

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Education Committee

Thursday 12th September 2024 9am-12pm

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 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9th May 2024	SEC 24/25 1A
3.	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convener's communications	
4.	SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS	
4.1	Student Experience Update+ Student Support Model Project: Closure and Handover For noting	SEC 24/25 1B
4.2	Student Surveys Update+ National Student Survey 2024 and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2024 Results and Responses For noting and discussion Paper closed due to being commercial in confidence.	SEC 24/25 1C CLOSED
4.3	Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030+ For noting	Verbal update
4.4	Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2024/25 For information and discussion	SEC 24/25 1D
4.5	Senate Education Committee Business 2024/25 For noting and discussion	SEC 24/25 1E
5.	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING	
5.1	Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24 For noting and endorsement	SEC 24/25 1F
5.2	Learn Ultra: Evaluation Report For information	SEC 24/25 1G

5.3	FLORA (Digital Exams) Update For noting	SEC 24/25 1H
5.4	Learning Analytics Policy Review 2024/2025 For noting	SEC 24/25 1I
5.5	Membership and Terms of Reference 2024/25 For noting	SEC 24/25 1J
5.5	Assessment and Feedback Groups* For noting	Verbal update
5.6	Curriculum Transformation** For noting	Verbal update
6.	Any Other Business	
7.	Date of next meeting Thursday 7 th November 2024, 2-5pm Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House & Microsoft Teams	

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Education Committee

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

1. Attendance

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

Lauren Harrison	Senior Project Officer (Students)
Teresa Ironside	Director of Data Science Education, Bayes Centre
Lindsay Jack	Director of Student Experience, Edinburgh Law School
Kirsten Roche	Careers and Employability Lead, Careers Service

2. Minutes of meeting held on 7th March 2024

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2024.

3. Matters Arising

- **Curriculum Transformation – Challenge Courses**

Members referenced concerns by Senate about undergraduate challenge courses, with regard to directions regarding the approval and role of challenge courses at both the central University and College levels, as well as the role of Senate Education Committee (SEC).

Members noted that activity is underway in each of the Colleges to develop challenge courses and questioned whether this was in conflict with the recommendation at Senate regarding School ownership. In response relevant members of SEC noted how this matter was being progressed in Colleges. Within CAHSS, consultation with Schools and relevant committees has been initiated. Specific existing courses have been identified as potentially being piloted as challenge courses during 2024/25. However, a decision is yet to be made on developing a formal College strategy for CTP. Colleagues within CSE are considering piloting challenge courses as an opportunity to examine how they interact with existing programmes. Proposition papers relating to CTP will be presented to Management and Education Committees within CSE, but they do not propose to establish new policy. CMVM are working to develop new courses which meet the remit of a challenge course.

The Convener clarified that Senate had agreed that challenge courses will not be mandatory within programme archetypes. Conceptually however, challenge courses should be regarded positively and could potentially be expanded from pre-honours into honours years. It is the responsibility of the Colleges to consider how to develop and embed challenge courses within their curricula as appropriate; there is no University-level policy or strategy that dictates what Colleges can or cannot do within this context. Many SEC members are also on the University's CTP Board and work is ongoing to stress-test programme archetypes. It was also noted how clearly some programmes will continue to not have the appropriate curriculum 'bandwidth' to accommodate students electing to take challenge courses - for example the need to meet external accreditation requirements. Colleges will continue to consider these issues as CTP work moves forward and this will inform and be informed by future discussions and subsequent resolutions at both Senate and SEC.

4. Substantive Items

4.1 Student Experience Update: 'Watch That Gap' Project Report

The paper was presented by the Director of Student Experience within the Edinburgh Law School. Committee members were informed that the report uses the University's definition of student carers and EUSA's definition of student parents. The project sought to capture the experience of those students who were experiencing difficult personal circumstances but did not qualify for exceptional circumstances. Although the report focuses on student parents and carers, the report's outcomes apply to other broad student cohorts. The report identifies areas of good practice, such as the Edinburgh Cares team and how they support students, as well as the ESC team and creative initiatives within Schools. It is queried however whether the University places too much expectation on students to be able to navigate the support resources available to them, and whether access to support can in some instances take too long. In terms of what more can be done to address this as an institution, the report recommends a bespoke package of modifications such as the earlier release of timetables and the availability of recordings across all lectures. The recommended modifications are intended to be a starting point for wider work in the longer term around equipping staff to best support students.

Committee members raised the following comments:

- The population of online students and how they could benefit from this work should be considered.
- It would be particularly useful for PGR students if they were not required to further evidence caring responsibilities, for example school holidays, when submitting interruption of study requests.
- It would be positive to see actionable outcomes as a result of this work, such as evaluating the future appropriateness of the ESC case management system.
- Intersectionality is important. Staff should be aware that caring responsibilities for students can fluctuate between academic years.
- There is different practice across Schools and SCQF levels with regard to lecture recording. Making lecture recordings universal could be very challenging in some settings, such as in areas where small group teaching is dominant.
- To what extent have we reflected on the understanding of international students considering themselves as carers? How will this work communicate itself to international students?

Members were informed that the intention moving forward is that this work will be differentiated from the University's Widening Participation team and Disability and Learning Support Service. While specific colleagues will lead on taking this work forward, it should be communicated that this wider responsibility applies to all staff at the University. The Deputy Secretary, Students highlighted the importance of clear actions being identified to take forward this work collectively across the institution. Staff are welcome to share this report with students, with the caveat that it is made clear that the recommendations are currently being finalised.

4.2 Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030: Update on Development

The Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) presented the paper, informing members that while the strategy is still being refined, approval in principle is sought for the strategy's three central areas of focus and their direction of travel. Approval in principle would facilitate further development of the strategy, as well as progress how to implement the key focus areas and measure their success. Wide consultation has already taken place with feedback being taken into consideration, such as making explicit the strategy's focus on staff. The aim is to bring the finalised strategy back to SEC at its first meeting of 2024/25 for formal approval.

The Committee approved the draft strategy in principle and noted the following comments:

- The ringed diagram (p.5) received positive feedback, particularly around its clarity and granularity.
- A holistic depiction of staff would be welcomed, supporting staff awareness of how their research and teaching underpins the strategy.
- In terms of staff agency, it would be helpful if staff felt sufficiently supported in developing new curriculum proposals and navigating approval processes. It was noted that staff agency should be taken forward across a number of areas and is incorporated into the existing People and Research & Innovation strategies.
- While the strategy takes account of CTP, it also addresses curriculum development in its broadest sense. Some but not all elements of the strategy will be delivered via CTP. For example, the curriculum being challenge-led is a key ethos of the strategy, however, while challenge courses being able to promote this, it is not solely dependent on the introduction of challenge courses. This enables Schools and Colleges to deliver on the strategy in addition to CTP.
- The wording of "*curriculum for the 21st century*" was queried, given that almost a quarter of the century has now passed.
- Consideration could be given to whether the strategy states ambitions around staff teaching qualifications, taking in to account the QAA Quality Code and the number of staff who have achieved AdvanceHE fellowships.

Members were provided with a link to the SharePoint site for further details around the development of the strategy. Moving forward, the Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) highlighted that she would be happy to discuss the strategy in more details with Schools should they require any further information relating to the strategy.

4.3 Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report

The Committee was presented with an annual update on the UK-wide Graduate Outcomes Survey of graduate destinations. The University is obliged to undertake this survey and graduates are contacted by HESA 15 months after completion of their programme. 4,700 graduates responded for 2023, representing a 40% response rate. The response rate has declined, primarily due to HESA no longer telephoning international graduates. Data for 2023 is difficult to compare to recent years due to the Covid pandemic and industrial action. Graduate employment has remained resilient in spite of this, with 95% in employment or further study and unemployment rates falling. It was noted that graduates from particular demographics are facing barriers to highly skilled employment post-graduation, particularly those with a widening participation marker or those with a disability.

The Convener noted that the Academic Strategy Group had previously received this report and discussed the variation in data between Schools. Members discussed addressing career readiness amongst current students and how best to provide graduate support via expanding making transitions personal to every year group. Comments were raised around whether students could be surveyed on career readiness each academic year, whereby data can be shared with Student Advisors who can subsequently discuss feedback and forward-planning with individual students. It was noted whether the intentionality of student development teams in terms of scaffolding support could be further enhanced.

Committee members noted that while some Schools already facilitate students meeting employers and organise student placements, it would be helpful if good practice across the University was visible. It was further noted that there has been a trend in some Schools whereby investment in student development and management of relevant skills are empowering students to feel more confident in their direction of travel. Some Schools are enlisting the support of the Careers Service to help embed relevant skills in the curriculum from the 1st year of undergraduate programmes onwards.

4.4 Update on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Learning & Teaching

The Committee was provided with an update on the CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching, noting that the Framework had been reaccredited in 2023 by AdvanceHE against the new professional standards framework. The University of Edinburgh is one of the first higher education institutions within the UK to be reaccredited. The Framework is working well, with participation across all elements of the CPD Framework returning to pre-pandemic levels. Staff who are not completing CPD provision are often citing difficulty to allocate sufficient time to CPD and would appreciate time commitments and recognition for learning and teaching CPD activity to be built into workload allocation models (WAMs). It was highlighted that this should also apply to staff without WAMs.

The Committee was informed that there is spare capacity on the new Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP) programme and members were encouraged to share details with their colleagues, particularly teaching fellows and new lecturers. It was noted that lower enrolments on the PgCAP could be attributed to a greater extent of activity during standard working hours which makes it difficult for staff to commit to completing the programme. Volunteer trained assessors are also being sought. There is a strong appetite for more local mentoring schemes as part of the Edinburgh Teaching Award. Mentor training typically takes place during teaching time however alternative timings could be explored.

4.5 Postgraduate Research Culture Action Plan

The Committee was informed that the PGR Culture Action Plan builds on and contextualises the commitments made to the improvement of research cultures through the University Research Cultures Action Plan (RCAP). The University's new Postgraduate Research Lead will have oversight of the action plan. The action plan and its outcomes have been aligned under the five main drivers of RCAP, some of which are granular and more straightforward to implement, whereas others are broader and more likely to be longer term actions. Results

from the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) indicated that research culture is an area for development within the University, which requires proactive enhancement work. Comments on the action plan were sought from SEC members to be fed back via the Doctoral College.

The Committee flagged that the provision of student support for PGR students was a noticeable omission from the University's student support model and that the Committee should emphasise the need to address this within the action plan. It was noted that PGR had been overlooked when the University created RCAP, which in itself demonstrates an issue with PGR culture given that PGR students were not at the heart of this work. The Committee discussed the use of peer support amongst PGR students, with feedback indicating that junior PhD students would appreciate peer support from senior PhD students, and whether more local peer-support networks could be established. In terms of supervisory practice, it was noted that some Schools involve the PGR Director in year 1 reviews. However, while efforts are being made to develop more consistent guidelines to address common issues, it will be difficult to implement a universal solution as many PGR leads are already required to manage very high workloads.

Committee members discussed space resource for PGR students, with it being noted that many PGR students have fed back negatively on the use of hot-desking. It was queried whether a new central space could be created specifically for the use of PGR students. Members noted that a new Space Advisory Group has been established which will audit all central spaces and identify whether there is any availability for PGR students, as well as optimising space. The Old Kirk Project is also being revisited.

The Committee encouraged Schools to utilise annual monitoring as a process to evaluate PGR provision and that this should be made explicit within the action plan.

4.6 Student Partnership Agreement 2024-25

The Committee noted the content of the proposed University of Edinburgh Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) and its priority areas for 2024-25. The priority areas are supported by SPA Funding which is available for small partnership projects involving students and staff. It was highlighted that priorities have been adapted to reflect increasing concerns around wellbeing, mental health, cost of living and accommodation challenges.

The Committee endorsed the SPA and approved the agreement for 2024-25.

4.7 Senate Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review

The Committee was presented with plans for the annual review of Senate Standing Committees' effectiveness, in alignment with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance. As a result of the review, Registry Services will seek to use responses to help develop and track key performance indicators. The review process will evaluate effectiveness across four broad areas. Registry Services are aiming to undertake benchmarking in relation to how other higher education institutions conduct this exercise.

In terms of further consultation, the Committee suggested that members of staff external to the committee are surveyed. Staff resource within Academic Services would need to be considered should further consultation be undertaken, however consultation via the University's Directors of Teaching Network may be the optimal route to conduct this if required. It was further noted that student members would need to be consulted prior to demitting their roles if possible. It was queried whether metrics are available regarding engagement with the Senate Committees' Newsletter. While feedback on the Newsletter has been positive, metrics will need to be checked.

Action: Academic Services to consider surveying staff external to the committee and timing of the survey to ensure Sabbatical Officers are able to contribute.

Action: Academic Services to confirm if engagement metrics regarding the Senate Committees' Newsletter are available.

5. Items for Information / Noting

5.1 Committee Priorities 2024/25

The Committee noted the proposed SEC priorities for 2024/25 and provided no further comments. The Standing Committees' proposed priorities will be reported to Senate later in May 2024 for endorsement.

5.2 Membership and Terms of Reference 2024/25

The Committee noted the SEC membership and terms of reference for 2024/25. SEC membership will be presented for approval to Senate later in May, with Senate representatives to be confirmed following the Senate elections process.

5.3 Tutors & Demonstrators Update

Committee members received a verbal update on tutors and demonstrators, noting that this is a key priority action from the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR). A central sub-committee will be created to oversee the governance underpinning this staff cohort. This will be a sub-committee of the Staff Experience Committee as this is primarily an HR responsibility, and discussions have been held with the Convener of that Committee to help organise the approval of the sub-committee in June 2024.

Members were informed that Schools are to be consulted on their plans relating to the recruitment and training of tutors and demonstrators in order to explore what would be required for University-wide baseline training. Some training models are already in place within Colleges and efforts will be made to build upon these existing models. The uptake of training across Schools will be monitored. One School is developing an online system to develop and monitor training and the sub-committee will work with ISG to explore rolling this system out more widely across the University.

The Committee discussed the need to produce data around identifying PGR students who teach that have undertaken training, in order to better understand the scale of the issue, as well as respond to the relevant QESR recommendation. It was noted that practical steps could be taken during 2024/25 to achieve this. A more systematic process could subsequently be introduced from 2025/26. While the QESR recommendation only focuses on PGR students who teach, this workstream will cover all tutors and demonstrators, irrespective of whether they are a PGR student. Comments were noted around how standardising training could help address the inequity of training provision across Schools. While there is an initial focus on training, longer term consideration will take place with regard to recruitment and fair access to teaching across the University.

5.4 Assessment and Feedback Groups

The Committee was informed that the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group had not met since the last meeting of SEC. Assessment and feedback is however also being considered by the External Quality Review Oversight Group, specifically around the QESR recommendation regarding feedback turnaround times and quality of feedback. Members noted that work to embed the moderation of feedback quality within moderation processes is being taken forward by Colleges. The Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) and the Deputy Secretary (Students) are in discussion with Internal Audit colleagues to explore whether the methodology underpinning feedback audit work carried out within the Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences can be rolled out more widely across the University.

The Committee noted that positive discussions have been held with Colleges in relation to assessment and feedback data monitoring. School teaching offices which have supported the capture of initial data relating to feedback turnaround times were thanked as this has helped identify where action should be focussed moving forward. The Deputy Secretary (Students) highlighted that a note of thanks had been passed on to College Office teams but welcomed suggestions of other colleagues to send thanks on to such as Heads of School or Heads of teaching administration within Schools.

5.5 Generative AI

The Committee noted QAA Scotland's event taking place on 11 June, exploring the current picture of assessment in an AI world across Scotland and beyond. A link to register for the event was included in the meeting agenda. Members noted that a similar presentation was recently provided at a town hall event within the University and that it would be useful to invite the speakers to a future meeting of SEC.

6. Any Other Business

Members who were stepping down from SEC at the end of 2023/24 were thanked for their input. Senate representatives were also thanked and the constructive value of representatives from Senate on SEC was noted.

The Committee discussed moving to holding four 3-hour meetings per year from 2024/25. It was noted that moving from five to four meetings will help with agenda planning and

progressing actions, as there will be more time available in between meetings. The Committee supported this approach.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Dates of SEC meetings for 2024/25 are yet to be confirmed however it is anticipated that the next meeting will take place on Thursday 12 September, 9am – 12noon.

Action: Academic Services to confirm 2024/25 meeting dates and issue invites to members.

Senate Education Committee

12 September 2024

Student Support Model Project Closure and Handover

Description of paper

1. This paper reports on the successful completion of the Student Support Model Implementation Project and confirms the next steps to ensure the model continue to be embedded in the University whilst maintaining fidelity to the model and consistency of experience for students.

Fit with remit

Education Committee	Y/N
Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners.	Y
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.	Y
Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback.	Y
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.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested/Recommendation

2. To note the paper and support the handover approach as presented.

Background and context

3. Our new model of student support is a sector-leading approach to respond to the needs of students. Specifically, it ensures students have appropriate academic guidance, and personal and wellbeing support, with these working in alignment and focused on improving the transactional and transitional experiences of students over their lifecycle.

4. The previous model, based on a personal tutor as the students' key contact, did not have the level of consistency necessary to support the diversity of student needs - in levels of care, expertise, content, and time commitment. Academic guidance and advice are critical – and will always be part of our core offering - but when it goes

beyond this it faces challenges, especially with student needs and expectations spanning beyond academic support.

5. The new model supports distinct aspects of student life with appropriate staff commitments and roles:

- Student Advisers are a team of professional colleagues assigned to each School, but cross-institution as a team of support. These staff proactively engage with students, especially during key transitions, and provide day-to-day advice to all students in each School.
- Wellbeing Advisers provide specialist mental health and wellbeing support in each School as part of the central Student wellbeing teams. These staff provide a layer of support between the student advisers and the specialist counselling and disability services to provide proactive and reactive wellbeing support for students.
- Cohort Leads are academics who provide strong disciplinary leadership, with specific responsibility for providing advice and guidance on programme matters and building a sense of belonging among members of the programme cohort.
- Strengthened Peer Assisted Learning Schemes further enhance and promote peer support available.
- Continued recognition of the role the academic teachers play in supporting students to transition into and through their studies both within and alongside the curriculum.

6. The overall aim is to benefit our students – to ensure that they have access to consistent levels of timely, professional, empathetic support covering both academic and pastoral matters from within their School, providing support in a more cohort or community-focused environment for students when and where they need it.

7. The key deliverables were:

- Introducing a consistent student peer-led model of support within Schools and Deaneries, with new roles identified.
- Defining, recruiting, training new student support roles, and providing robust guidance and ways of working
- Providing a named Student Adviser to students as a point of contact who can help resolve issues and/or signpost to the relevant team and to provide proactive support to underpin their studies
- Introducing academic Cohort Leads to build a sense of belonging and community, alongside guidance for wider teaching teams on how they can continue to provide support to students
- Introduce a new service aimed at supporting wellbeing of students
- Establishing clear governance structures and standards via new/updated policies and frameworks

8. We undertook the implementation of the model through a phased approach commencing in September 2022. New taught students (undergraduate and postgraduate) who joined the University in 2022/23 in Schools in the College of Science and Engineering, one School in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and five Schools in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science are now benefiting from the new Student Support Model. The School of Economics additionally introduced the model to years 2 and 3 undergraduates as well as new UG/PGT students. Full implementation of the model, across all Schools and taught students, took place from September 2023

9. The implementation has been a partnership approach with a central project team supporting College implementation groups, overseen by the Project Board, including student representation from EUSA. Throughout phase 1 and 2, we undertook assessment and monitoring through surveys and focus groups with students and staff to allow us to evaluate the impact of the new model, and make improvements, as required.

10. The formal project has now concluded.

Discussion

Project Closure

11. The project formally closed on 31 July 2024, having successfully implemented the new model and achieved its deliverables set out above. The Implementation Project Closure Report was approved by the Project Board on 1 July 2024.

12. The Report provides a detailed reflection on the implementation in terms of approach, outcomes and deliverables, resources and investment. It has sections which will be discussed in detail by UIPB at its meeting in October, on lessons learned, principles for future student experience projects and follow-on actions. Two areas are outlined below for Senate Education Committee to be aware of.

Handover

13. A Student Support Handover has been established to ensure the model continues to be monitored and evaluated, with quality assurance and continuous improvement processes established. In particular, it sets out the role of College Oversight Groups and a cross-University Student Support Continuous Improvement Group (SSCIG). These groups are now established.

Fidelity

14. To ensure consistency and fidelity to the new model is maintained, a [Student Support Framework](#) was approved by Senate Education Committee, with a review due in one year. This document sets out responsibilities between existing quality assurance groups, Heads of Schools, and the Deputy Secretary Students.

15. The groups required in the Handover document will take a coordinating role to ensure the importance of reviewing and adapting the model through a continuous improvement approach to ensure University-wide consistency of experience for students across the University.

16. [Guidance](#) on practical application of the Framework has also been published for staff.

Evaluation & Monitoring

17. The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team within Registry Services will coordinate long term evaluation and monitoring of student support provision to ensure envisaged benefits of the changes to student support are being realised.

18. The logic model which we will use was developed through the team working with Professor John Devaney, Head of SPS, and with input from staff across the University, available for review here: [Quality Assurance of the Student Support Model](#).

19. Colleges and Schools will be asked to provide updates on the effectiveness of student support in the annual monitoring process in relation to these outcomes. Directors of Quality should work with Directors of Students and Student Adviser line managers to understand the effectiveness of student support in these areas. To support the evaluation, the model provides suggested data sources and specific data items.

Resource Implications

20. There are no specific resource requests in this paper. Schools, College and Student Experience Services will continue to ensure that the model is appropriately resourced, and in a way that upholds the principles of consistency for its implementation.

Risk Management

21. Failure to address student experience is our highest rated risk on the University Risk Register. This would mean we have not met our strategic ambitions as set out in Strategy 2030, nor fulfilled the related QAA recommendation. It carries reputational risk and continues to affect the University's standing in national league tables. The Student Support Model is a significant mitigating activity to respond to this risk.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

22. This paper supports the SDG "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" as part the strategic objective to improve student experience. The proposals would not hinder the achievement of any other UN SDGs or exacerbate the Climate Emergency.

Equality & Diversity

23. Relevant Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) was completed as part of the implementation of the project. The ongoing monitoring and evaluation will seek to support greater equality, diversity and inclusion for students within our community.

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

24. This paper presents an update to note. We will continue to promote and communicate the benefits of the student support model to students and staff. Evaluation activity is noted above.

Authors

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Deputy Secretary Students

Lisa Dawson
Academic Registrar

September 2024

Freedom of Information: Open

Presenter

Lucy Evans
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Senate Education Committee

12 September 2024

Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for 2024/25

Description of paper

1. This paper notes the priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education and the Sabbatical team for 2024-25.

Fit with remit

Education Committee	Y/N
Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners.	Y
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.	Y
Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback.	Y
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.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. For information and discussion.

Background and context

3. Each year a report is presented to the Senate standing committees on the priorities of the student representatives for the coming year.

Discussion

4. See attached paper.

Resource implications:

5. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have resource implications. These will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

Risk management:

6. The risk of any action arising from the ideas discussed in the paper will be assessed if specific action is proposed.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals:

7. This paper does not itself directly impact the SDGs or Climate Emergency, but this will be considered when specific actions are proposed or progressed.

Equality & diversity:

8. The ideas discussed in the paper aim to encourage and support equality, diversity, and inclusion. The equality impact of any specific actions arising from the paper will be assessed once the actions are proposed.

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

9. This will be agreed if specific actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper are identified.

Author

Callum Paterson

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Presenter

Dylan Walch

Vice President Education 2024-25
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Freedom of Information: *Open*

Priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education for 2024-25:

- Advocate for transparency and accountability in University decision-making, giving students the power to shape their experience. This includes work around informed decision making for students, allowing them to make properly informed course choices and learning support conversations, and empowering student representatives with data so they can be more effective.
- Enhance students' experience of interacting with the University, by streamlining key processes and setting high standards of service delivery. This includes making student support services easier to identify and navigate, exploring improvements to PATH to make course choice easier, and assuring the quality of lecture recordings.
- Empower student leaders to create positive change within Schools, with strong governance, ensuring staff engage meaningfully with student feedback. This includes exploring pay and reward for student representatives, and ensuring they are key components of the feedback loop.

Shared priorities of the Sabbatical Officer team for 2024-25:

- Build a University for all, that centres student communities who have historically been marginalised, from international and Widening Participation students, to trans and Black and Minority Ethnic students.
- Make students' lives easier, ensuring they have what they need to thrive academically and personally, from affordable housing, transport, and food to accessible support services and academic processes.
- Lobby for institutional reform, whilst empowering students to create positive change, in accessible ways, on the issues that matter to them, from racial justice to the climate crisis.

Senate Education Committee

12 September 2024

Senate Education Committee Business 2024/25

Description of paper

1. This paper outlines the current priorities and areas of focus identified by the Senate Education Committee (SEC) for 2024/25 and how these will be progressed via committee business across the forthcoming academic year.

Fit with remit

Education Committee	Y/N
Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners.	Y
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.	Y
Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback.	Y
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.	Y
Anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in learning and teaching for all cohorts of students and learners.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. To note the current priorities of the Committee, and to consider the Committee's areas of focus and evaluate whether specific areas could be removed.
3. To discuss and inform the forward agenda for 2024/25 in line with the priorities, areas of focus and remit

Background and context

4. At its meeting in May 2024, the Committee noted the Senate Education Committee's priorities and its terms of reference for 2024/25. Senate Standing Committee Priorities were presented to Senate in May and June 2024 for

endorsement. However, Senate has not yet taken a decision on the paper and it will return to Senate in 2024/25.

5. During summer 2024, Registry Services undertook its annual internal effectiveness review of Senate Education Committee. Respondent feedback highlighted that the clarity and appropriateness of the SEC’s remit was one of the key areas in which enhancement activity should be focussed. This paper aims to ensure that business aligns with the Committee’s current remit, is manageable, and planned to enable objectives identified for the priorities to be achieved.
6. Members should also note the following recommendation from the external review of Senate is being progressed: “We recommend that the Vice Principal (Students) reviews the Terms of Reference, coverage and scope of the three Senate Committees with a view to identifying any overlap and considering if they together cover all university academic priorities.”

Discussion

7. The list of current Senate Education Committee priorities and areas of focus, as well as proposed business and actions are collated in tabular format below.

Priority	2024/25 SEC Business
Curriculum Transformation Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included as a standing item.
Student Experience – Student Survey Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of routine items aligned to this priority across the academic year. • Student experience update on the closure and handover of the Student Support Model Project, including strengthening staff-student relationships to come to September meeting.
Assessment & Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included as a standing item. • A&F Strategy Group will meet every two months and report back to SEC.
L&T Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalised L&T Strategy 2030 to come to November meeting for approval. • Reflections on progress across 2024/25 to come to May meeting.

Focus Area	2024/25 SEC Business
WP Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose to invite Laura Cattell to November meeting to provide a strategic update.
Awarding Gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose to include SQAC update at November meeting, covering

	awarding gap, annual monitoring, IPRs and any other key themes for 2024/25.
Staff Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within SEC’s remit: propose to remove this as an area of focus.
Small Group Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within SEC’s remit: propose to remove this as an area of focus.
Employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual report on Graduate Outcomes presented to May meeting.
Student Experience of Different Cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose to invite Laura Cattell to November meeting for WP update, • How else can the Committee consider the experience of different cohorts given the changing student profile (using evidence to identify cohorts)?
Estates / Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within SEC’s remit: propose to remove this as an area of focus.
Student Journey Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 NSS & PTES results, as well as institutional questions for NSS, PTES & PRES are all covered via routine SEC business.

8. The Committee is invited to comment on the proposed business for 2024/25 as outlined in paragraph 7 and appendix 1. Committee business should be aligned to the remit of the Committee, as stated in the SEC [Terms of Reference](#). Discussion may also be used to inform the review of Senate Standing Committee remits.

Resource implications

9. 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

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

Equality & diversity

11. 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

12. No changes to the current priorities are proposed, the paper aims to clarify how the areas of focus will be taken forward by the Committee. Senate receive a Standing Committee Upcoming Business report at each meeting and a mid-year reflection on Senate Standing Committee Priorities. Additionally, the Senate Committees' Newsletter provides information on standing committee business.

13. The Committee will reflect mid-year on progress with priorities and members will be able to provide feedback through the next SEC internal effectiveness review process.

Author

Patrick Jack
Registry Services
August 2024

Presenter

Colm Harmon
Vice Principal (Students)

Freedom of Information

Open

Appendix 1: Senate Education Committee Forward Agenda 2024/25

2024/25 Committee Priorities: Curriculum Transformation Programme; Student Experience – Responding to Student Survey Results; Assessment & Feedback; L&T Strategy

Areas of Focus: WP Strategy; Awarding Gaps; Staff Development; Small Group Teaching; Employability; Experience of Cohorts; Estates / Space; Student Journey Data

Standing Items: Curriculum Transformation; Assessment & Feedback Groups

Routine / Annual Business.

12 Sept 2024	Agenda Item	Author / Presenter
	Minutes – 9 May meeting	
	Matters Arising	Colm Harmon
	SEC Business 2024/25	Colm Harmon
	Student Experience Update – Student Support Model Project	Lucy Evans
	Learning & Teaching Strategy 2030	Tina Harrison
	Learn Ultra: Evaluation Report	Stuart Nicol
	Leaning Analytics Policy Review 2024-25	Stuart Nicol
	FLORA (Digital Exams) Update	Stuart Nicol
	Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24	Registry Services
	Student Surveys Update: NSS & PTES 2024 Results	Lucy Evans
	Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2024-25	EUSA VP Education
	Membership and ToR 2024/25	Registry Services
	Curriculum Transformation	Colm Harmon
	Assessment & Feedback Groups	Tina Harrison

14 Nov 2024	Agenda Item	Author / Presenter
	Minutes - 12 September meeting	
	NSS 2025 – Optional Questions	Marianne Brown
	Generative AI Update	Michael Rovatsos / Sian Bayne
	SQAC Themes: Annual Monitoring and IPRs.	Tina Harrison / Brian Connolly
	WP Strategy – Update (through lens of varying cohort experiences)	Laura Cattell
	Learning & Teaching Strategy 2030	Tina Harrison
	T&D Update	Antony Maciocia
	Curriculum Transformation	Colm Harmon

27 Feb 2025	Agenda Item	Author / Presenter
	Minutes – 14 November meeting	
	PTES & PRES – Institutional Questions 2025	Marianne Brown / Chantal Reilly
	Committee Priorities – Mid-year Reflection	Registry Services
	SEC Committee Priorities 2025/26	Registry Services
	School Accessibility Reviews	Melissa Highton
	Curriculum Transformation	
	Assessment & Feedback Groups	
	Assessment & Feedback Groups	Tina Harrison

1 May 2025	Agenda Item	Author / Presenter
	Minutes – 27 February meeting	
	Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report	Careers Service
	Student Partnership Agreement 2025-26	IAD
	Senate Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review	Registry Services
	SEC Committee Priorities 2025/26	Registry Services
	Membership and ToR 2025/26	Registry Services
	L&T Strategy 2030 Reflections	Tina Harrison
	T&D Update	Antony Maciocia
	Curriculum Transformation	
	Assessment & Feedback Groups	

Senate Education Committee

12 September 2024

Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

Description of paper

1. This paper provides Senate Education Committee with analysis and proposed actions drawn from the responses received to the Senate Standing Committees internal effectiveness review conducted in summer 2024.

Fit with remit

Education Committee	Y/N
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. To note the analysis of feedback received and comment on the proposed actions set out in Appendix 1, which is intended to aid continuous improvement of our approach to academic governance.

Background and context

3. The University is required under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance to carry out an annual internal review of Senate and its Committees which carry delegated responsibilities.
4. In summer 2024, Registry Services issued a questionnaire to Senate Standing Committee members and their responses were collated.

Discussion

5. An analysis of questionnaire responses received from members and proposed actions can be found in Appendix 1.
6. Proposed actions for the Standing Committee, in response to the feedback from members, are intended to be proportionate to the scope of an annual effectiveness review, and the volume of feedback received.
7. Senate will receive the analysis of responses and proposed actions for each Standing Committee in October.

Resource implications

8. The resource implications of the proposed actions will be considered within Registry Services alongside other Departmental work for 2024/25. Actions will be prioritised and taken forward in line with available resources and in consultation

with Senate Standing Committee Conveners. An update on progress with actions will be presented to a future meeting of the relevant Standing Committee.

Risk management

9. This activity supports the University's obligations under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.

Equality & diversity

10. The review provides an opportunity to identify any equality and diversity issues in the composition of Senate Standing Committees, and the way they conduct their business.

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

11. As detailed in paragraphs 7 and 8.

Author

Patrick Jack
Registry Services
August 2024

Presenter

Nichola Kett
Registry Services

Freedom of Information

Open

Appendix 1: Report of Senate Education Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

In 2023/24 Senate Education Committee had 29 members. The Convener, Vice-Convener, Secretary and representative from Registry Services did not take part in the survey. Therefore, of the remaining 25 members, 11 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire equating to a 44% response rate.

Good Practice

- The two respondents who were new members to SEC in 2023/24 both agreed that they received an effective induction when they joined the Committee.
- All members agreed or strongly agreed that SEC is supported effectively by Registry Services. Ten respondents were in agreement that the information provided supports effective decision-making by the Committee.
- Ten respondents agreed that the size of the Committee is appropriate for it to operate effectively.
- All respondents agreed they are clear on their role and responsibilities as a member of SEC, with nine members highlighting they are able to engage effectively with the Committee.
- Nine respondents agreed that equality and diversity are appropriately considered and promoted in the work of the Committee.

Areas for Development

Two central themes were identified from respondent feedback as being areas where the Senate Education Committee could seek to focus enhancement.

1) Committee Remit

- Three respondents disagreed that the remit of SEC is clear.
- Four respondents were not in agreement that the scope of the Committee's remit is appropriate.

Free text comments indicated that the remit of SEC is not as clear as the other two Senate Standing Committees. Feedback noted the ambiguity around whether SEC should maintain ownership of specific items and whether other key issues are not being allocated due focus by SEC or the other Standing Committees. Examples raised of this include assessment and feedback, widening participation and student experience matters. It was noted that SEC could enhance its integration with the other Standing Committees. Comments suggested that the remit and scope of the Committee could be reinforced across the academic year at each meeting.

2) Strategic Impact and Communication to the Wider University

- Four respondents disagreed that the work of the Committee is communicated effectively to the wider University. Only three members agreed.
- Three respondents were not in agreement that that the work of the Committee links to University strategic priorities.
- Four respondents were not in agreement that the work of the Committee makes a positive impact.

Free text comments highlighted that the impact of the Committee's decisions on staff and students should be given more consideration, particularly in cases where staff are required to implement proposals. Feedback noted that the decisions made by the Committee are not communicated clearly enough and at times it is unclear how these decisions are taken forward. Comments suggested that the Committee should consider diversifying its membership and input.

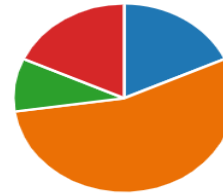
Proposed Actions

- In order to enhance the feedback rate, Registry Services propose to allocate time during the last Committee meeting of the academic year to provide members the opportunity to complete the internal effectiveness review survey. This will apply across all three Senate Standing Committees.
- Registry Services will update the paper template for Senate Standing Committees, listing the remits of each Committee and requesting authors highlight where their paper aligns.
- Continue to explore ways to diversify the membership of the Committee and effectively consider EDI matters.
- Review Senate Education Committee priorities and areas of focus during the first meeting of 2024/25, highlighting the actions being taken on how the Committee will meet its priorities.
- Committee members to discuss how the work of the Committee can be communicated effectively to the wider University.

1. The composition of the Committee enables it to fulfill its remit

[More Details](#)

● Strongly agree	2
● Agree	6
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	2
● Strongly disagree	0



2. The size of the Committee is appropriate for it to operate effectively

[More Details](#)

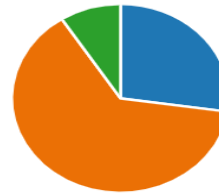
● Strongly agree	1
● Agree	9
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



4. The information provided supports effective decision-making by the Committee

[More Details](#)

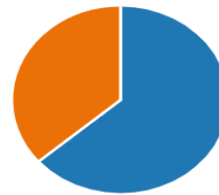
● Strongly agree	3
● Agree	7
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



5. The Committee is supported effectively by Registry Services

[More Details](#)

● Strongly agree	7
● Agree	4
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



6. For new members in 2023/24: I received an effective induction when I joined the Committee

[More Details](#)

● Strongly agree	0
● Agree	2
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



8. The Committee's remit is clear

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Strongly agree	4
● Agree	4
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	2
● Strongly disagree	1



9. The scope of the Committee's remit is appropriate

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

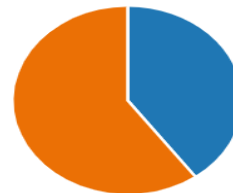
● Strongly agree	3
● Agree	4
● Neutral	2
● Disagree	2
● Strongly disagree	0



10. I am clear on my role and responsibilities as a member of the Committee

[More Details](#)

● Strongly agree	4
● Agree	6
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



11. I am able to engage effectively with and contribute to the work of the Committee

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Strongly agree	5
● Agree	4
● Neutral	2
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



13. The work of the Committee makes a positive impact

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Strongly agree	3
● Agree	4
● Neutral	2
● Disagree	2
● Strongly disagree	0



14. The work of the Committee links to University strategic priorities

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Strongly agree	3
● Agree	5
● Neutral	2
● Disagree	1
● Strongly disagree	0

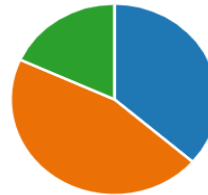


15. Equality and diversity are appropriately considered and promoted in the work of the Committee

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Strongly agree	4
● Agree	5
● Neutral	2
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



17. The work of the Committee is communicated effectively to the wider University

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Strongly agree	0
● Agree	3
● Neutral	4
● Disagree	4
● Strongly disagree	0



Senate Education Committee

12 September 2024

Learn Ultra Evaluation

Description of paper

1. In 2021, Learning, Teaching and Web (LTW) undertook a multi-year programme to upgrade the University’s core Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Learn and to engage colleagues across the University to use the new tools in new ways to enhance learning and teaching. As a strategic change project, an external evaluation was done to understand the impact of the change delivered.
2. This paper follows on from the March 2024 paper (SEC 23/24 4F) and provides Senate Education Committee access to the executive summary from the completed evaluation report (please see appendix one).
3. The evaluation report contributes to Strategy 2030 as the recommendations within the report support change projects in delivering more user-friendly processes and efficient systems to support our work.

Fit with remit

Education Committee	Y/N
Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners.	Y
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.	Y
Oversee policy relating to students’ academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback.	Y
Anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in learning and teaching for all cohorts of students and learners.	Y

<p>Consider the implications of the Committee’s work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.</p>	<p>Y</p>
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Action requested / recommendation

4. The committee is requested to **review** the executive summary from the evaluation report contained within this paper, **share** the Learn Ultra [evaluation report](#) as appropriate within their respective areas and **consider** how the recommendations for future change projects can be most usefully embedded.

Background and context

5. This paper presents the external evaluation report undertaken via the Learn Ultra Upgrade project and focuses on central decisions made by the governing board, steering groups and project teams.
6. In 2023, the Learn Ultra Upgrade project was also the subject of an internal audit, the output of which noted that the project was well planned and executed.

Discussion

7. During the Learn Ultra Upgrade project, it was identified early on that in order to ensure success, the project would need to be considered as more than a technical upgrade.
8. The evaluation of the Learn Ultra Upgrade project was undertaken by an external consultant to provide an independent overview of how the change was delivered and providing recommendations for future change projects at the University.
9. The evaluation report was shared with the Learn Ultra project board at the beginning of August who have approved and endorsed the report for sharing with this Senate Education Committee.
10. The evaluation report makes a number of recommendations, these are highlighted for stakeholders including ISG, local learning technologists, teaching office colleagues, academic colleagues and governance boards.

Resource implications

11. There are no further resource implications as a result of this paper, but the recommendations in the evaluation report will be used to guide planning and resourcing decisions for future projects.

Risk management

12. It is sometimes said that evaluation reports sit unread on shelves (or SharePoint). By bringing the report to this meeting and disseminating it more widely inside and out with the university (to peer institutions enabling similar programmes of change) we aim to mitigate that risk in this case.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

13. N/A

Equality & diversity

14. Where possible, intersectional approaches have been used to understand our data, acknowledging that different people experience our services in different ways.

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

15. The evaluation report has been shared with the project board who have been requested to circulate (as required) within their respective areas. The report will also be shared amongst key stakeholders as per the project communications strategy with key information available via the Learn Ultra SharePoint¹.

Author

*Lee-Ann Simpson
August 2024*

Presenter

Stuart Nicol

Freedom of Information: Open

¹ <https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/LearnUltra/SitePages/Learn-Ultra-Evaluation.aspx>

Appendix One

Executive Summary

Overview

- The University of Edinburgh's Learn Ultra upgrade aimed to enhance the virtual learning environment (VLE) to better support the diverse student body and align with other strategic initiatives and objectives.
- The Learn platform hosts over 6,000 courses with an average of 39,000 daily logins from students engaged in on-campus, online, and hybrid studies.
- The Learn Ultra upgrade project oversaw the successful upgrade of the University's VLE from Learn Original to Learn Ultra. It focused on improving usability and accessibility based on feedback from students and faculty, aiming to create a more user-friendly and inclusive learning environment.
- This report presents an evaluation of the key decisions made by the central Project Team that have led to the successful delivery of the upgrade project.
- The evaluation combines qualitative and quantitative data sources to provide a comprehensive analysis of the delivery of the Learn Ultra upgrade project:
 1. A campus-wide student survey that gathered responses from 391 undergraduate students on their experiences with Learn Ultra.
 2. Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including senior stakeholders, learning technologists, teaching office staff, academic colleagues, and relationship managers.
 3. Focus groups with the project's implementation and user groups.
 4. Profession-specific focus groups with learning technologists, teaching office staff, and academic colleagues.
 5. Secondary analysis of existing data sources, including user experience (UX) data, Early Adopter feedback, training feedback, and internal project reports.
- The evaluation identifies eight key overarching decisions made by the Project Team that have led to the success delivery:
 1. Upgrading the existing VLE, rather than procuring a new provider.
 2. Treating the upgrade as a Change project.
 3. Implementing a pluralistic governance framework.
 4. Extensive multimodal communications and engagement.
 5. Establishing the Early Adopter Programme.
 6. Creating an extensive training programme.
 7. Focusing on a user-centred upgrade approach.

8. Enhanced focus on accessibility.

Additionally, the evaluation identifies three themes that were found to be important to successful local upgrades:

1. Pro-active local Change approaches and project ownership.
2. Effective relationship-building and collaboration.
3. Tailored local training and ongoing support.

Attention to recommendations for large change projects

In the time that this evaluation has been written, the university has received other external reviews of large change projects.

The Information Services Group (ISG) was keen to build on recommendations produced by the People and Money (P&M) evaluation²; while P&M and the Learn Ultra upgrade differed greatly in their topics and scope, the P&M evaluation produced important recommendations for all University Change projects, including:

- *Building trust and collaboration*: Build trust with Colleges, Schools, Directorates, and other staff groups to foster a more collaborative environment.
- *Enhancing Change Management*: Continue and enhance focus on Change management, rather than approach projects as mere system implementations.
- *Effective Engagement*: Develop an approach for effective engagement with users, utilising representatives from various staff groups.
- *Sufficient Training*: Develop intuitive and informative training materials, and deliver training through dedicated sessions.
- *Reciprocal Communication*: Implement a communications plan for regular and effective stakeholder communication. Additionally, adopt a "you said, we did" approach to address feedback and demonstrate responsiveness, and regularly communicate progress and plans transparently.
- *Developing a Unified Roadmap*: Consolidate all plans (e.g., short-term, medium-term, long-term), into a single integrated roadmap, ensuring the roadmap provides clear milestones and deliverable dates to instil confidence in leadership, governance groups, and the wider organisation.
- *Quick Wins for Building Confidence*: Identify areas where substantial improvements can be made quickly to demonstrate progress and build confidence in the change process.

² [External Post Implementation Review of the People and Money Programme](#)

Defined Governance Structure: Clearly outline the overall governance structure, specifying where decisions are made and how they are communicated.

Upgrading the existing VLE, rather than procuring a new provider.

- The upgrade was aligned with Strategy 2030, supporting the University's strategic goal of enhancing the student experience, placing student needs and expectations at the forefront of educational technology development.
- Upgrading from Learn Original to Learn Ultra was necessary to maintain secure and robust integrations with existing online systems.
- A focussed market analysis concluded that there was no alternative VLE that could better meet the University's needs within the required timeframe. The merger between Blackboard and Anthology also promised an improved EdTech ecosystem.
- Upgrading to Learn Ultra minimised business continuity risks and avoided the significant costs and disruptions associated with switching to a new provider.
- The established working relationship with Blackboard also facilitated a smoother transition.

Approaching the upgrade as a Change project.

The Project Team approached the Learn Ultra upgrade as a Change project, emphasising stakeholder buy-in and enhanced change management:

- The project was guided by established change theory, specifically John Kotter's eight-step model for organisational transformation, which includes: creating urgency, forming a guiding coalition, developing a vision, communicating the vision, empowering action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains, and anchoring new approaches in the culture.
- A Change approach focuses on managing resistance, engaging stakeholders, ensuring effective communication, aligning with broader goals, and promoting continuous improvement rather than seeing the project as a one-time upgrade.
- This approach encouraged involvement from colleagues from across the University, fostering buy-in and addressing concerns more effectively, ensuring a smoother transition.

Robust communication strategies were employed to address concerns and facilitate a smoother transition, ensuring stakeholders were well-informed and engaged throughout the process.

Implementing a pluralistic governance framework.

- The project benefitted from a *Defined Governance Structure*: A Project Board was established to make key strategic decisions and supervise the overall progress of the upgrade.
- The Learning and Teaching Implementation Group (LTIG) provided guidance on issues relating to learning and teaching, representing learning technologists. Some academic colleagues were also members.
- The Technical Implementation Group (TIG) ensured all integrations worked well and liaised with Blackboard on software developments.
- The Academic User Group (AUG) represented the views of academic colleagues.
- The Professional Services User Group (PSUG) represented professional services stakeholders' interests during the project.
- Focus groups conducted with the implementation and user groups identified the key reasons that members thought their groups contributed to the project's overall success:
 1. Group meetings were good networking opportunities and allowed for information flow to colleagues across the University.
 2. Members could share good practices from their Schools and Colleges.
 3. Members gained valuable insights into software changes.
 4. Groups had diverse representation and voices, providing a comprehensive view of the upgrade's progress across different areas.

Extensive multimodal communications and engagement.

- The Project Team dedicated significant time and resource to developing effective communication and engagement strategies during the course of the upgrade.
- There was an extensive project of engagement with key stakeholders throughout the upgrade:
 1. *Round One*: Raising awareness of the project.
 2. *Round Two*: Gathering requirements from key stakeholders.
 3. *Round Three*: Embedding change in the University.

In between the rounds of engagements, the Project Team also met informally with School and College stakeholders, and attended various School and College committees to continue to raise awareness and provide project updates.

- The Project Team continually updated the University committees: the Information Technology Committee³, the Knowledge Strategy Committee⁴ and the Senate Education Committee.⁵
- Communication methods ranged from blog posts and website articles to conference presentations and posters.
- Regular updates were provided to stakeholders to ensure transparency and strategic buy-in from senior leaders and key stakeholders.
- Early adopters played a crucial role as ambassadors, disseminating information and driving enthusiasm within their respective Schools.

Establishing the Early Adopter Programme.

- The project benefitted from building trust and collaboration from the start. The Early Adopter Programme (EAP) was implemented to transition courses to Learn Ultra ahead of the full upgrade, engaging over 160 courses, representing all three Colleges, to gather insights for a smoother rollout.
- Good Practice Guidance provided comprehensive resources, streamlining course builds and encouraging meaningful discussions.
- Comprehensive training sessions and a flexible approach ensured relevance and responsiveness to feedback and updates.
- A Microsoft Teams channel facilitated collaborative learning and community building among colleagues.
- Involvement of diverse support teams within Information Services Group enhanced problem-solving and support provision.
- Positive feedback on course builds and ease of use of Learn Ultra reflected the Project Team's commitment to user input and improvement.
- Robust partnerships and relationship-building efforts with learning technologists and academic teams improved trust and facilitated collaboration.
- Cohesive teamwork among various support roles was instrumental in the programme's success, showcasing effective support throughout the upgrade.
- Learnings from the EAP informed the University-wide rollout in 2023/24.

Creating an extensive training programme.

- The Training and Support workstream focused on delivering a comprehensive training programme to Early Adopters prior to the full upgrade.

³ [Information Technology Committee](#)

⁴ [Knowledge Strategy Committee](#)

⁵ [Education Committee](#)

- The '10 Things to get Started in Learn Ultra' training programme for the full University rollout was designed to familiarise staff with the upgrade, with sessions running from March 2023 to January 2024.
- Maintaining a two-hour training course length was crucial: it was long enough to cover the most important features of Learn Ultra, and short enough for time-strapped colleagues to attend.
- The training schedule was crucial in three key ways:
 1. There was a high frequency of sessions, with sessions available weekly and during the summer.
 2. Courses were available both online and in-person across all locations on campus.
 3. Courses always ran regardless of attendance numbers and cancellations.
- Bespoke sessions were also offered as part of the training programme for any Schools who wished to have more tailored experiences.
- Training was shaped by user feedback and tailored to meet the needs of staff and students, with proactive recruitment techniques employed to promote uptake.
- A survey of 306 training participants showed overwhelmingly positive satisfaction levels, with high ratings for course duration, structure, coverage of essential areas, and increased confidence in creating accessible courses and improving the student and staff experience with Learn Ultra.

A user-centred upgrade approach

- The Project Team included user experience (UX) experts who conducted user research with staff and students prior to the University-wide upgrade to ensure a user-centred approach in implementing Learn Ultra.
- Usability testing with staff that focused on commonly performed tasks – which were identified through a 'top tasks' survey conducted during the Learn Foundations project⁶ - returned encouraging usability scores and positive feedback on the platform's shallower folder structure.

A similar research blueprint was applied to a group of students, with most reporting positive experiences and ease of completing top tasks on Learn Ultra.

- Student feedback highlighted preferences for consistent terminology and comprehensive scheduling information within the platform.
- The Project Team responded accordingly by:

⁶ [Learn Foundations](#)

1. Confirming course templates based on staff feedback and research insight
2. Adjusting content styling for accessibility and providing guidance on content structure.
3. Developing training and guidance for discussion boards, groups, activity stream, and calendar features.

Enhanced focus on accessibility.

- The Learn Ultra Project Team focused on enhancing accessibility through the upgrade, making key decisions to support this goal.
- Implementing the 'Ally' accessibility tool in Learn Ultra allowed for greater accessibility support, including alternative format downloads and suggestions for course improvements.
- Existing accessibility resources and initiatives - such as accessibility training sessions, guidance on creating accessible materials, and a student-led annual accessibility checklist and review process – were given more prominence during the project.
- Annual accessibility reviews, conducted through the Learn Foundations Internship programme, assessed courses against WCAG 2.1 guidelines and provided holistic and individual reports to participating Schools and Deaneries.
- Accessibility became a central theme in communications to senior staff and committee meetings, with discussions on Learn Ultra's accessibility features and the decision to embed mandatory accessibility reviews for all Schools following the March 2024 SEC meeting.⁷
- Learn Ultra's features, such as pronoun and name pronunciation options, improved navigation, universal design principles, responsive interface, and file transformation capabilities, were highlighted for their contribution to accessibility and inclusion.

Insights from interviews

- The analysis of stakeholder interviews revealed three key themes contributing to the positive local implementation of the project: proactive Change approaches, effective relationship building with key colleagues, and tailored local support and training.
- Local Stakeholders approached the upgrade as a Change project, emphasising the importance of local ownership alongside central guidance.
- Successful initiatives included proactive identification of heavily impacted courses and addressing change resistance through relationship building.
- Challenges included academic scepticism and change fatigue, necessitating trust building efforts and personalised approaches to gain buy-in.
- Good communication and collaboration across professions were vital for success, with relationships deepened through effective dissemination of project information.

⁷ [Senate Education Committee, minutes of meeting on 7 March 2024](#)

- Relationship building with the central Project Team facilitated efficient information flow and allowed for timely responses to academic queries.
- User and implementation groups played a key role in disseminating project news and fostering collaboration within local areas.
- Schools provided tailored support and training to address diverse academic needs, ensuring smooth transition to Learn Ultra.
- Proactive approaches to training and support, including frequent notifications and personalised sessions, were linked to positive project experiences.
- Adaptation of local approaches based on specific academic needs further enhanced support and facilitated successful implementation.

Insights from student survey

- The student survey findings provide valuable insights into the usability and satisfaction levels with Learn Ultra among undergraduate students.
- Students expressed high levels of satisfaction with Learn Ultra's usability.
- Among students who have no experience with the previous Learn Original VLE, the majority found accessing their courses on Learn Ultra easy.

Students with experience in both Original and Ultra generally found Ultra easier to use. Recommendations

The project's learnings have identified a number of general recommendations for project teams and groups, and colleagues across professions who will be engaging in similar upcoming projects:

ISG and other professional services

- *Learn lessons from other Change projects:* Reflect on the recommendations of previous strategic Change projects and how they feed into your own ongoing or upcoming projects.
- *Embed a 'Change' mentality in all projects:* Design and manage systems implementations and technical change projects as Change projects with a focus on people and culture as well as technology.

Project Teams

- *Effective Communication Strategies:* Establish an explicit communication strategy to facilitate transparent and timely communication with stakeholders. Use a combination of communication channels such as regular meetings, email updates, and Teams groups to ensure everyone is informed and aligned.
- *Stakeholder Engagement and Management:* Develop a stakeholder engagement and management plan to build relationships with key stakeholders throughout the project. Identify stakeholders, assess their interests and concerns, communicate regularly with them, and involve them in decision-making processes to ensure their buy-in and support.

- *A Clear Governance Structure:* Establish appropriate governance groups with defined terms of reference, with representation coming from across the University.
- *Local Representation in Governance Structure:* Foster a partnership approach by including local representatives in governance and implementation groups, and have them be responsible for dissemination of information in their local areas.
- *Continuous Improvement and Reflection:* Foster a culture of continuous improvement and reflection within the project team and with stakeholders by regularly evaluating progress, identifying lessons learned, and implementing process improvements where appropriate.
- *Ensure Senior Committees Understand the Project's Strategy:* Ensure that committee members have a clear understanding of how the project aligns with the university's strategic goals, mission, and values. Provide regular updates on how the project contributes to overarching objectives such as enhancing the student experience, supporting digital learning initiatives, and achieving institutional excellence.
- *Update Committees Regularly:* Provide committee members with timely and relevant information to support informed decision-making.
- *Collect Training Data:* If training is to be provided to stakeholders as part of the project, ensure sufficient data is collected to track progress (e.g. attendance rates, completions across Schools/Colleges, etc).

Academic colleagues

- *Early Engagement and Training:* It is beneficial to engage with Change projects at the earliest possible stage, by participating in training sessions and informational workshops.
- *Faculty Champions:* Identify and appoint faculty champions within your School who are enthusiastic about the upcoming change and willing to advocate for it. These faculty champions can serve as mentors to their peers, share best practices, and provide support during the transition process.

Teaching Office colleagues

- *Specialised Internal Support Teams:* Establish specialised support teams within teaching offices, dedicated to providing project support. Assign appropriate colleagues with relevant experience to ensure internal project coverage.
- *Clear Communication Channels:* Implement clear and accessible communication channels for School/College staff to receive updates, announcements, and guidance related to the project.

Learning Technologists

- *Pro-active Engagement with Project Team:* Engage early and effectively with the Project Team to ensure good communication practices are established. Communicate local progress to the Project Team regularly and identify areas where support is needed.

- *Pedagogical Support:* Provide appropriate pedagogical support to academic colleagues if the project requires it. If time and resource allow, offer assistance such as instructional design guides, training workshops, examples of good practice and tailored support.

Governance and Implementation Group colleagues

- *Clearly defined Terms of Reference:* Before assembling and convening groups, the Project Team should define the group's terms of reference, outlining the group's scope and objectives, to ensure members understand their roles and responsibilities.
- *Ensure information dissemination to Schools/Colleges:* The Project Team should ensure that group members understand their responsibility to inform their Schools/Colleges of key group developments and updates.
- *Encourage proactive involvement from members:* Ask members to bring local issues to the group for wider discussion.

Senate Education Committee

12 September 2024

FLORA (Digital Exams): Recommended Next Steps

Description of paper

1. This paper contains a high-level summary of work done so far and a summary of the recommended next steps for the project, as agreed by the Project Board. These steps align with the strategy to have more user-friendly processes and efficient systems to support our work.

Fit with remit

Education Committee	Y/N
Promote strategically led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners.	Y
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.	Y
Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback.	Partial
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.	Y
Anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in learning and teaching for all cohorts of students and learners.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. Please review this paper and note the recommendations from the FLORA project board.

Background and context

3. What is FLORA (Formal exams, Learning, Online Rubrics and Assessment)?

FLORA (phase 1) is a short life project which is looking at producing a set of recommendations for the future of digital exams.

The Project Board is chaired by Prof Tim Stratford, the Dean of Learning and Teaching within the College of Science and Engineering. There are board members from the three Colleges and various teaching-related units.

The Project Board and the project team have been consulting academic colleagues, students and professional staff across our institution. The team have also contacted other UK institutions to discover what they do.

This work on exams:

- Builds on the knowledge gained from assessment and exams work done by IS in collaboration with Schools through 2023/2024.
- Runs in parallel with the internal review within the central Exam Service following return to in person exams.
- Aligns with the University of Edinburgh Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities.
- Directly contributes to understanding and improving the student experience.
- Includes an emphasis on equity and inclusion issues to ensure that groups of students are not being disproportionately disadvantaged by our systems and practices.
- Runs in parallel to complement the work being done on supporting in-course assessment by the LOUISA Project.

Project consultation has included:

- Multiple rounds of discussions with each School and Deaneries about what their current process for, and experience with assessment and digital exams is, to identify what can be learned and where the gaps are.
- Workshops run with board members and their deputies about exam 'gaps' and what needs to be done going forward.
- Conversations with other universities who provide digital exams services.
- Semi structured interviews with students to find out their opinions on exams.

Further details of our interviews and discussions can be supplied by the FLORA project team. A selection of quotes from our student interviewees:

"Good exams are stressful. They are important for preparing you for the real world" (Y4 Medicine)

"A written exam is more pressure but helps me to better understand that course" (Y2 Maths and Statistics)

"I don't always take things in at lectures. The Exam process is also learning, and you have to consolidate learning" (Y3 Biomedical Science)

4. Current digital exams at the University

The Exams Office managed the timetabling of 1,700 exams across 2023/24 academic year. This equates to a total of 87,227 student sittings.

The term 'digital exams' at Edinburgh includes multiple formats and workflows, and the digital component can cover various individual phases of the exam. There is now only a small number of exams which do not include any digital element, whether that is where the writing of answers involves a computer, or the scanning of answers from paper into a computer, or the marking of scripts and management of scripts, and the feedback of marks to the student.

Of the remaining exams which are conducted on paper, colleagues in a number of schools have indicated that they would prefer to do this digitally if the right support were easily accessible to them.

Digital exams are not always done at a distance, they are done in rooms on campus or computer labs. A number of exams seem to be done only on a 'take home' basis and do not appear anywhere in the timetable. Demand for on-campus digital exams is increasing. IT support teams have seen requests double this year for rooms to be set up in 'digital exam mode'. Edinburgh along with other universities have seen a trend back to in-person exams to make their assessments more 'AI-proof'.

The lack of a central digital exams platform which can be used online or in the room, and associated support service has caused schools to source their own solutions and support models. There is much good practice there that can be built upon, but it is not a cost-efficient, sustainable way to manage this crucial part of the student and staff experiences.

The project initially sought to discover how many 'digital exams' are delivered each year. The project found that we do not have full accurate data because not all exams go through the central Exams Office. There are inconsistencies in definitions and

terminology used across the university for digital exams which is confusing for students and staff and impacts the student experience. Exam delivery brings misunderstandings for students around adjustments during high stakes moments and adjustments are increasing.

5. Exam types and exam systems

Analysis completed in conjunction with colleagues across all schools and deaneries have found that we have 7 exam types. These are from combinations of workflows across exam location, exam format and marking format.

The following diagram visualises the 7 exam types and the table shows how broadly the 7 exam platforms are being used. A further breakdown of where the 7 digital exam platforms are being used can be supplied by the FLORA project team.

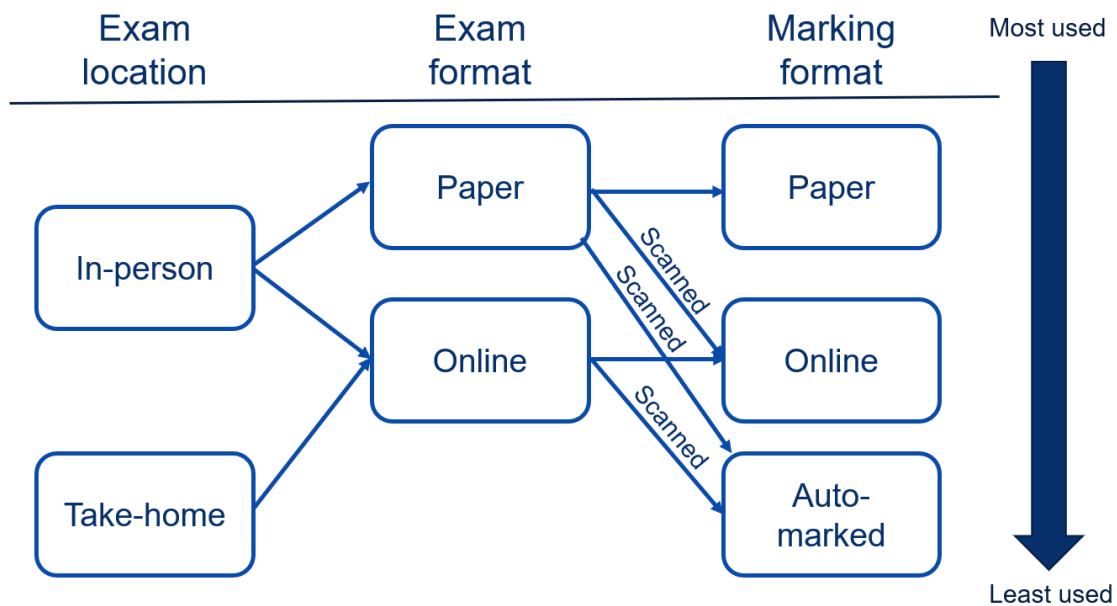


Figure 1 The 7 exam types in use.

Across those 7 exams types the following 7 platforms are being used for digital exams.

System	No. Schools/Deaneries using
Learn/Turnitin	16
Speedwell	9
Gradescope	6

risr/Assess (was Practique)	3
Questionmark (QMP)	2
ExamOnline	1
MyProgress	1

Discussion

- The project has agreed a set of key recommendations on the future steps required to better secure and better support, students and staff experiencing digital exams.

FLORA Recommendations.	SEC
<p>That the University should continue work on 'Platform Review'.</p> <p>Reducing the number of disparate and overlapping platforms while ensuring effective coverage. The Board wishes to establish a strategy, including procurement, for centrally supported exams platforms to simplify operations, ensure different exam types can be supported and reduce the associated costs related to the proliferation of exam platforms.</p>	<p>SEC to note that ISG move will forward with an assessment platform review.</p>
<p>Following the University Digital Strategy to use the right platform for the right activity necessitates moving high stakes exams to robust platforms designed for them with lock down, time limit and security features. [Can only happen if recommendation 1 is completed]</p> <p>This would allow us to move high stakes exam activity off Learn VLE.</p>	<p>SEC to note that the Learn VLE teams continue to support schools to move exams included in the exam diet, off the Learn VLE and on to appropriate exam platforms where those are available.</p> <p>This work will be in conjunction with the first recommendation.</p>

<p>Improve training and skills for exam practice.</p> <p>That every member of staff who works with digital exams needs to complete training for the platforms and processes they are using, and we need to ensure that students are familiar with the platforms before their exam diet.</p>	<p>SEC to note that ISG can work with schools and colleges to develop appropriate training to offer to staff and students to support use of technologies in exams.</p>
<p>Data Management and Standardisation.</p> <p>Establish reliable mechanism to monitor and manage all digital exam occurrences to provide helpful data and timely support. The Central Exams Office should be made aware of all exams, including those organised by Schools. This includes standardising terminology related to exams to prevent miscommunication and streamlining the workflows for using exams platforms.</p>	<p>SEC to note that ISG work with schools and colleges to develop a mechanism to monitor and manage all digital exam occurrences to provide helpful data and timely support. This includes standardising terminology related to exams.</p>
<p>Improve Support for Digital Exams.</p> <p>The current support system for digital exams at Edinburgh is fragmented e.g. care should be taken to ensure that support is available throughout the diet including exams that sit outside of normal working hours/weekends (or exams should be scheduled when there is cover).</p> <p>An 'Exam Command Centre' online team would help to offer real-time support during exams, ensuring that issues are promptly and consistently addressed.</p> <p>Such centralisation could demonstrate significant institutional efficiencies including the use of digital formats which can be more inclusive than traditional paper-based methods. A dedicated Exams Accessibility Support Service would bring increased inclusion, working in tandem with the Disability and Learning Support Service, further assisting in meeting diverse needs effectively and especially focussing on the provision of adjustments for exams.</p>	<p>SEC to note that ISG work toward a business case for central support of digital exams.</p>

<p>Improve and expand space options for this kind of activity.</p> <p>One 'pain point' obstacle for expanding digital exams is the shortage of appropriate spaces possibilities such as using non-computer lab space or hiring external venues for exams.</p>	<p>SEC to encourage the Space Advisory group (SAG) and other appropriate committee(s) to consider solutions to the growing demand.</p>
<p>Future Directions and AI Impact.</p> <p>The evolving role of AI in education necessitates proactive discussions and policies, especially in the context of assessments. Regular updates and strategy revisions will be necessary to keep pace with technological advancements and to address the growing concerns of AI in academic evaluations. This includes revising policies around AI with practical, student-friendly language and examples and providing staff with support on how to assess using methods that mitigate against the use of AI.</p>	<p>SEC to advise on the most appropriate forum for these discussions.</p>

The outputs from these recommended next steps would seek to build a more consistent and less stressful exam experience for staff and students at the University of Edinburgh, promoting efficiency both in terms of process and budget, inclusiveness, and better adaptability to future educational trends.

7. Next steps

These recommendations and any feedback provided will be taken through the University committee process including ITC, KSC and TSOG with associated budget information.

Resource implications

8. The next stage of the project, once recommendations are finalised, will be to work on a business case for the Digital Estates Programme which will include a thorough analysis of the costs. Exams are already a huge amount of work for staff, and we are keen to make them simpler and reduce the workload for staff who choose to use them for assessment.

Risk management

9. The recommendations move us towards a simpler, more consistent workflow for digital exams which would allow us to provide better central support and more appropriate platforms for them. This reduces the risk that the exams could go wrong, that should in turn make exams a less stressful experience for students and reduce the risk of reputational damage should there be issues.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

10. Improving our digital exam offering may also identify opportunities to maximise our Estate utilisation. Increasing the use of digital exams will reduce our use of paper and cut down on costs of transporting exam scripts to exam halls.

Equality & diversity

11. The recommendations in this paper do consider equality and diversity. They include recommendations which will improve staff and student experience of exams in general, and adjustment provisions which can be problematic for accessibility and diversity and compound to impact the experience of groups of students.

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

12. The recommendations in this paper will be worked on, where appropriate, by the project team and a business case proposal will be brought forward to relevant budget holding committees.

Author

Name(s):

*Colin Forrest. FLORA Project Manager
Karen McPhail. FLORA Business Analyst
With contributions from the FLORA team.*

Presenter

Name:

*Stuart Nicol. Head of Educational
Design and Engagement.*

Date: 28/08/2024

Freedom of Information: Open paper

Senate Education Committee

12 September 2024

Learning Analytics Policy Review 2024-2025

Description of paper

1. The paper details the remit and proposed membership for a group to review the University's learning analytics principles, policies and governance arrangements. Clear, appropriate and current policy and governance for learning analytics is relevant to the majority of Strategy 2030 outcomes, particularly the use of data with integrity (Outcome iii), and development of all our students (Outcome vi).

Fit with remit

Education Committee	Y/N
Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners.	Y
Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback.	Y
Anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in learning and teaching for all cohorts of students and learners.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. The committee is asked to note the proposal.

Background and context

3. The University's Learning Analytics Principles and purposes, Policy and procedures, and Governance arrangements are due to be reviewed.

Discussion

4. Proposals for a review group remit, membership, support and reporting arrangements are appended.

Resource implications

5. The review will be supported within existing resources.

Risk management

6. The learning analytics principles, policy and governance arrangements are intended to reduce or eliminate compliance and reputational risks in the use and analysis of student learning and activity data, and their review will ensure these arrangements are current.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

7. The paper aligns particularly with Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Equality & diversity

8. An equality impact assessment was undertaken for the original policy and this will be reviewed, particularly if the review proposes significant changes.

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

9. The review group will report back to the committee and to Knowledge Strategy Committee on completion of the review.

Authors

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and Open Learning
Neil McCormick
Educational Technology Policy Officer
29 August 2024*

Presenter

*Stuart Nicol
Head of Educational Design and
Engagement*

Freedom of Information: Open paper

Learning Analytics Policy Review 2024-2025

The University's Learning Analytics principles and purposes (approved in 2017) and policy, procedures and governance arrangements (approved in 2018) have had international reach and influence since they were first published. They are now due to be reviewed.

The original remit in 2016 was for a task group to develop a policy and communication plan, in the context of both a European research project to address learning analytics policy (SHEILA) and a pilot led by Information Services Group with a commercial partner (Civitas) that would look at the possibilities for using virtual learning environment, student and survey data to improve the student experience. The intention was for the learning analytics policy to "focus primarily on the governance of data", and while it would "also address the specific ways in which learning analytics could be used in the University to support the learning experience, this aspect of the Policy [would] need to be developed in future" in the light of lessons learned and feedback from pilot projects.

While regular review is due, it is also timely. In 2024 there is a renewed interest in data analytics in teaching, and the University is currently investigating tools offered by its suppliers to help analyse learning platform data. There are significant analytics projects currently underway within both Student Systems (University Secretary's Group) and Learning, Teaching and Web Services (Information Services Group). Review should also ensure that learning analytics policy and guidance is aligned with current equality, diversity, accessibility and inclusion expectations.

Further information on how learning analytics are used by the University, along with links to the current principles and policy, is available: [Learning Analytics | The University of Edinburgh](#)

Review remit

1. Review the University's learning analytics principles, policy and guidance and the membership and operation of the review group established in the policy and guidance to review learning analytics proposals.
2. Implement and communicate any changes approved.

Review group membership and support

Having considered the composition of the original policy task group, the review group for learning analytics proposals, and those with current or recent interests in learning analytics, we propose to invite the following membership:

- Assistant Principal Online and Open Learning (Melissa Highton) - convener
- Assistant Principal Education Futures (Sian Bayne - convener of the Learning Analytics proposals review group, and member of the University's AI taskforce)
- Academic Registrar (Lisa Dawson)
- EUSA Vice President Education (2024/2025 Dylan Walch)
- Representative of UCU (tbc)
- Dean of Learning and Teaching or equivalent from one College (Linda Kirstein)
- School or College Learning Technologist from one College (tbc)
- A member of academic staff with practical expertise in learning analytics (tbc)
- A member of staff with practical expertise in SMART campus analytics (tbc)
- Head of Student Insights (Marianne Brown)
- Data Protection Officer (Rena Gertz)
- Associate Director Digital Library (Rebecca Hirsch)
- Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media (Karen Howie – also member of the AI taskforce)

The Educational Technology Policy Officer (Neil McCormick) will support the review as part of the Learning Analytics in UlTRA (LAURA) project.

Reporting arrangements

The group will report to and seek approval for any changes from the University's Knowledge Strategy Committee and Senate Education Committee.

The convener of the review group will keep the LAURA project board up to date with progress on reviewing the policy.

Senate Education Committee

12 September 2024

Membership and Terms of Reference 2024/25

Description of paper:

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

Fit with remit

Education Committee	Y/N
Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners.	Y
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.	Y
Oversee policy relating to students’ academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback.	Y
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.	Y
Anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in learning and teaching for all cohorts of students and learners.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee’s work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation:

2. The Membership and Terms of Reference are presented to SEC for members to note.

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 October meeting.
6. Changes to membership to take effect from 2024/25 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
September 2024

Presenter
Colm Harmon
Vice Principal (Students)

Freedom of Information: Open

SEC 24/25 1J

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)	
Professor Gill Aitken	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching)	
Alexandra Laidlaw	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching)	
Professor Patrick Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)	
Professor Linda Kirstein	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)	
Lorna Halliday	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)	
Professor Jamie Pearce	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)	
Dylan Walsh	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Ex Officio
TBC – election held in October 2024	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	

SEC 24/25 1J

Nichola Kett	Interim Director of Academic Services	Ex Officio
Professor 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
Professor James Hopgood (CSE)	Representative of Senate	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
Dr Tamara Trodd (CAHSS)	Representative of Senate	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
Vacant (CMVM)	Representative of Senate	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
Patrick Jack	Committee Secretary	