic and other staff with a substantive role in teaching or supporting learning.   Most participants are at a relatively early point in their career.

The EdTA is designed to provide a manageable and flexible portfolio route to AdvanceHE accreditation and covers all four categories of Fellowship. It is aimed at all colleagues, including those in professional services, who are contributing to the student learning experience at any stage in their careers. All participants are supported by dedicated mentors from across the institution. The central scheme, run by the IAD, is augmented by some local school mentoring schemes.

All three pathways are well received by participants and external examiners.

In addition to the three pathways a small number of staff also choose to gain Fellowship directly through Advance HE. Successful candidates are automatically recorded by Advance HE as part of the UoE completion records.

Participation in the Framework

a) Participation in the EdTA and PgCAP

Participation in the EdTA and the PgCAP has remained generally stable in recent years, with the exception of a dip in numbers during the pandemic (see Figure 2). This suggests the continued willingness of staff to participate in accredited provision.

Participation in the Edinburgh Teaching Award was stable at around 200 participants until AY 2020/21 (see Figure 2) when it started to drop as a result of the pandemic. It fell from a steady state of around 200 participants per year on the central and existing School mentoring schemes. Numbers are increasing again to over 180 in AY23/24 and demand regularly exceeds capacity; we typically run a waiting list for the central provision from some months before each intake. Growth in the number or scale of local mentoring schemes may result in participation numbers increasing further beyond AY 23/24.

Participants tell us that finding time is the biggest barrier to full participation in the PGCAP and EdTA, and this was exacerbated by Covid. We are getting regular comments from participants in the PGCAP and EdTA (and also from EdTA mentors) about the lack of recognition of this work in many School workload allocation models. The precarious working lives of some of our colleagues is also a factor, with some of those on short contracts leaving before they are able to complete. Some colleagues may be able to use what they completed on the PCGAP as Recognition of Prior Learning into programmes in new institutions in these cases.

Fig 2 Participation in the EdTA (levels 2-4) and PGCAP (AY12/13 to AY23/24)
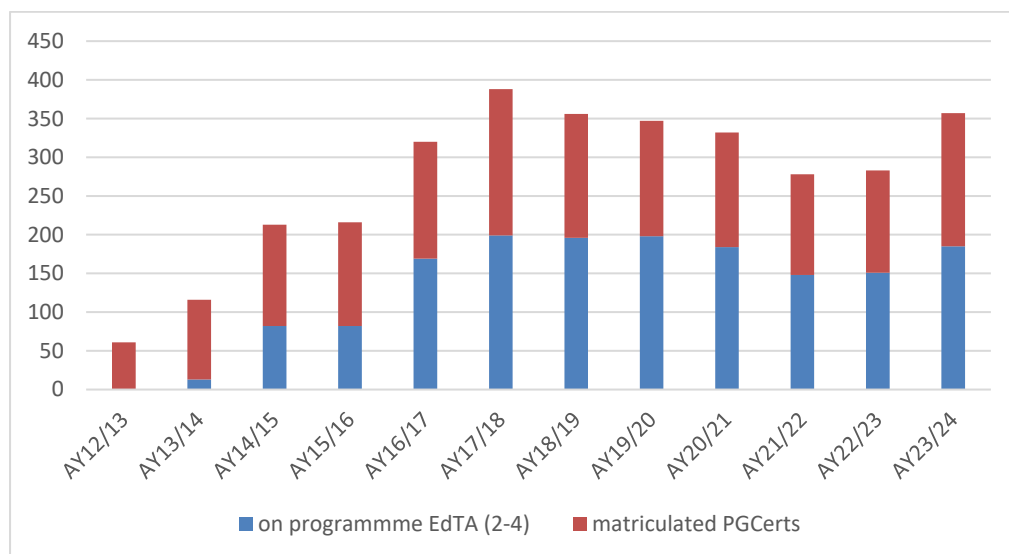
The number of colleagues participating in the full PGCAP peaked in AY17/18 and has since fallen. We skipped one intake in AY20/21 as a result of the pandemic and

we are seeing the effects of this in the lower completions for AY22/23.   Participation in the PgCAP rose in AY23/24 and there are now 172 participants. Completions on the EdTA also dropped in AY20/21, as a result of additional workload pressures linked to the pandemic. Participants who do not complete the PGCAP or the EdTA typically cite time pressures as the main barriers. Increasing numbers of participants on the PgCAP are also citing medical reasons for asking for extensions to submission dates or to the end of their period of study.

Fig 3 In year completions for the EdTA (levels 2-4) and PGCAP (AY12/13 to AY23/24)
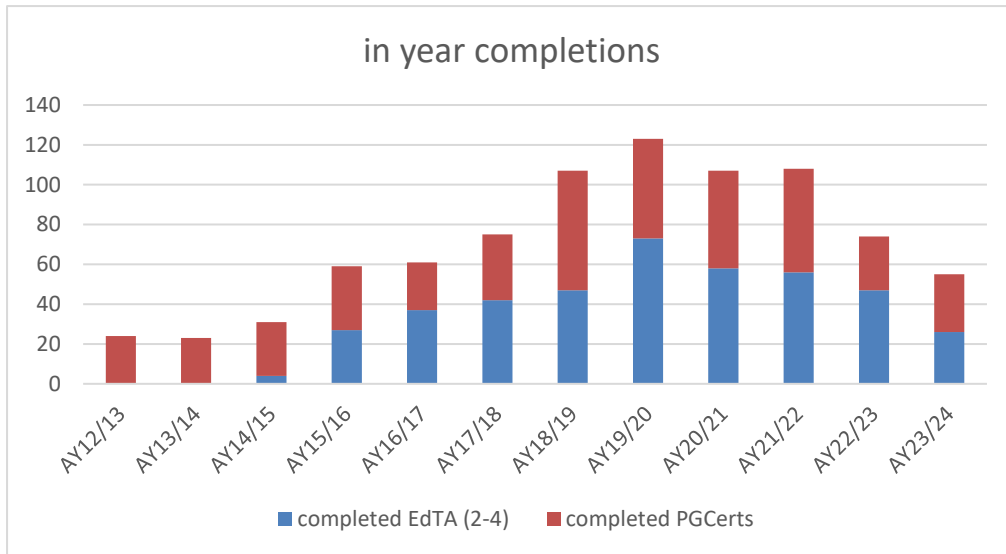
b) Participation in IntroAP

Completion data for the Introduction to Academic Practice are provided in Figure 4 along with completion data for the EdTA category 1. Around 70 participants complete IntroAP each year. The excellent completion rates for IntroAP of around 95% reflect the close support given to participants by the IntroAP team. Other influences on completion are that tutors and demonstrators may have slightly less time pressures than other staff and do not yet have secure careers thus providing another incentive to secure an accredited award. Recruitment to the IntroAP is buoyant and the intake is running at capacity. We operate a waiting list and this involves applicants who want to come on IntroAP but who have not as yet met the eligibility criteria. Due to a member of staff leaving the University we did not run IntroAP in semester one of AY23/24 hence there are no completions as yet for this year.   We cap the number of EdTA participants for category 1 in order to prioritise spaces on this oversubscribed provision for academic staff rather than tutors and demonstrators. We also offer workshops on tutoring and demonstrating to a larger numbers of participants (over 300 each year).

Fig 4. Completion of the IntroAP and EdTA Category 1 (AY13/14 to AY23/24)
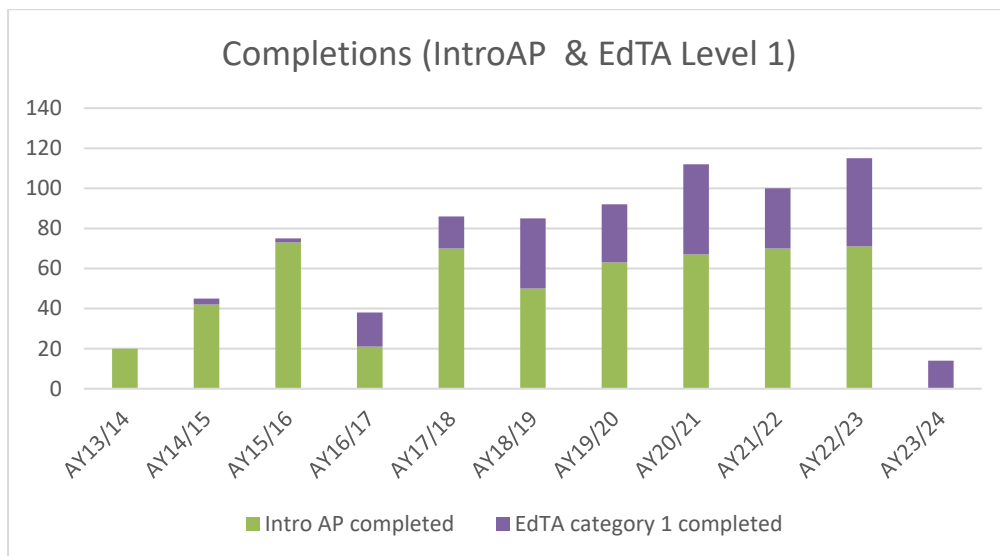
Looking ahead

Now that the CPD Framework has been fully reaccredited we are looking to the period until AY26/27 to consolidate and enhance it. In looking to the future we will be guided by the University's strategic priorities including the Teaching and Learning Strategy, Quality and Enhancement Standards Review, the Curriculum Transformation Programme, the QAA Quality Code and the return of the work around Teaching Cultures. Our priority is to ensure that we increase participation and completion rates on all pathways. We know that conditions are challenging for staff, with workload issues being difficult, but we would like ask Education Committee to note our suggestions on the way forward.

This paper is the first step in a consultation process with the learning and teaching community about their aspirations for the Framework. We will work collaboratively with Directors of Learning and Teaching and other stakeholders to further enhance the Framework. It is important that the Framework contributes to the upskilling of staff to be able to provide excellent teaching, as well as to the recognition, reward and support of teaching within academic careers.

IntroAP is in a secure position, and we are anticipating that the enhanced structure, based on four seminars which embed the PSF, will work well. We will build on existing good practice given the continued positive feedback and evidence of good outcomes in the assessment results. We are mindful of the good reputation the course enjoys and are keen to see the course grow and develop to continue to meet high expectations and best serve our participants. We have enough staff resources to have an intake of 40 participants each semester.

For the PGCAP we would like to ensure that the Programme is meeting the University's strategic objectives to ensure that teaching meets the same standards as research as well as equipping our participants to develop their careers in learning

and teaching. We are also mindful of preparing participants to teach in the post-Covid university as well as introducing them all to debates around collaborative learning, co-creation of the curriculum, curriculum design and development, inclusion and digital education.   The new Programme is in the first year of delivery. We hope that the move to three linked 20 credit compulsory courses will ensure that completion rates are improved as well as allowing us to streamline our teaching and make some efficiency gains. For our first intake we deliberately kept numbers low (38 participants) but we expect to admit up to 100 participants at the next intake in AY24/25. Now that the Programme is running fully on-line we expect to recruit participants from our partner institutions in India and China. The first participants from Gujurat Biotechnology University will start in AY25/26.

The PgCAP is the only part of the Framework where we have capacity currently to admit more participants. We would ask Education Committee to raise the profile of the Programme to help us recruit more staff and to ensure that participants are given the workload allocation they need to complete on time.

The EdTA is now in a mature phase and we will be making only minor enhancements as overall the scheme is working well and participants report high satisfaction. The supporting workshops for participants and the training and update events for mentors and assessors will continue to be provided throughout the year. A priority is the training for assessors on using the new PSF because without the training they cannot assess the participants' work. The low numbers of trained assessors (26 in total) is contributing to our waiting lists. The scheme is running with a waiting list of a few months. For the November intake in AY24/25 we have 50 confirmed attendees and 25 on the waiting list. We now have a secure pool of mentors and our priority is to increase our pool of assessors. One stumbling block is that colleagues who become mentors and assessors are often giving their time without any allocation from their WAMs. We suggest that assessing and mentoring on the EdTA be recognised in WAM so that we can recruit more colleagues to these roles.

Local mentoring schemes are operating within four schools across the University. These are run in partnership between Schools and the IAD, and give an opportunity to provide mentorship with a closer fit to local needs and to secure greater interest in applying for different categories of fellowship locally. There is strong appetite across the Schools to support new local mentoring schemes. Appendix 1 sets out the conditions and resources required if Schools are to develop these schemes.

Resource implications
The following context suggests that we may see further demand for the different parts of the CPD Framework:
- The University desire to develop excellent teaching
- Meeting the requirements of the QAA Quality Code for sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- The requirements of the Curriculum Transformation Programme
- The wish to enhance support for teaching career development and progression

If the University wishes to increase participation in the CPD Framework and the achievement of professional recognition for teaching, there are several resource implications:

1. To ensure that participants have time for participation in these programmes this needs to be built into workload allocation
2. To ensure that there are sufficient mentors and assessors on the EdTA, this activity needs to be built into workload allocation
3. There may be a future need to invest in more capacity within the IAD to run and support any significant increase in participation, especially on IntroAP and the EdTA.

Risk management

The key risk is that workload pressures make it difficult for sufficient colleagues to participate. This has been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

The Framework contributes to SDG 4 on Quality Education to Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Equality & diversity

1. An equality impact assessment has been conducted on the Framework. The PSF has equality and diversity as part of its professional values. All of the Framework is underpinning by these including:
   V1 respect individual learners and diverse groups of learners
   V2 promote engagement in learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their potential.

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

The IAD will continue to work with colleagues across the University to build participation in the Framework and collect further evaluation data.

Author
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24 April 2024

Presenter
Hazel Christie

Freedom of Information: Open

Appendix 1: Scaling up the EdTA via local mentoring schemes

There is strong appetite amongst the Schools for running local mentoring schemes (LMS) for the EdTA as a way to scale up provision and to invest in staff training and development. These LMSs are run in partnership between Schools and the IAD, and give an opportunity to provide a closer fit to local needs and to secure greater buy-in locally. They offer a local route to fellowship at D1 and D2. HoS are keen to prioritise LMS as a way to develop staff expertise but in order to do so they should be comfortable in making an investment in both people and time.

There are several conditions that IAD stipulate must be met when implementing LMSs. These relate to the running of the schemes, the workload allocation and the provision of assessors for the central EdTA. These are all intrinsic to the success of the LMS and require investment by Schools.

For a local mentoring scheme to run there are five conditions which Schools must meet:

1. There must be a named lead for an EdTA LMS
2. The named lead must hold at least a D2 Fellowship
3. All mentors must have undertaken training on the PSF 2023 by the EdTA Academic Lead before commencing their duties
4. All mentors and named leads must attend EdTA mentor updates once a year.
5. EdTA LMSs must provide all participants with the IAD produced EdTA category Handbooks and AHE guidance document

Consideration should be given to the workload implications of running an LMS. Heads of School should be comfortable with allocating time for the management of the local scheme and for the mentoring process to take place as follows:
1. Time allocated to the named lead for the LMS to manage the scheme, develop local materials and to run supportive and informative sessions (approximately 50 hours per year)
2. Local mentors need time to attend IAD training, meet with mentees and provide feedback on fellowship portfolios (30 hours)
3. Mentees need time to attend local training, draft their portfolios and to meet with their mentor (60 hours)

All portfolios will be assessed through the central EdTA including those on a LMS. Trained assessors are required for this process, and these will need to be supplied by the Schools as follows:
- For every 10 mentees within a LMS the School provides one trained assessor for the central scheme
- The assessor will require workload allocation of 20 hours for training, assessing and attending panel meetings in each year.
- Assessors would only be required to assess work for one panel per year.

Senate Education Committee

9 May 2024

Postgraduate Research Culture Action Plan

Description of paper
1. This paper presents the Postgraduate Research Culture Action Plan which fleshes out and contextualises (for postgraduate research) the commitments made to improvement of research cultures through the University Research Cultures Action Plan (RCAP).
2. This paper contributes to Strategy 2030 in the areas of Research and People.

Action requested / recommendation
3. For information and comment.

Background and context
4. In February 2023 the University published its first [Research Cultures Action Plan (RCAP)](). RCAP reflects the University's commitment to foster an environment in which research, researchers, and those that support them, can thrive. The plan recognises the essential role of postgraduate researchers as contributors to the wider research community.
5. In spring 2023 the RCAP Delivery Group agreed that a complimentary Postgraduate Research Cultures Plan should be drawn up to address the specific needs of the postgraduate research environment.
6. The plan is organised under the five main drivers of the University Research Cultures Action Plan (Career Pathways and Progression,Targeted Support, Responsible Research, Communication and Engagement, Governance and Data). Under each of these, the plan sets out the main known challenges and issues for postgraduate research cultures at Edinburgh, summarises some of the work already ongoing or started, addresses the specific deliverables for each driver as set out in the RCAP and identifies areas for future development.
7. The plan has undergone a number of iterations and has been consulted on via a range of different routes. From March 2023 to March 2024, a number of different consultative activities with a range of stakeholders fed into this work.

Resource implications
8. This plan will constitute part of the wider Research Cultures Action Plan implementation work and will fall under the remit of the RCAP Delivery Group. The recently appointed Head of Research Cultures will chair this group and the new University Postgraduate Research Lead (Antony Maciocia) will sit on this group and have oversight of the PGR plan. The PGR lead will work closely with the Doctoral College to ensure implementation. The existing structure of the Doctoral College and its themes provide a framework for the implementation of

this plan. The named lead (or co-lead) in each theme will sponsor implementation of the deliverables which sit most closely within their theme. Where an area for improvement has been identified but will require resource or ownership not yet identified, it has been included in the future areas for development.

Risk management
9. Failure to address the actions in this plan will have likely negative implications for the improvement of postgraduate research cultures. This has implications for PGR student experience.
10. The proposed implementation of this plan will address risk management.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals
11. N/A

Equality & diversity
12. The actions in this plan support improvements in equality and diversity. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as appropriate for implementation of this plan.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
13. No specific action is requested but comments and suggestions from SEC will be fed back via the Doctoral College, Research Strategy Group, Research Cultures Delivery Group and College PGR committees.

Author
Patrick Hadoke (CMVM) and Fiona Philippi (Institute for Academic Development) on behalf of the Doctoral College

Presenter
*Paddy Hadoke
Antony Maciocia*

Freedom of Information: Open

Appendix

University of Edinburgh
Postgraduate Research (PGR) Cultures Plan (DRAFT)

Introduction

Postgraduate researchers are vital to our success as a leading research-intensive University. They form a large and varied community and bring new approaches, insights and creativity which enrich our research and environment. However, research is highly pressured, and for postgraduate researchers who are at the beginning of their careers this can be particularly challenging. It is well-documented that isolation, insecurity and difficulties in supervisory relationships are factors which contribute to a high prevalence of health problems and anxiety in this population (Hazell et al. 2021). It is also known that postgraduate researchers themselves often feel dissatisfied with aspects of research culture, such as a perceived lack of opportunities to become involved in the wider teaching and research communities[1]. Recent studies have also highlighted how these challenges are particularly acute for postgraduate researchers from diverse backgrounds (QAA 2023). At Edinburgh, we are proud of the diversity of our postgraduate researchers and recognise the need to equip our support structures to support them effectively.

The need to take positive action to address these challenges and to improve research environments has become a priority at international, UK and institutional levels. Of particular focus are supervisory support and training (including routes for relevant and targeted continuous professional development and supervisory recognition and reward), support for interdisciplinary researchers, and researchers from diverse backgrounds, and a pressing need to prepare postgraduate researchers for a wide range of careers (SFC 2021, UKCGE 2022, UKRI 2023).

At Edinburgh, we have a strong sense of the main challenges in postgraduate research cultures, gained from our student representatives, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and Pulse survey responses, and various other forums. These largely align with the wider nationally and internationally recognised challenges outlined above, but there is a particular emphasis on the difficulties around community building, understanding and communicating effectively with a diverse postgraduate research population, and setting and managing expectations for students and supervisors.

The University of Edinburgh Research Cultures Action Plan recognises the essential role of postgraduate researchers as contributors to the wider research community and reiterates the University's responsibility to foster a culture in which researchers are encouraged, supported and recognised. The deliverables in this plan are closely aligned to the University Research Cultures Action Plan.

This plan outlines a number of areas of priority for improving the research cultures experienced by postgraduate researchers. These have been selected as a result of consultation and evidence gathering from across the University. As such, this plan deliberately does not try to cover all areas of postgraduate researcher experience, rather it focuses on a selection of key areas which impact most

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[1] Satisfaction with research culture consistently scores lower than other areas in the UK wide Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). This is also the case at Edinburgh, where overall satisfaction in 2023 with this area was 57.3%.

significantly on culture. In doing so, it identifies clear deliverables which will bring about change. The plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

There are other significant pieces of work at the University which are important to consider along with this plan as they have impact on the postgraduate research student experience. These include:

- Work on Tutors and Demonstrators
- Student Support Model
- Stipends and Fees

The Doctoral College and PGR Research Cultures

The Doctoral College was founded at Edinburgh in 2020 and is a coordinating structure for all postgraduate researchers and supervisors across the institution. It operates as a team of around 200 staff involved with postgraduate researchers from across the Schools, Colleges and services. It does not have dedicated resource via staff, budget or time buyout for staff. The College Deans act as Doctoral College academic leads and are supported in their roles by the College offices. The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) provides support in coordinating the Forum and the Management Group and other related activities but does not presently have dedicated resource to support Doctoral College administration. Despite the lean model, the Doctoral College has successfully shaped policy, process and student experience over the last four years.

The strategic aims of the Doctoral College relate to improvement of research cultures. These are:

- Promote and facilitate the exchange of expertise to support and improve the postgraduate student experience
- Raise the profile of postgraduate research across the University
- Coordinate support for postgraduate researchers and supervisors across the institution
- Lead on national and international debates and initiatives in doctoral education

The University of Edinburgh is a large, devolved structure and the Doctoral College recognises the strength of tailored local level support and community-building initiatives, which are underpinned by clear and consistent frameworks, communication and connections across the institution. This structure fosters the sharing of good practice, through regular meetings of the Doctoral College Forum.

The work of the Doctoral College is organised into six themes (listed below). Each of these has a named lead from within the Doctoral College Management group[2]:

- ➢ Experience and Development
- ➢ Wellbeing
- ➢ Administration
- ➢ Scholarships and Fees
- ➢ Communities
- ➢ Research Strategy

Improving cultures for postgraduate research underpins many of these themes and this plan demonstrates the ongoing commitment to building on existing progress and making changes which will have a positive and visible impact across the postgraduate researcher community.

How this plan was developed

Improving research cultures is a complex process and change takes time. The writers of this plan acknowledge this and have been careful to ensure that the deliverables outlined here reflect the priorities for change as shared across our postgraduate research communities and the staff who

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[2] Further information on this structure can be found on the Doctoral College webpages

support them. From March 2023 to March 2024, a number of different consultative activities with a range of stakeholders fed into this work:

➢ Doctoral College Staff Forum April and June 2023, March 2024
➢ Doctoral College Town Hall meeting for all Postgraduate Researchers June 2023
➢ Research Cultures Forum March 2024
➢ Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) responses 2023
➢ College Postgraduate Committee discussions
➢ Input from Doctoral College student representatives
➢ Discussions with professional services

The input from these activities has been systematically gathered and commonalities and priorities have been identified by the Doctoral College working group. The result of this is a comprehensive and ambitious, yet achievable, set of deliverables which work across the existing themes of the Doctoral College and feed into the wider University Research Cultures Action Plan.

How the plan will be implemented

This plan will constitute part of the wider Research Cultures Action Plan implementation work and will fall under the remit of the RCAP Delivery Group. The recently appointed Head of Research Cultures will chair this group and the new University Postgraduate Research Lead will sit on this group and have oversight of the PGR plan. The PGR lead will work closely with the Doctoral College to ensure implementation. The existing structure of the Doctoral College and its themes provide a framework for the implementation of this plan. The named lead (or co-lead) in each theme will sponsor implementation of the deliverables which sit most closely within their theme. Each deliverable requires the input and commitment of at least one owner, and to comprehensively deliver on this plan there is a need for additional dedicated resource in some areas. Where this is the case, it is clearly indicated in this plan. Careful consideration will be given to how success is measured for each of these deliverables.

The reporting and reviewing expectations for this plan are outlined in the final section of this document.

How the plan is structured

The plan is organised under the five main drivers of the University Research Cultures Action Plan;

1. Career Pathways and Progression
2. Targeted Support
3. Responsible Research
4. Communication and Engagement
5. Governance and Data

Under each of these, we set out the main known challenges and issues for postgraduate research cultures at Edinburgh, summarise some of the work already ongoing or started, address the specific deliverables for each driver as set out in the RCAP and identify areas for future development. It is vital that the initial work identified under this plan is realistic and achievable and we have taken care to ensure that this is the case. Where an area for improvement has been identified but will require resource or ownership not yet identified, we have included it in the future areas for development.

1. Career pathways and progression

Known challenges and issues

- PGRs and supervisors often lack awareness of different career pathways
- Career planning is not systematically built into PGR degrees across the institution
- Professional development and training are not systematically recorded
- Supporting timely completion for PGRs

What is already happening?

- We offer dedicated Careers Support for all PGRs through our Careers Service. This covers preparation for all types of careers. This is complemented by training for professional development offered by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) and through local level activity.
- The Careers Service oversees a Graduate Outcomes Survey which collects data 15 months after graduation
- We are committed to the introduction of a PGR Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR).
- A cross-institutional team led by IAD is developing a new Development Needs Analysis for PGRs.
- Support a wide range of internship and placement opportunities

Commitments under the Research Cultures Action Plan (RCAP) 2023			
Deliverable	**Timescale**	**Owner**	**Doctoral College theme**
Promote and publicise initiatives which showcase different PhD career pathways (e.g. annual PhD Horizons Conference)	2023/24 - 2025/26	Careers Service, Doctoral College	Experience and Development
Promote and publicise Platform One as a resource for PGRs to meet others, network and find mentors	2023/24 - 2025/26	Development and Alumni, Doctoral College	Experience and Development
Incorporate career-related questions into the annual review forms for PGRs	2023/24	Student Systems, Doctoral College	Administration
Promote the development of structured career development plans for all PGRs	2023/24 - 2025/26	Careers Service, IAD, Doctoral College	Experience and Development
Undertake a feasibility study of introducing a student 'exit survey' to monitor experience and career intentions.	2023/24 - 2025/26	Careers Service, Doctoral College	Experience and Development
Introduce a PGR Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR), Undertake a pilot study to assess scope and scale (2023/24)	2023/24 - 2025/26	Provost's Office (Students)	Administration

Publish and promote guidance and processes (2024/25) Launch PGR HEAR (2025/26)			

Future areas for development (contingent on resource/ buy-in etc.)

- Gather data and information on PGR mentoring schemes or equivalent at Edinburgh
- Investigate ways to increase resource for core Careers Support for PGRs
- Evaluate the feasibility study of introducing an exit survey for PGRs and identify next steps

2. Targeted support

Known challenges and issues

- Processes, systems and policies do not always represent the increasing diversity in the PGR population
- There is a lack of recognition and reward of good supervisory practice
- There is a lack of recognition and resolution of inappropriate supervisory practice
- Where breakdowns in relationships occur between students and supervisors, lack of understanding of expectations is a common cause

What is already happening?

- Supervisor briefings are held regularly at local level across the institution. Briefing content is co-ordinated through the Doctoral College.
- IAD has updated and relaunched the mandatory online course for PhD supervisors, Fundamentals of PhD Supervision, aligning with the UKCGE supervisory framework and integrating with People and Money to ensure consistent recording of completion
- IAD has invested in a new academic developer post who will partly focus on supervisor support and training
- The Doctoral College supported an internship project into widening participation in recruitment for PGRs which resulted in a series of videos of PGR stories which can be used by Schools.

Commitments under the Research Cultures Action Plan (RCAP) 2023

Deliverable	Timescale	Owner	DC theme
Strengthen supervisor professional development through design and implementation of a supervision framework (which includes opportunities for peer support/ recognition of professional development)	2023/24-2025/26	IAD, Doctoral College	Experience and Development
Develop work already started by the Doctoral College in 2021 on widening participation and inclusion for postgraduate researchers	2023/2024 - 2025/26	College PGR Deans	Experience and Development

Future areas for development (contingent on resource/ buy-in etc.)

- Review targeted support for specific groups of PGRs (eg. Disabled researchers, researchers from Black and Ethnic Minority backgrounds, researchers who are parents or carers, international researchers)
- Develop communities of practice for PhD supervisors
- Develop a structure of coaching skills training for supervisors
- Build on the widening participation work for PGRs
- Investigate the feasibility of 360 degree feedback for PGRs and supervisors

3. Responsible research

Known challenges and issues

- Devolved institution and different models of PhD means there are differences in expectations and provision in research ethics and integrity training and support at local level
- Rapidly changing landscape means AI technology and ethics is a fast-moving area and it is difficult for University processes and systems to keep up with changes and how they relate to PGR

What is already happening?

- IAD has developed a comprehensive online introductory course for Research Ethics and Integrity which is suitable for all PGRs
- The Research Data Service offers a wide range of relevant support for PGRs in research data management
- Edinburgh hosts an annual Open Research Conference which is open to PGRs
- Edinburgh ReproducibiliTea has regular events for all researchers, including PGRs.

Commitments under the Research Cultures Action Plan (RCAP) 2023

Deliverable	Timescale	Owner	DC theme
Systematically roll out research ethics and integrity training • Further develop and refine IAD ethics and integrity online modules (2023/24) • Ensure that PGR included in wider review of research ethics and integrity training and support	2023/24 - 2024/25	IAD, Research ethics and integrity review group	Experience and Development

Future areas for development (contingent on resource/ buy-in etc.)

- Develop training, guidance and support for using AI tools in postgraduate research
- Develop train the trainer resources and support to support research ethics and integrity training and development for PGRs at local level

4. Communication and engagement

Known challenges and issues

- The University has a highly devolved structure, so it is difficult to communicate efficiently with PGRs and supervisors
- An increasingly diverse PGR population means traditional methods of communication are not always appropriate or successful
- Communication and engagement methods are continuously evolving and require continued maintenance and review

What is already happening?

- The Code of Practice for supervisors and research students is concise and sets out expectations of the University, supervisors and students. It is complemented by local level Handbooks and guidance.
- The Doctoral College webpages have been set up to gather central level information for PGRs and supervisors
- The Doctoral College has an active Microsoft Teams site for staff who work with PGRs (from Schools, Colleges and services) and holds bi-monthly Doctoral College Forum meetings. Bi-annual Town Hall meetings are held for all PGRs
- Consistent and appropriate communication via central level email to PGRs has improved considerably since the set-up of the Doctoral College
- There is an established network for PGR representatives across the institution supported by the Students' Association. The Doctoral College has set up monthly meetings for representatives.

Commitments under the Research Cultures Action Plan (RCAP) 2023

Deliverable	Timescale	Owner	DC theme
Identify and secure central level resource to collate and put together a regular newsletter, calendar or equivalent on societies and community building activities to circulate to all postgraduate researchers	2023/24- 2024/25	Doctoral College, College PGR Deans	Communities
Roll out, publicise and integrate communication on societies and community building activity into local and central mechanisms.	2023/24-2024/25	Doctoral College, College PGR Deans	Communities
Pilot and evaluate the effectiveness of a programme of outreach activities to allow direct interaction with the PGR Student body	2023/24- 2024/25	College PGR Deans	Communities
Work in partnership with the Students' Association and Colleges to strengthen postgraduate research representation and reporting processes for Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs)	2023/24- 2024/25	College PGR Deans	Communities / Experience and Development

Future areas for development (contingent on resource/ buy-in etc.)

- Continue to develop Doctoral College webpages as a hub for PGR information and a hub for community building
- Establish a clear structure for PGR communications and engagement at central level ensuring sustainability
- Build on progress with PGR representative structure to ensure sustainability
- Revisit plans for establishment of a PGR student building or PGR spaces on different campuses

5. Governance and data

Known challenges and issues

- Data is generally entered locally and so can be hard to compare

• Scholarship data is not held centrally and so it is hard to understand the distribution and level of scholarships across the institution.	
What is already happening?	
• We run the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) every two years and Colleges compile a report on responses for their College which is presented to the Senate Education Committee • We have run a Pulse survey also reported to Senate Education Committee • Data dashboards on student numbers exist in Colleges and Governance and Strategic Planning. These include completion rates and can be broken down by protected characteristics, programme, School and College. • Completion data for the Fundamentals of PhD Supervision course are available. • Recruitment and selection data is also available in Euclid via dashboards.	

Commitments under the Research Cultures Action Plan (RCAP) 2023

Deliverable	Timescale	Owner	DC theme
Continuing to conduct the 2-yearly Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) • Increase visibility and use of PRES and other student voice mechanisms by working with PGR representatives, Schools and Colleges • Pilot a range of mechanisms to publicise and encourage completion of PRES 2025	2023/24 - 2024/25	Doctoral College, Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling, College PGR Deans	Communities/ Experience and Development

Future areas for development (contingent on resource/ buy-in etc.)
• Explore ways to develop central level reporting systems for fast, straightforward generation of PGR student metrics

Measuring success

Measurement of a successful outcome for postgraduate research students has traditionally been predominantly binary (pass/fail) and relatively limited. Outcomes measured routinely to indicate success have been limited to quantifiable metrics (such as: successful award of the degree; examiner's recommendation – Regulations A-J; time to completion). Even within this limited field straightforward access to data to enable fast, informative report generation is not available. Approaches to measuring success in postgraduate research need to include broader and more inclusive parameters than has traditionally been the case. The metrics must be meaningful and measurable.

There are useful examples of relevant approaches in this area:

- [Postgraduate Researchers from Diverse Backgrounds: A Framework for Defining, Measuring and Supporting Success (ukcge.ac.uk)](#)
- [Identifying metrics to track improvements in research culture | Research Culture at Leeds](#)

Measurement of success would be improved if systems allowed rapid generation of comprehensive, meaningful reports (including data listed previously as well as: percentage completion rates; exit awards; concessions; part time/ full time; online/distance/on campus), with the ability to compare data across relevant groups (e.g. by College; Deanery/ School; sex; ethnicity; nationality; age; other protected characteristics).

A key limitation of the data currently collected is the inherent assumption that award of the degree indicates a successful experience during the PhD. Gaining insight into, and measuring, the actual experience of postgraduate students is hampered by numerous factors, not least the individual nature of the experience for each student, which contributes to the isolation felt by many. Information on postgraduate student experience gained anecdotally, or in a more systematic way, through surveys (e.g., Research Cultures Survey; Pulse Surveys; PRES) is impaired by the informality of some feedback and the low response rate common in the more systematic surveys. The University of Edinburgh does not run an *Exit Survey* for postgraduate students to obtain retrospective views on the overall experience. The evidence that is available indicates good satisfaction in many areas but highlights important areas where considerable improvement is required; *Community* and *Research Culture* returned the lowest scores in PRES in each of the three Colleges. It is apparent that better ways are needed to communicate effectively with the postgraduate student population so that they understand and assimilate key information. In addition, experience suggests that more pro-active approaches are required to obtain meaningful experience data from an appropriate proportion of the studentship.

Reporting and review

An annual report on the implementation of this plan will be submitted to the Research Cultures Delivery Group, which in turn reports to Research Strategy Group. This annual report will also be shared with the Doctoral College Management Group and the wider Doctoral College. The Plan and reports will be accessible on the Doctoral College webpages. The plan will be reviewed and updated in August 2025.

Contacts: This document has been drafted by Professor Patrick Hadoke Patrick.Hadoke@ed.ac.uk and Dr Fiona Philippi fiona.philippi@ed.ac.uk on behalf of the Doctoral College. Feedback and comments are welcome.

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Senate Education Committee

9 May 2024

Student Partnership Agreement 2024-25

Description of paper

1. This paper outlines the proposed University of Edinburgh Student Partnership Agreement for 2024-25. The SPA is negotiated each year between the University and Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), with groups of staff and students consulted about the priority areas focused on each year. The SPA and its priority areas help to promote Strategy 2030's values, in particular fostering a welcoming community and ensuring our teaching and research is relevant to society, diverse, inclusive and accessible to all. The SPA funded projects also explicitly create opportunities for students and staff to co-create work together enhancing the impact of work we do in the priority areas.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate Education Committee is asked to APPROVE the Student Partnership Agreement for 2024-25.

Background and context

3. Responsibility for leading and administering the SPA sits with the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) but is supported by the SPA Panel comprising representatives from IAD, EUSA, Academic Services, along with the Deputy Vice Principal Students (Enhancement).

4. The SPA is a broad statement of intent for the University and EUSA to work in partnership. The priority areas/themes are negotiated annually in consultation with staff and students across the University. The priority areas agreed each year become the focus for SPA Funding which is available for small partnership projects of up to £1000 each. In 2023-24, 19 projects were funded – with the projects running between November 23 to July 24. These projects enable increased activity to take place across the University focused on the agreed priority areas. One previous SPA funded project team (the Institute for Molecular Plant Sciences sports day – a community building event involving all staff and students) won a sparqs Student Engagement Award in 2023.

Discussion

5. The priority areas have been updated for 2024-25 and we ask colleagues to approve the new Student Partnership Agreement with these new themes. The priorities have remained the same since before Covid up to this year as consultations with staff and students each year suggested agreement that these priorities remained important for the University and EUSA. However, this year in our staff and student consultations, we noted an upturn in concern about wellbeing, mental health, cost of living and accommodation challenges, and a slight reduction in the number of people mentioning community. We have adapted the priorities accordingly, and community is now covered within several descriptive sub-themes rather than being a stand-alone priority.

6. The new proposed themes are: 1. Wellbeing, mental health, cost of living and student accommodation, 2. Transforming curriculum, 3. Equality, diversity and inclusion. The extended descriptions under each priority, which can be seen in the full Student Partnership Agreement attached, is helpful to those considering applying for SPA funding, in highlighting the areas of work we are encouraging partnership projects to focus on.

Resource implications

7. None for the SPA itself. The associated SPA funding scheme is funded by the IAD up to a total of £20,000 each year.

Risk management

8. There are no significant risks to continuation of the Student Partnership Agreement unless we see any significant change to funding in the IAD.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

9. The SPA is not explicitly focused on tackling the climate emergency or meeting the SDGs, however, some previous SPA projects have focused on sustainability. The priority areas proposed for 2024-25 are most closely connected to supporting the following SDGs: SDG 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and SDG 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Equality & diversity

10. Equality, diversity and inclusion remains as an explicitly proposed priority area within the SPA 2024-25 and thus will be likely to be the focus of some of the SPA funded projects next year. In previous years, many projects have chosen to focus on enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion, or have embedded inclusive practice within their projects focused on other themes.

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

11. The SPA 2023-24 can be found at the following SPA webpage: https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/student-engagement/student-partnership-agreement Please note, this will be updated if we receive approval from Senate Education Committee for the new SPA and priorities.

12. Information about the SPA funding scheme can be found at: https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/funding/spa-funding Please note this will be updated with new dates in a few months' time. Funding usually opens around August with a deadline in mid-October, and funded projects can start from early November onwards.

13. We significantly increased dissemination of information about the SPA funding scheme in 2022-23 which saw us triple the number of applications to the funding scheme from the previous year. We have continued to share information about

this scheme widely, and provide a workshop (and a recording of this workshop on the webpages) to support those who wish to apply prior to the deadline in October. We saw another more modest increase in applications last year and hope to continue this trend.

14. All SPA funded project teams are required to write a Teaching Matters blog as a way to report outcomes of the work more broadly across the University – these are featured in a Teaching Matters series in Aug/Sept each year.

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25 April 2024

Freedom of Information *Open*

STUDENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
2024-25

Working together to enhance the student experience

Introduction

What is a Student Partnership Agreement?
Student Partnership Agreements were first outlined in the Scottish Government's 2011 paper *Putting Learners at the Centre – Delivering our Ambitions for Post-16 Education*, which, amongst many other things, proposed the development of a document setting out how students and their institutions interact. Sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland) subsequently published guidance in 2013 for the development of student partnership agreements for universities. Many Scottish HEIs have since developed Student Partnership Agreements or are working towards their development.

A Student Partnership Agreement is essentially an explicit statement of the ways in which the institution and the student body are working in partnership. It should be a living document that is reviewed annually and, over time, will enable progress on activities to be documented and communicated.

It is not a contract and has no legal basis. The term 'partnership' reflects a mature relationship, based on mutual trust and respect. Partnership working recognises that members of the partnership have legitimate, though sometimes different, perceptions and experiences. By working together towards a common agreed purpose, we can achieve positive outcomes to the benefit of all concerned. The core emphasis is on common goals and activity rather than separating out staff and student responsibilities.

Benefits of a Partnership Agreement
A key benefit of a Student Partnership Agreement is the ability to engage and communicate with the wider student body, beyond the Students' Association. In particular, a Student Partnership Agreement can:
• serve to map and promote student engagement opportunities across the University;
• act as a tool to reflect on the ways in which staff and students interact and highlight any enhancements that can be made;
• be used to monitor and review the effectiveness of student engagement;
• provide tangible evidence of the partnership between students and staff.

Why have a Student Partnership Agreement?
The University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh University Students' Association have enjoyed a long and productive partnership, which has been commended in Enhancement-led Institutional Review reports from the Quality Assurance Agency for Scotland. We were already working in partnership before Student Partnership Agreements, and in many ways we were ahead of most Scottish HEIs in developing a joint Students' Association and

University of Edinburgh Student Engagement Statement in 2013 that set out our explicit commitment to working in partnership with our students and outlined the various ways in which students could engage with the University. This agreement builds on the strength of that established partnership.

The priorities in the Student Partnership Agreement align with the University Strategy and Students' Association own priorities, rather than creating new initiatives. The agreement serves to highlight ways in which the wider University, including all staff and students, can effectively work together to enhance the student experience. It sets out our values, our approach to partnership and the priorities we have agreed to work on.

Our values

Our partnership is underpinned by the following core values and sets out expectations of both students and staff to enhance the student experience:

Excellence – We are committed to excellence in education, expect the highest standards of our teachers and learners, and recognise high quality teaching. We want to be known nationally and internationally for the quality of our teaching and the quality of our graduates.

Inquiry – We foster an approach to learning based on research and inquiry. We celebrate and encourage independent, critical thinkers. We provide opportunities for student-led, co-designed learning within and beyond the main discipline. Our excellence in research enhances our teaching and we consider that every student is an active researcher and participant in building knowledge.

Community – We are all members of a vibrant community based on collaboration, co-creation and support for one another. Our connectivity extends across different disciplines and outside the University to our alumni and external partnerships. Our community is underpinned by high-quality academic and pastoral support, peer-learning, clubs and societies.

Inclusion – We celebrate the diversity of our University community. We value and respect each other. We create a welcoming and supportive environment in which all members of our community have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Responsibility – We promote the highest standards of individual behaviour and personal accountability, ensuring we act ethically and sustainably. We all have a responsibility to develop the student experience, including engaging constructively in giving and receiving feedback to positively enhance the Edinburgh experience for current and future students.

Partnership at Edinburgh

Our commitment to working in partnership with students is articulated at the highest level in the University's Strategic Plan. Staff at the University of Edinburgh currently work in partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association to ensure that students are central to:

- governance and decision making,
- quality assurance and enhancement,
- providing opportunities for students to become active participants,
- fostering collaboration between students and staff.

Appendix 1 sets out examples of working in partnership

Partnership in Practice – Our Priorities

Our priorities are set out in the following themes, which relate to ongoing work in the Student Experience Action Plan and the University Strategy and have been discussed with the Students' Association, the Student Representatives Forum, the Directors of Teaching Network, all Senate committees' members, and the Student Partnership Agreement Panel.

- **Wellbeing, mental health, cost of living and student accommodation**
Developing communities that promote a sense of wellbeing, positive mental health, belonging and mattering in Schools and societies and across years, degrees, and the University as a whole. Supporting students through the cost-of-living crisis and the challenging student accommodation context in the city. Supporting students as they move to the University, from semester to semester, from year to year, as well as beyond the University and preparing for professional working life.

- **Transforming curriculum**
Recognising and enhancing the power of learning, teaching, and assessment to transform the student experience. Encouraging meaningful student and staff engagement with the curriculum, including through co-creation of learning, teaching, and assessment. University-wide curriculum transformation and making the Edinburgh Student Vision a reality, and effectively communicating this work to students and staff. Developing students who are: disciplinary experts; ready to thrive in a changing world; and highly employable. Exploring: experiential learning; engagement with global and local challenges; decolonising the curriculum; generative AI; sustainability and climate change; online, in-person, and hybrid experiences of teaching and learning. Creating a sense of community and belonging in the curriculum.

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion**
Ensuring we work in partnership to promote a University community where all are welcome, respected and nurtured. Making intentional efforts to meet the needs of our diverse community of students and staff, and acknowledging intersectionality. Recognising we may need to change the way we practice to ensure some individuals and groups, who have traditionally been systemically excluded, feel welcome and are enabled to engage. Celebrating our incredible diversity of students and staff. Listening to a diverse range of student voices and perspectives and closing the feedback loop.

Reviewing the Student Partnership Agreement

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

Student Partnership Agreement Funding

Student Partnership Agreement funding is available each year. These projects enable increased activity to take place across the University, which encourage partnership working

between students and staff, and that are focused on the agreed priority areas. Information about the SPA funding scheme can be found at:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/funding/spa-funding

Appendix 1: Examples of working in partnership

University level involvement:
- The Student Representation system -www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation
- Student participation on committees at every level of the University, including
  - ➤ Student-Staff Liaison Committees,
  - ➤ School and subject area committees,
  - ➤ College Committees,
  - ➤ Senate, Court and the Senate Committees
- Student participation in Task and Project Groups
- Student participation in the Internal Periodic Review Process, including full membership of review teams – Information for students on Internal Review Process

Student-led initiatives, including, but not limited to:
- Peer Learning and Support – https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/peerlearningsupport
- Student-Led Individually Created Courses (SLICCs) http://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/facilitators-toolkit/case-studies/sliccs
- Student Awards (formerly the Activities Awards and Impact Awards, now combined into a single event): https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/whatson/awards/studentawards
- Student-Led Teaching Awards - www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/teachingawards
- Student Led Activities from Societies to volunteering that enhance student life. – http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities
- Student Groups: https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/list (groups for marginalised and underrepresented students) or https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/yourvoice/yourrepresentatives/liberationofficers and https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/yourvoice/yourrepresentatives/sectionrepresentatives (student representatives for marginalised and underrepresented students)

Senate Education Committee

9 May 2024

Senate Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review

Description of paper
1. This paper outlines plans for the annual review of Senate Standing Committees' effectiveness.

Action requested / recommendation
2. Committee members are asked to comment on the plans for the annual review.

Background and context
3. The 2017 version of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance states that institutions are expected to review the effectiveness of their Senate and its committees annually and to hold an externally-facilitated review every five years: "49. The governing body is expected to review its own effectiveness each year and to undertake an externally facilitated evaluation of its own effectiveness and that of its committees, including size and composition of membership, at least every five years. As part of these processes or separately, the effectiveness of the academic board (also known as Senate, Senatus Academicus or academic council) is expected to be reviewed similarly. These reviews should be reported upon appropriately within the Institution and outside. Externally facilitated reviews should be held following any period of exceptional change or upheaval (allowing suitable time to see the effects of changes made), the usual timetable for externally facilitated review being brought forward if necessary in these circumstances."

4. In line with the requirements of the Code, Registry Services will be conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the three Senate Standing Committees over summer 2024. The outcomes of the annual review will be reported to Senate and Senate Standing Committees in September/ October 2024.

5. Actions identified in the previous annual review and responses are outlined in Appendix 2.

Discussion

6. The annual review process is intended to gather information on, and evaluate effectiveness in terms of, the:
   - Composition of the committee
   - Support and facilitation of committee meetings
   - Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits
   - Impact and strategic relevance of Senate Committees' work

7. The review is a self-evaluative process and Senate Standing Committee members will be invited by the relevant Committee Secretary to respond to an online survey during summer 2024. Draft questions are provided in Appendix 1.

8. Registry Services will collate and analyse the information, producing a report on the findings to be presented to Senate and Senate Standing Committees in September/ October 2024.

9. Previously the Convener and Secretary of each committee reviewed its coverage of postgraduate research student business, however, this is being looked at through the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.

Resource implications

10. The review will be conducted by Registry Services as part of planned work. The resource implications of any actions identified in response to the outcomes of the review will be considered at that stage.

Risk management

11. The annual effectiveness review process assists the University in ensuring that its academic governance arrangements are effective and enables the University to manage a range of risks associated with its academic provision.

Equality & diversity

12. The online survey provides an opportunity for members to reflect on equality, diversity and representation through committee work.

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

13. The report will be presented to Senate and the Senate Standing Committees in September / October 2024. If the review identifies required actions or enhancement opportunities, these will be taken forward by Registry Services (if directly related to the functioning and support of the Senate Committees) or referred to the appropriate body for consideration.

<u>**Author**</u>
Registry Services
24 April 2024

Freedom of Information
Open

Appendix 1

Senate Standing Committees: Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

Draft questions for Summer 2024 survey

Members of the Senate Standing Committees will be invited to fill in an online survey during Summer 2024 and the draft questions are set out below for comment. The questions are based on the same set used for the previous four years but have been reviewed and refined for clarity, to align with the intentions of the review process outlined in paragraph 6, and to support gathering of actionable responses. HR EDI were consulted on the questions relating to equality, diversity and representation. Registry Services will also use responses to develop and track key performance indicators.

All responses to questions are Likert scale unless otherwise stated (strongly agree – agree – neutral – disagree – strongly disagree).

1. **Composition of the Committee**
   1.1. The composition of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit.
   1.2. The size of the Committee is appropriate for it to operate effectively.
   1.3. Please provide any comments on the composition of the committee [free text]

2. **Support and Facilitation of Committee Meetings**
   2.1. The information provided supports effective decision-making by the Committee.
   2.2. The Committee is supported effectively by Registry Services.
   2.3. For new members in 2023/24: I received an effective induction when I joined the Committee.
   2.4. Please provide any comments on the support and facilitation of committee meetings [free text]

3. **Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits**
   3.1. The Committee's remit is clear.
   3.2. The scope of the Committee's remit is appropriate.
   3.3. I am clear on my role and responsibilities as a member of the Committee.
   3.4. I am able to engage effectively with and contribute to the work of the Committee.
   3.5. Please provide any comments on the engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits [free text]

4. **Impact and Strategic Relevance of Senate Committee's Work**
   4.1. The work of the Committee makes a positive impact.
   4.2. The work of the Committee links to University strategic priorities.
   4.3. Equality and diversity are appropriately considered and promoted in the work of the Committee.
   4.4. Please provide any comments on how the work of the Committee can represent the views and needs of our diverse University community to inform decision-making [free text]
   4.5. The work of the Committee is communicated effectively to the wider University.
   4.6. Please provide any comments on the impact and strategic relevance of Senate Committees' work [free text]

Appendix 2: Action taken in response to 2022/23 Senate Standing Committees' Annual Effectiveness Review

Committee	Action	Response
All	Consider how to focus business within the Committee remit and clarify responsibilities where business overlaps and links with other committees.	Registry Services have supported paper authors to focus on the detail relevant to the committees' remit and the decision being asked of them. Discussions held on committees' priorities have made specific reference to remits. Consideration is also being given to including reference to remits on committee paper cover sheets. This is also being looked at through the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.
All	Continue to explore ways to diversify the membership of the Committee and effectively consider EDI matters.	Registry Services have signposted to relevant EDI guidance and training materials in order to empower members and enhance their understanding of EDI matters, and enable all members to appropriately scrutinise Committee business.
All	Consider how committees can communicate effectively with stakeholders, including the roles and responsibilities of Academic Services and members.	Information to support members with their roles and responsibilities was updated in the Senate Standing Committees' Members' Guidance. The Senate Committees' Newsletter is back to being routinely published throughout the year. Registry Services have supported paper authors to include a plan of how information will be communicated to relevant stakeholders and to record instances where Committee members have responsibility for communicating information or outcomes to their College or Group.
SQAC	Clarify the roles of subgroups and task groups at the start of the year.	Registry Services are producing an organogram with the subgroups and task groups for all Senate Standing Committees.

Senate Education Committee

9 May 2024

Committee Priorities 2024/25

Description of paper
1. The paper asks the Committee to note the final proposed priorities for academic year 2024/25 for endorsement by Senate.

Action requested / recommendation
2. The Committee is asked to note the proposed priorities for 2024/25.

Background and context
3. At its meeting in March the Committee discussed draft proposed committee priorities. The feedback provided by members at the meeting was used to develop a further iteration of the proposal priorities which was shared on the Committee's SharePoint site for further comment. Comments received on this iteration have been used to finalise the proposed priorities.

4. The Standing Committees' proposed priorities will be reported to Senate in May 2024 for endorsement.

Discussion

Proposed Committee priorities 2024/25 for endorsement by Senate

Proposed priority	Curriculum Transformation
Rationale and fit with remit	Curriculum Transformation is a major University strategic priority which aligns to Strategy 2030. It is also relevant to the committee remit: 2.1 Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners 2.2 Promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment, embrace new teaching methods and consider cross-cutting themes such as research-led and technology-enhanced learning, digital and information literacy, education for employability, internationalisation and lifelong learning. Consider and promote local developments or initiatives with substantial implications for University learning and teaching strategy, policy, services or operations
Area of focus and objectives	• Committee to contribute to and guide development and adoption of UG and PGT Curriculum Frameworks • Committee to have oversight of priority areas for enhancement linked to Curriculum Transformation (e.g. programme level assessment, sustainability & climate, accessibility & inclusion)

Regulatory/external requirement?	No

Proposed priority	Student experience – actions taken in response to student survey results
Rationale and fit with remit	• Relevant to committee remit 2.3: Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback • Feedback from Senate via elected members (January 2024, Paper F) • Also fits with Senate Quality Assurance remit 2.6 Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.
Area of focus and objectives	• For the Committee to continue to receive and consider updates on work undertaken to improve the student survey results from the Deputy Secretary (Students). • By the end of AY 24/25, for the Committee to have worked in partnership with Senate Quality Assurance Committee to facilitate the sharing of good practice and successes in relation to improving student survey results to support Schools, including in relation to core learning skills.
Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes – Quality Code advice and guidance Student Engagement

Proposed priority	Assessment and feedback
Rationale and fit with remit	• Relevant to committee remit 2.3: Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback. • Also fits with Senate Quality Assurance remit 2.5 Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.

Area of focus and objectives	• Ensure ongoing implementation of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities, with a focus on principles:
	1. Assessment will be fit for purpose;
	3. Assessment and feedback will be inclusive, equitable and fair; and
	 6. Feedback on assessment will be constructive, developmental and timely
	    o Ensure mechanisms are in place for the continued monitoring of feedback turnaround times (to the three-week standard)
	    o Ensure mechanisms are in place for the continued monitoring of feedback quality

	• Consider School-level data and evidence against assessment and feedback priorities, including timeliness and quality/usefulness of feedback.
Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes – This was a recommendation in the QAA ELIR 2021 Report and has been re-emphasised in the QAA QESR Report (published January 2024).

Proposed priority	Learning and Teaching Strategy
Rationale and fit with remit	• Relevant to committee remit 2.1 Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners • Relevant to committee remit 2.2 Promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment, embrace new teaching methods and consider cross-cutting themes such as research-led and technology-enhanced learning, digital and information literacy, education for employability, internationalisation and lifelong learning. Consider and promote local developments or initiatives with substantial implications for University learning and teaching strategy, policy, services or operations.
Area of focus and objectives	• Launch a Learning and Teaching Strategy from AY 2024/25 that aligns with Strategy 2030 • Provides strategic direction for learning, teaching • Facilitate curriculum development, student engagement and inspire and support teaching excellence.
Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes – This was a recommendation in the QAA ELIR 2021 Report and has been re-emphasised in the QAA QESR Report (published January 2024).

Members also identified the following areas of focus for the Committee. These will be added to the Committee's forward agenda for discussion initially which will inform further work.

- The Widening Participation Strategy
- Awarding gaps (aligns with a QESR recommendation so the Committee will also receive updates on the actions being taken to progress this recommendation from the External Quality Review Oversight Group)
- Staff development (would need to ensure alignment with the Committee's remit and also other relevant HR/staff groups/committees)
- Small group teaching
- Employability (a report on Graduate Outcomes will be presented to the May meeting)
- Consider the experience of cohorts of students given the changing student profile, using evidence to identify cohorts (aligns with committee remit 2.4 Give specific consideration to instances in which the experience of one particular cohort of students or learners (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research students, and those involved in non-standard programmes) may diverge from that of others)
- Estates and space

- Look at data across the student journey, including but not limited to awarding gaps

5. There are a number of priorities and areas of focus identified. Members are asked to continue to consider SMART criteria in this context, ideally, the objectives of the priorities and areas of focus should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

Resource implications
6. Standing Committees' work has implications not only for Registry Services, but also for the membership and stakeholders the Committee may need to consult and work with in relation to a particular priority. Resource implications should be outlined and considered on an ongoing basis as work on priorities progresses.

Risk management
7. Work on priorities is vital to the Committee fulfilling its remit. Failure to fulfil its remit raises potential risks associated with the University's framework of academic policy and regulations and the student experience.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals
8. This paper does not respond to the climate emergency or contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & diversity
9. Equality and diversity implications should be outlined and considered on an ongoing basis as work on priorities progresses.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
10. The proposed priorities will be reported to Senate in May for endorsement. Additionally, the Senate Committees' Newsletter provides information on standing committee business.

<u>**Author**</u>
Registry Services
24 April 2024

Freedom of Information *Open*

Senate Education Committee

9 May 2024

Membership and Terms of Reference 2024/25

Description of paper:
1. Senate Education Committee (SEC) Membership and Terms of Reference for 2024/25.

Action requested / recommendation:
2. The Membership and Terms of Reference are presented to SEC for members to note and advise of any forthcoming changes not already highlighted.

Background and context:
3. The membership for SEC is presented to Senate annually for approval. Any subsequent amendments to the membership are reported to Senate at the next Ordinary meeting, usually held in October.

4. Senate Standing Committees formally report to Senate annually in addition to providing updates on recent and forthcoming business at each ordinary meeting of Senate. These committees feed into and out of College level committees (Undergraduate Education, Postgraduate Education, Quality Assurance) and specialist Support Services (the Institute for Academic Development, Careers Service, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Registry Services) via committee membership. Therefore, a number of committee roles are ex officio, to ensure that committee members have the appropriate knowledge, expertise, responsibility and accountability to fulfil the committee remit. In October 2022, Senate agreed to expand the membership of each Standing Committee to include three elected Senate members. An election is held annually to fill the three positions. All committees include student representation.

Discussion

5. The Committee membership for SEC will be presented to Senate for approval at its May meeting.

6. Changes to membership to take effect from 1 August 2024 are highlighted.

7. The SEC webpages will be updated with membership once all positions are confirmed.

8. The SEC Terms of Reference remain unchanged and are published on the Academic Services website: https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/education/terms-reference

Resource implications

9. No amendments with resource implications are proposed.

Risk management

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

Equality & diversity

11. The composition of the Senate Committees is largely determined according to defined role-holders (e.g. defined Assistant or Vice-Principal, Director of a defined Support Service or delegate) or as representatives of particular stakeholders (e.g. a College or the Students' Association). The membership of SEC is therefore largely a consequence of decisions taken elsewhere to appoint individuals to particular roles. Ensuring that appointment processes support a diverse staff body is part of the broader responsibility of the University.

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

12. SEC's Membership and Terms of Reference are communicated via the Academic Services website: https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/education

13. Senate Standing Committees are subject to an annual internal review process, and this is reported annually to Senate.

Author
Registry Services
May 2024

Freedom of Information: Open

Name	Position	Term of Office
Professor Colm Harmon (Convener)	Vice-Principal Students	Ex Officio
Professor Tina Harrison (Vice-Convener)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Ex Officio
Professor Mary Brennan	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)	
Dr Lisa Kendall	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)	
Professor Laura Bradley	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)	
Dr Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching)	
Professor Jamie Davies	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching)	
Professor Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)	
Professor Patrick Walsh	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)	
Professor Tim Stratford	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)	
Dr Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)	
Dylan Walsh	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Ex Officio
TBC – election held in October	Postgraduate Research Student Representative	Ex Officio
Callum Paterson	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Ex Officio
Professor Jason Love	Head of School, CSE	
Professor Jo Shaw	Head of School, CAHSS	
Professor Mike Shipston	Head of School / Deanery, CMVM	

Nichola Kett	Interim Director of Academic Services	Ex Officio
Dr Velda McCune	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's nominee)	Ex Officio
Dr Shane Collins	Representing Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions	Ex Officio
Dr Melissa Highton	Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services	Ex Officio
Shelagh Green	Director for Careers and Employability	Ex Officio
Marianne Brown	Co-opted member (Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling)	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2027
Professor Sian Bayne	Co-opted member (Digital Education)	1 August 2023 - 31 July 2026
Lucy Evans	Co-opted member (Student Experience)	1 August 2022 - 31 July 2025
TBC – election outcome not yet known	Representative of Senate	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
TBC – election outcome not yet known	Representative of Senate	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
TBC – election outcome not yet known	Representative of Senate	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
Patrick Jack	Committee Secretary	