Academic Services
March to June 2018

Senate Committees'
e-Newsletter

Introduction

Welcome to the final 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 E-Senate meeting held from 8 May to 16 May 2018, and the Senate meeting held on 30 May 2018, is available at http://edin.ac/1FL8RrJ

The theme for the presentation and discussion section of the Senate meeting was 'Student Careers and Employability.' Speakers, including University staff and the Head of Recruitment & Graduate Development at Pinsent Masons LLP, made presentations which provided context and insight into the skills required for future employment, and current and planned activity at the University to equip graduates for success in a dynamic global labour market.

Senate's formal business included approval by members of recommendations for the practical operation of the new Senate model to comply with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

Senate also approved an annual report setting out the achievements of its Standing Committees during 2017-18 and the Committees' plans for 2018-19.

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 meetings held on 14 March and 23 May 2018 is available at http://edin.ac/1tHNcjB

Key topics considered included:

Entrants' Survey 2017

The Committee received a presentation on the results of this survey. Members noted in particular that: entrants accept the offer of a place at Edinburgh primarily because of its reputation, location, programme content and the quality of its academic staff; the website is the key tool when searching for a university; most students who accept a place at Edinburgh but then fail to matriculate do so on the basis of cost; and around half of those students who decline a place at Edinburgh go on to accept a place at one of ten other institutions.

Student Representation System
(https://edin.ac/2JSXozz Paper B)

The Business and Vet Schools have been piloting programme-level student representation systems in 2017/18, and most other Schools have committed to bringing in this new approach to student representation from 2018/19.

LTC has agreed that from 2019/20, all Schools should implement a programme-level representation system. Any exceptions to this will be considered by Academic Services and the Students' Association, overseen by Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

Learning Analytics
(https://edin.ac/2JSXozz Paper C)

Having approved overarching Principles and Purposes for Learning Analytics in 2016-17, LTC and Knowledge Strategy Committee have now approved a more detailed policy and procedures. These set out how to manage practical issues such as data governance, consent and security when developing and operating learning analytics systems, and the governance and approval arrangements for introducing new learning analytics arrangements. The new policy and procedures, principles and purposes, and some FAQs are available at https://edin.ac/2MVCj9G.

Careers, Employability and Graduate Attributes Task Group
(https://edin.ac/2JSXozz Paper D)

The Committee received the final report of this Task Group, which was established because the University has been below its HESA Performance Indicator Benchmark in this area for the past 5 years. The Group made 5 main recommendations around:

1. ensuring that employability is a strategic priority for the University;

2. asking Schools and Subject Areas to engage more systematically with the available, relevant information sets and use them to develop local, evidence-based strategic approaches to employability;

3. undertaking further work on employability-related communications;

4. assessing the extent to which employability is embedded within the curriculum;

5. and securing funding for additional audit activity in this area.

LTC approved the recommendations, and emphasised that 1 and 5 are particularly important. Discussions around employability will therefore be initiated with Colleges, and additional research amongst recent alumni and employers of the University's graduates will be commissioned. Employability will also be discussed at a joint meeting of Directors of Teaching and Senior Tutors in the autumn.

Research-Led Learning and Teaching Task Group
(https://edin.ac/2JSXozz Paper H)

LTC also received and approved the final report of this Task Group, which included recommendations around the way in which the University communicates about and evaluates its research-led learning and teaching, and conducting further consultation and research in this area.

Student-Led, Individually-Created Courses (SLICCs)
(https://edin.ac/2JSXozz Paper E)

LTC received a report on progress to date with SLICCs. The framework is being used in two ways: as a centrally-run course in the summer, and in an in-programme format, with the SLICC reflective framework and supporting materials embedded within existing degree programmes and courses. The Committee supported the continuation of both elements over the next two years, highlighting some priority areas for further development.

Distance Learning at Scale

The Committee received an update on the Distance Learning at Scale pilot, which aims to build, test and prove the University's and its partners' capability and capacity to plan, create and execute distance learning at scale without compromising quality. LTC advised on some aspects of the development, agreeing that those studying for credit on this provision would have full student status, and that further work would be undertaken over the summer regarding arrangements for student support services.

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

Senate Committee Dates for 2018/19

Senate	E-Senate	LTC	CSPC	REC	QAC
3 Oct 2018	11-19 Sep 2018	19 Sep 18	20 Sep 18	25 Sep 18	20 Sep 18
		14 Nov 18	22 Nov 18	6 Nov 18	6 Dec 18
6 Feb 2019	15-23 Jan 2019	23 Jan 19	24 Jan 19	15 Jan 19	28 Feb 19
		13 Mar 19	21 Mar 19	12 Mar 19	25 Apr 19
29 May 2019	7-15 May 2019	22 May	30 May 19	14 May 19	23 May 19

Report from Curriculum & Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

Documentation for the meetings held on 22 March, 13 April and 31 May 2018 is available at
http://edin.ac/2y83LIO

Key points discussed included:

Industrial Action
At its exceptional meeting on 13 April 2018, the Committee approved a set of guidelines and concessions to mitigate the academic impact on students of the industrial action while maintaining academic standards. These guidelines are available at
https://edin.ac/2MXirDe

New and Revised Policies
The Committee has agreed a range of new and revised policies and regulations which will take effect in 2018-19 (including those highlighted below). Once finalised, these documents will be available at

http://edin.ac/2r1Wc3M.

Assessment Arrangements for Postgraduate Taught Degrees
(https://edin.ac/2trrW5z Paper B)

Following the work of a task group with representation from across the Colleges and the Students' Association, and broad consultation with Schools and other stakeholders, the Committee approved some changes to assessment arrangements for postgraduate taught degrees. The most significant change is that MSc students achieving a marginal fail (45-49%) at the first attempt will be entitled to one dissertation/research project resubmission attempt. The Committee also agreed that students may be awarded the degree with Merit or Distinction where they have failed up to 40 credits of courses but met other requirements, and approved new guidance for students regarding supervision arrangements for dissertations/research projects.

In addition to approving these changes for 2018-19, the Committee agreed to undertake further work in 2018-19 regarding the proposed removal of the elevated pass mark (50%) on postgraduate taught courses and programmes, and of the progression hurdle between the taught and research components of Masters programmes. The Committee will be consulting Schools and Colleges as part of this work in due course.

Shared Academic Timetabling Policy and Guidance
(https://edin.ac/2trrW5z Paper A)

The Committee approved revisions to this policy in order to reflect the evolution of timetabling processes and service as well as business changes introduced as a result of the Service Excellence Programme.

Policy on Authorised Interruption of Studies (AIS)
(https://edin.ac/2trrW5z Paper C)

The Committee approved a new policy regarding interruption of study, which signals a more permissive approach to allowing students to take a break from their studies. The policy also provides greater clarity regarding when students can request an interruption to their studies, and what their status is during a period of interruption.

Academic Misconduct
(https://edin.ac/2trrW5z Paper E)

The Committee endorsed a plan for future University-level activities in relation to academic misconduct, and agreed some revisions to the University's procedures for investigating academic misconduct. The Committee plans a more fundamental review of these procedures in 2018-19.

Publication of Results for Semester 1 Postgraduate Taught Courses
(https://edin.ac/2trrW5z Paper I)

The Committee agreed to change the date by which Schools must publish results of Semester 1 PGT courses whose assessment was complete during or immediately following Semester 1 to 22 February 2019. This recognises the fact that some PGT course teams find it challenging to meet the existing deadline of 31 January for publication of Semester 1 course results because of the common practice at PGT level of setting January deadlines for final coursework assessment for Semester 1 courses.

In agreeing to extend this deadline, the Committee emphasised that Schools must hold Boards of Examiners early in Semester Two for these Semester One courses because providing students with certainty regarding their final course outcomes as early as possible supports a positive student experience, and allows students to approach their Semester 2 courses with clarity regarding their current progression status. Moreover, holding Boards of Examiners soon after Semester 1 prevents delay in providing outcomes to students who have requested consideration of Special Circumstances, which supports students' wellbeing, and can allow students an early opportunity to complete any missed or failed assessment during Semester 2.

Service Excellence Programme - Special Circumstances, Coursework Extensions, Work and Study Away
(https://edin.ac/2tymzld Papers A, B and C)

The Committee has continued to engage with the Service Excellence Programme (SEP) regarding the academic policy implications of SEP's proposals for changes to business processes regarding special circumstances and coursework extension arrangements. The Committee has also approved changes to the University's Degree and Assessment Regulations for 2018-19 to support SEP's plans for a single Work and Study Away Service, and associated processes and systems changes.
For further information about any CSPC matter, please contact
ailsa.taylor@ed.ac.uk

Report from Researcher Experience Committee (REC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 20 April 2018 is available at http://edin.ac/1Q528n5

Enlightenment Scholarships
REC received an update on progress regarding the implementation of these Scholarships, including the practical arrangements for the management of these scholarships, and the establishment of a management group which will replace the current Implementation Group. Dr Antony Maciocia is acting as the academic lead for the scholarships, and will be communicating with Schools over the summer.

Task Groups
(https://edin.ac/2JV44xf Paper B)

The Committee agreed to establish two short-life task groups on the status of PhD students after the submission of the thesis, and the practical operation of PhD with Integrated Study programmes.

Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students
(https://edin.ac/2JV44xf Paper D)

A new design and draft content for the Code was agreed in principle by REC. The Code will retain its familiar title, but will be presented in a more concise and usable format. The finalised document will be published over the summer.
For further information about any REC matter, please contact susan.hunter5@ed.ac.uk
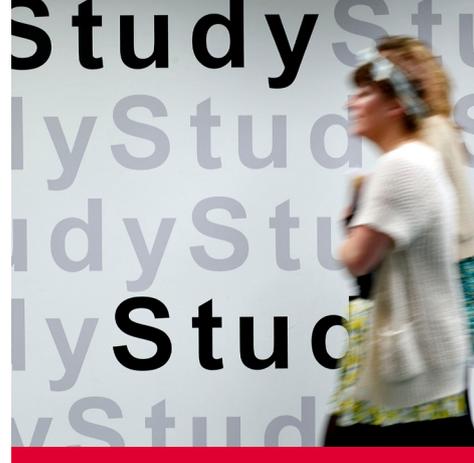
Report from Quality Assurance Committee

Documentation for the meetings held on 26 April and 24 May 2018 is available at http://edin.ac/1MUwq8L

Undergraduate Degree Classification
(https://edin.ac/2MHQrmW Paper B)

The Committee discussed the annual report on degree classification outcomes of successfully exiting undergraduates, and a paper highlighting sector trends in undergraduate degree classification outcomes. The proportion of first class degrees being awarded by UK higher education institutions is increasing and this trend has stimulated political interest in relation to the possible implications for academic standards. While its patterns of degree classification outcomes are broadly in line with Russell Group comparators, the Committee agreed that the University should continue to monitor subject areas for patterns which diverge substantially from either the institution average or disciplinary comparators. In addition to arrangements already in place, the Committee agreed some additional steps including giving the issue greater profile within the annual quality review process.

Industrial Action
(https://edin.ac/2MHQrmW Paper G)

The Committee discussed the University's approach to monitoring the impact of the recent industrial action on the quality of the student experience, and agreed to use the annual quality review process to review the impact the industrial action may have had on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment.

Thematic Review
(https://edin.ac/2JVEyfB, Paper B)

The Committee received a progress report on this year's Thematic Review of Support for Mature Students and Student Parents and Carers. The review is currently in the consultation phase and the panel has held a number of meetings with students and staff stakeholders from across the Support Services. The Committee agreed that the consultation period would be extended over the summer in order to give younger parents and carers further opportunities to participate. A final report identifying good practice and areas for enhancement will be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee.

The Committee also agreed that Widening Participation will be the focus of the Thematic Review in 2018-19 in light of the recent approval by the University Court of the new Widening Participation Strategy. The review will focus on exploring the University's current position in relation to the aspects of the Strategy relating to the student (as opposed to applicant) experience ie. the 'Support to Succeed' and 'Support to Progress' sections.

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

March / June 2018
Meetings covered by the March / June 2018 Edition

Date	Committee
14 March, 23 May	LTC
22 March, 31 May	CSPC
20 April	REC
26 April, 24 May	QAC
8 – 16 May	E-Senate
30 May	Senate