THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Academic Services
January to February 2018

Senate Committees'
e-Newsletter

Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of the Senate Committees' Newsletter for 2017/18. This publication aims to keep the University community better informed about discussions and decisions occurring within Senate and its Standing Committees. We hope you find it interesting and informative.

Report from Senate

Documentation for the Senate meeting held on 7 February 2018 (and E-Senate meeting held from 16-24 January 2018) is available at http://edin.ac/2E3upX2

The theme for the presentation and discussion section of the Senate meeting was 'The University and its City: Partnering to Support Inclusion.' Members of staff and students made presentations exploring different models of community engagement and how they intersect with core University business. The meeting also enabled Senate to debate the challenges and opportunities presented by the University's strategic commitment to 'contribute locally.'

During formal business, Senate considered the outcome of a consultation on the proposal to move to a new Senate model of around 300 members in order to comply with the Higher Education Governance

(Scotland) Act 2016 (http://edin.ac/2EjB3wo, Paper B). Senate endorsed this proposal, which had been supported by the vast majority of consultation respondents. Senate also discussed proposed changes to the composition of Court to comply with the Act, including to the Senate Assessors on Court (http://edin.ac/2EjB3wo, Paper C). Amendments to the Laigh Year regulations to allow sabbatical officers to serve for a second, one-year term of office if re-elected by the student body were approved by Senate members (http://edin.ac/2EjB3wo, Paper D).

For further information about any Senate matter, please contact theresa.sheppard@ed.ac.uk

This newsletter is produced by Academic Services.

Please direct any queries or suggestions to Philippa.Ward@ed.ac.uk.

Further information on Senate and its Standing Committees is available at http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees.

Report from Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 24 January 2018 is available at http://edin.ac/1tHNcjB

Key topics considered included:

Undergraduate Retention

Court has asked LTC to consider issues around undergraduate retention. The Committee discussed possible reasons for non-continuation, and agreed that Governance and Strategic Planning would produce more granular data to facilitate further investigation in this area.

Near Future Teaching
(http://edin.ac/2EGVVuJ Paper D)

LTC received an update on a strategic project to develop a vision for the future of digital education at Edinburgh. The project has adopted a method which combines gathering input through thematic events with short 'vox pop' interviews conducted across the University's campuses. The Committee was impressed by the project's methodology, critical approach and findings. The Assistant Principal Digital Education is now using these findings to develop the vision for digital education, and working with Information Services Group to ensure that the technology required to support the vision is in place.

Distance Learning at Scale

The University is developing proposals for distance learning at scale programmes (those designed for large groups from the outset). LTC had an initial discussion of ways in which the University might approach pedagogy, assessment and student support in order to deliver a high-quality student experience.

Using the Curriculum to Promote Inclusion, Equality and Diversity
(http://edin.ac/2EGVVuJ Paper B)

The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy commits to using the curriculum to promote equality and diversity. LTC had an initial discussion of ways in which this work might be taken forward and agreed that more specific proposals would be developed and brought back to LTC in due course.

Computer-Based Exams
(http://edin.ac/2EGVVuJ Paper G)

It is likely that the University will be required to increase provision of computer-based exams in the future. As such, LTC began to explore some of the pedagogical and technological issues around this, and referred the matter to the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Working Group for further consideration.

Responding to the Student Voice
(http://edin.ac/2EGVVuJ Paper H)

The Committee considered an overview of the various activities that are underway to help Schools communicate to students the action they are taking in response to student feedback. It approved a number of recommendations to enhance these activities, including encouraging Schools to ensure that survey results (NSS, PTES and CEQ) are widely publicised and shared across all year groups, and making full survey datasets (with the exception of free-text comments) freely available to School and class representatives, and other students as required.

For further information about any LTC matter, please contact Philippa.Ward@ed.ac.uk

Report from Quality Assurance Committee

Documentation for the meeting held on 8 February 2018 is available at http://edin.ac/1MUwq8L

College Annual Quality Reports 2016-17
(http://edin.ac/2EDCaaz Paper C)

The Committee discussed the annual College Quality Reports for 2016-17. A number of themes were noted for Committee forward planning and actions for key stakeholders across the University identified. In particular, the availability of high quality teaching space and social space for students and staff was identified as an ongoing concern for many Schools.

Enhancement-led Institutional Review
(http://edin.ac/2EDCaaz Paper D)

The Committee discussed reports from the theme leads responsible for taking forward the areas for development from the University's recent Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR). The Committee agreed to reduce the reporting frequency to an annual update in recognition of the fact that activities are being progressed and reported on through other mechanisms such as the Learning and Teaching Strategy and Student Partnership Agreement implementation plans.

External Examiner Themes: Postgraduate Taught
(http://edin.ac/2EDCaaz Paper E)

The Committee considered an analysis of data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) covering postgraduate taught programmes for the academic year 2016/17. The report noted a high number of commendations across the University and a low number of issues requiring attention. Of the issues highlighted, the most frequently mentioned related to internal moderation and the provision of information to External Examiners.

For further information about any QAC matter, please contact b.connolly@ed.ac.uk

Report from Curriculum & Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 25 January 2018 is available at http://edin.ac/2y83LIO

Key points discussed included:

Service Excellence Programme
(http://epfhdin.ac/2E0WP3P, Paper A, B, C)

www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group/service-excellence-programme

The Committee received three Service Excellence Programme papers which provided updates on the overall Student Administration and Support strand of the programme (Paper A), and more detailed updates on plans for Working and Study Away (Paper B) and Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions (Paper C). A range of possible adjustments that are likely to impact on academic policy were discussed by the Committee.

Acceptable Grounds for Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions: Sexual Harassment or Assault
(http://edin.ac/2E0WP3P, Paper E)

The Committee approved proposals to amend the Special Circumstances Policy and Taught Assessment Regulations from 2018/19, to make it more explicit that experience of sexual harassment or assault are relevant grounds for seeking special circumstances or coursework extensions.

Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group
(http://edin.ac/2E0WP3P, Paper F)

A newly established Task Group is consulting with Schools on some emerging proposals relating to postgraduate taught assessment and progression. Key aspects will include how the University handles progression to dissertation for Masters; whether Masters programmes should all continue to have a dissertation/research project element as an essential component; and whether the University should consider allowing resubmission of the Masters dissertation.

Consolidation of Programme and Course Approval and Management Documentation
(http://edin.ac/2E0WP3P, Paper H)

The Committee agreed plans to work towards consolidating existing University and College documentation on programme and course approval.

For further information about any CSPC matter, please contact ailsa.taylor@ed.ac.uk
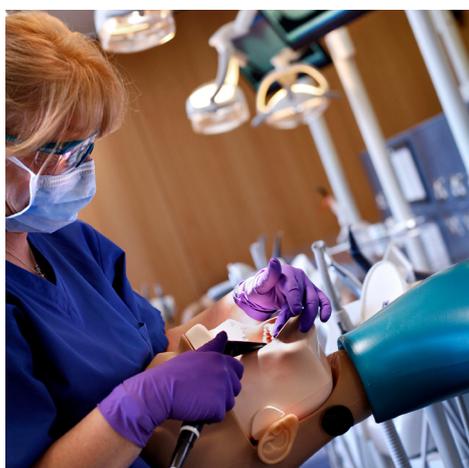
January / February 2018
Meetings covered by the Jan / Feb 2018 Edition

Date	Committee
16 January	REC
24 January	LTC
25 January	CSPC
7 February	Senate
8 February	QAC

Report from Researcher Experience Committee (REC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 16 January 2018 is available at http://edin.ac/1Q528n5
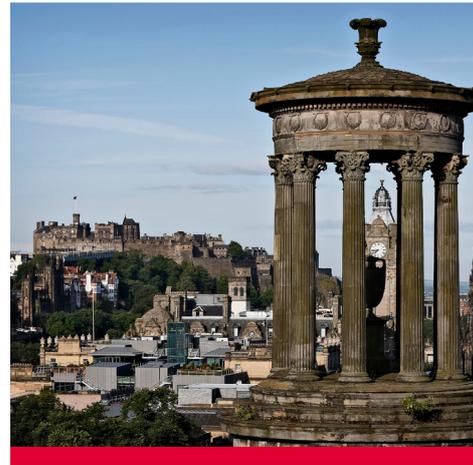
Enlightenment Scholarships

REC approved a suite of documents that will provide more information about the management of the Enlightenment Scholarships. The first cohort of Enlightenment scholars will begin their programmes in September 2018, and students will be located in the Colleges of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and Science and Engineering. An Enlightenment Scholarships Management Group will be set up to receive School reports, and will report to REC annually.

Continuing Professional Development for Doctoral Supervisors
(http://edin.ac/2E416Ut Paper C)

REC agreed to establish a short-life task group to explore CPD for supervisors. Its remit will be to benchmark against other CPD frameworks, explore the viability of online training, identify specific CPD needs for University of Edinburgh supervisors, and make recommendations on establishing a CPD framework for supervisors. The group, convened by the Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development (IAD), will include representatives from the Colleges, Academic Services, Careers and experienced supervisors.

Supervisory Roles
(http://edin.ac/2E416Ut Paper E)

The Committee discussed supervisory team roles and Principal Supervisors' key responsibilities. It agreed that further consultation with stakeholders will be undertaken by IAD and Academic Services. Outcomes will inform ongoing work by the CPD for Supervisors Task Group discussed above, and future revision of the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students.

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey Discussion for Heads of Graduate Schools
(http://edin.ac/2E416Ut Paper A)

A cross-College meeting for Heads of Graduate Schools to discuss institutional themes arising from Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) results is planned for this academic year. Themes for exploration will include postgraduate research (PGR) space, building PGR student communities, and non-academic training and support. Further information about the event will be circulated in due course.

REC Convener

This was Professor Jeremy Bradshaw's final meeting as Convener of the Committee prior to taking on a new role at the University of Bath. The meeting expressed its thanks to Professor Bradshaw for his leadership and contribution to REC over the past five years.

For further information about any REC matter, please contact susan.hunter5@ed.ac.uk

Further Information

Learning and Teaching Conference
The first University of Edinburgh Learning and Teaching Conference will take place on Wednesday 20 June 2018 in the John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls. Please save the date.

Remaining Senate Committee Dates for 2017/18

Senate	E-Senate	LTC	CSPC	REC	QAC
		14 Mar 18	22 Mar 18	13 Mar 18	18 Apr 18
30 May 18	8-16 May 18	23 May 18	31 May 18	15 May 18	24 May 18