Senate Education Committee

Thursday 9th November, 2-5pm
Hybrid meeting: College Office Meeting Room, 50 George Square and via Microsoft Teams

1.	Attendance

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

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 14th September 2023

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2023, with minor amendments to sections 3.5 and 4.1.

3. Convener's Communications and Matters Arising

- **University Firewall Website Controls**

This item was discussed at the previous meeting of the Committee. However, it was later noticed that a recommendation from the Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC) meeting held in May 2023 had been missed from the paper presented to SEC in September 2023. The recommendation requested a message on any website blocked with an explanation of why the site has been blocked and the dangers of interacting with essay mill companies. The message was also asked to highlight support available to students.

This oversight was raised at the October meeting of the KSC and followed up immediately. Text has been developed by those with the expertise and approved by Professor Colm Harmon and Professor Tina Harrison in their respective roles as VP and DVP.

- **Assessment & Feedback**

Following the update above, there was some discussion of Assessment & Feedback. It was felt that assessment design is an important aspect of inclusivity and combatting plagiarism. Representatives from CAHSS highlighted their College working groups which are working with assessment design to address areas such as student experience, resource and pedagogy.

> **Action:** Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) to liaise with IAD colleagues to identify resources which can then be shared across the University to support assessment design.
>
> **Action:** Convener to meet with student representatives to discuss A&F and key QA requirements. The minutes will be shared with the Committee.

- **Final Grades and Graduations**

A query was raised in relation to any awards still outstanding following the Marking & Assessment Boycott (MAB). It was confirmed that all students are expected to have graduated with full and final awards at the next set of graduations (November 2023). Students have been informed that they can attend the November or later graduation ceremonies if they missed their summer 2023 ceremony.

- **Committee Priorities**

A member of the Committee asked how the Committee should proceed with its priorities which have not yet been approved by Senate. The Convener confirmed that SEC will report to Senate as normal on its priorities which are aligned to the Committee remit and are set annually by the Committee itself. It was confirmed that members can submit a paper to SEC with a proposal to amend the Committee priorities.

4. Substantive Items

4.1   Curriculum Transformation Programme (Paper B)

This paper was presented by Dr Jon Turner, the Curriculum Transformation lead. Comments from members of the Committee raised the following points and queries:

- There needs to be understanding and planning for work streams/competency sets which affect how students approach work within their own discipline.
- Further detail on the difference the project intends to have at Honours and pre-Honours level would be appreciated by some members, particularly in relation to the role of challenge courses within each year of study.
- It was noted that current issues with students not getting on to their chosen courses/modules should be addressed and improved by the implementation of CTP.
- Questions were asked around the resourcing and scale of teaching within the proposed framework, noting that teaching staff on short-term contracts pose a particular resourcing challenge.
- There must be consideration for the impact on student experience, especially in relation to online learning and assessment.
- It was suggested that fundamentals such as systems and timetabling need to be improved across the institution, and there is some concern that large-scale projects distract from these areas.
- The long lead-in time for the project is perceived as a challenge for student engagement as students feeding in will not see the implementation of CTP.
- Further discussion with colleagues across the institution was flagged as necessary for the continued development of CTP activity.

The Committee were informed that an oversight group will have a role in guiding Schools, but Schools will have flexibility to take action in different directions depending on their subject area and requirements. It was emphasised that in its reports to Senate, CTP will be clear on its objectives and expectations.

There was also discussion on work around decolonising the curriculum and how this interacts with the CTP. A member highlighted that work around decolonisation should not be presented as optional, but something that needs to be concrete and actionable. It was emphasised that CTP provides an opportunity to review teaching and provision, and provides a framework to look at decolonising the curriculum alongside other institutional priorities, such as assessment & feedback. The Committee were informed that the CTP is actively recruiting for a role on secondment which will work with the EDI committee on decolonising the curriculum. In relation to a point about student dissatisfaction with reading lists, it was confirmed that SSLCs, conversations with course organisers and mid-course feedback surveys are the best initial avenues for this, rather than the University's Complaints Procedure.

4.2   Tutor & Demonstrator Training (Paper C)

The representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research) presented this paper, which proposed guidance for Schools and Deaneries to help embed the Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators, on behalf of the IAD working group. The work was a result of both the ELIR recommendation from the 2021 review and challenges with the policy not always being well understood within Schools.

The Committee discussed expectations around training for T&Ds and it was clarified that the time taken to complete training must be paid, as is set out in the T&D policy, and should be paid from Schools' T&D budget. It was highlighted that not all T&Ds are students, and this employed cohort must also be considered. Further feedback from the Committee identified line management and structure as areas which need strengthening within the guidance.

The Committee approved the guidance, whilst noting views on payment and line management.

Action: Lisa Kendall to share notes of this discussion to Heads of College and Registrars for their information.

Action: IAD working group to amend guidance and provide an update to future meeting of SEC.

4.3   Draft Learning and Teaching Strategy (verbal update)

The Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) provided a verbal update on this item and shared a draft of the strategy that has been developed so far. It was emphasised that the shared draft is at an early stage, and there will be plenty of opportunities for colleagues across the institution to feed in their comments. The Committee were informed that the purpose of the strategy is to describe what the University is doing and where it is heading in terms of Learning and Teaching, in line with the values from Strategy 2030. The intention is to have a "strategy on a page" which will support and guide the student and staff experience.

Comments received from the Committee members addressed the importance of EDI and WP throughout the strategy, focus on getting the fundamentals right, the need for space for AI innovation, clear outcomes for staff, students and stakeholders and the suggestion for curriculum development to be considered in the round and not only through the transformation project. It was also highlighted that research, as well as teaching, is an important pillar of excellence and should be reflected in the strategy for the impact it has on teaching matters.

Discussion also considered the importance of students understanding their journey through their studies, and the role that Academic Advisors had previously played in this. It was agreed that academic advice should be embedded at every stage of the curriculum.

Action: Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) to consider how to gather further comments from the Committee on the next iteration of the draft strategy.

4.4 Student Analytics Pilot Study (Paper D)

The paper for this item was considered to be closed business as it contained case study data relating to students. The paper was presented by the Head of Timetabling, Examinations and Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling.

The Committee were informed that the piloted tool analysed student data and correctly identified cases where additional support could be applied. The Committee discussed the impact of such a tool; there was support for analytics to be used to complement and enhance the work of the Student Support model, but some concern around the ethical scrutiny required to implement use of such a tool, and concerns around which metrics and cohorts would be focussed upon. The presenter emphasised that the analytics would be utilised as a positive way to meet KPIs and requirements and not as a punitive tool. The algorithm is not attuned to certain demographics or protected characteristics. It was raised by a member that the existing Learning Analytic policy needs to be reviewed and updated in light of developments around analytical tools. The Interim Director of Academic Services noted that the ownership of the policy and associated documents should be looked at as part of the next review.

It was acknowledged during the discussion that the current systems utilised by the University which collect data and engagement points do not interact with each other. Therefore, key benefits of a new tool would be to remove the manual work across different systems and to implement consistency across the University.

The Committee agreed to endorse the next phase of work in this project to introduce student analytics as a supporting technology for student support.

4.5 Student Survey Results 2023: PTES and PRES (Paper E)

The paper for this item was considered to be closed business as it contained confidential internal survey data. The paper was presented by the Deputy Secretary, Students. Discussion highlighted the key themes reflected in the survey data, which included evidence that PGR students are looking for more pastoral support throughout their programme and the excellence of teaching at PG level. It was proposed that the views on teaching excellence should be better highlighted by the University, as it is an area which outperforms other themes in student surveys.

It was also acknowledged by the Committee that low response rates are a challenge to engaging with the student voice. The Committee were informed that the PRES response rate is addressed in the Research Cultures Action Plan.

Action: MB & AM to co-ordinate on process to improve PRES response rates.

4.6 National Student Survey (NSS) 2024 Optional Questions (Paper F)

This item was presented by the Head of Timetabling, Examinations and Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling, and is routine business for the Committee. The committee approved the addition of questions B9 and B11 to the 2023/24 NSS Survey, and supported the proposal that additional questions are included on a two year rotational basis going forward, in order to better understand the rate progress over a period of time.

It was acknowledged by the presenter that work will be ongoing to best interpret and understand the data from surveys.

4.7 Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program Climate Leadership Award

The Committee approved the recommendation that the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program Climate Leadership Award is added to the HEAR.

5. For information/noting

5.1 Generative Artificial Intelligence

The Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) provided a verbal update on this matter. Work is underway to review and develop the guidance around Generative AI, and to develop training that will assist colleagues with AI literacy. The Artificial Intelligence Data Ethics task group (AIDE) is being revised and reshaped by Professor Michael Rovatsos.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Sinéad Docherty
Academic Services
December 2023