Senatus Academicus

Wednesday 9 October 2024, 1:10-4pm

Auditorium A (Shirley Hall), Chancellor's Building, Little France

Members attending the meeting in person are asked to please bring a device to enable them to access electronic voting which will be undertaken using Wooclap, if required.

AGENDA

1   Welcome and Apologies

2   Minutes and e-Senate Reports – 5 minutes

To _approve_ the minutes of the meetings held on:

- 22 May 2024.   **S 24/25 1A**
- 18 June 2024 (includes June 2024 e-Senate report).   **S 24/25 1B**

To _approve_ the e-Senate report of 11-25 September 2024.   **S 24/25 1C**
                                                                                                            To Follow

2.1   Matters arising – 5 minutes
                                                                                                            S 24/25 1D
To _consider_ any matters arising and items on the Action Log.

3   Convener's Communications – 10 minutes   Verbal Update

**4   Edinburgh University Students' Association - Vice President   S 24/25 1E
         Education Priorities 2024-25 – 15 minutes**

To _note_ and _comment_.

5   Award of degrees – 20 minutes   **S 24/25 1F
                                                                                                            CLOSED**
To _approve_ the proposal to delegate authority to Boards of Examiners to allow them to award degrees.

6   Senate Committee Administration

To _approve_ the:

  • Senate Standing Committee Membership. **– 15 minutes**   **S 24/25 1G**

To _note_:

  • Senate Standing Committee Priorities. **– 15 minutes**   **S 24/25 1H**
  • Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees.   **S 24/25 1I**
  • Senate Standing Committees – upcoming business.   **S 24/25 1J**

7   Senate External Review Task and Finish Group – 10 minutes   Verbal Update

To _note_ the update.

8   Research Ethics and Defence – 20 minutes   Verbal Update

To _receive_ a verbal update from the Convener of the Research Ethics for Defence Working Group.

9   Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate and its Standing Committees (2023-24) – 20 minutes   **S 24/25 1K**

To _note_ the findings and actions arising from the review.

10   Review of Timetabling Processes – Progress Update – 15 minutes   Verbal Update

To _note_ the update on progress with the Timetabling work stream.

11   Date of next meeting: 11 December 2024

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Senatus Academicus
Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 2-5 pm
Larch Lecture Theatre, Nucleus Kings Buildings or Teams

Unconfirmed Minute

Attendees: Peter Adkins, Gill Aitken, Jake Ansell, David Argyle, Sharan Atwal, Nikos Avramidis, Michael Barany, Matt Bell, Shereen Benjamin, Christina Boswell, Aidan Brown, Celine Caquineau, Neil Chue Hong, Martin Corley, Juan Cruz, Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Jo Danbolt, Chris Dent, Charlotte Desvages, John Devaney, Simone Dimartino, Claire Duncanson, Samantha Fawkner, Emily Ford-Halliday, Beatrix Frissell, Stuart Gilfillan, Iain Gordon, Kim Graham, Patrick Hadoke, Colm Harmon, Tina Harrison, Thorunn Helgason, James Hopgood, Alma Kalina Riessler, Jim Kaufman, George Kinnear, David Kluth, Dave Laurenson, Tom Leinster, Jason Love, Sophia Lycouris, Antony Maciocia, Cait MacPhee, Peter Mathieson, Gavin McLachlan, Simon Mudd, Lyndsay Murray, Rupert Nash, Max Nyman, Steven O'Hagan, Sarah Prescott, Colin Pulham, Hollie Rowlands, Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira, Simon Riley, Maximilian Ruffert, Eberhard Sauer, Bernd Schroers, Sean Smith, Gavin Sullivan, Tamara Trodd, Nadia Tuzi, Jeremy Upton, Patrick Walsh, Stephen Warrington, Michele Weiland, Christopher Weir, Iain Wright, Ansgar Zoch

In attendance: Adam Bunni, Anne-Marie Coriat, Lisa Dawson, Sinead Docherty, Lucy Evans, Lee Hamill, Olivia Hayes, Patrick Jack, Louise Kelso, Nichola Kett, Cristina Matthews, Lee-Anne Mitchell, Dave Robertson, Lorna Thomson, Jon Turner.

Apologies: Matthew Bailey, Laura Bickerton, Kelly Blacklock, Chandon Bose, Laura Bradley, Adam Budd, John Cairns, Jane Calvert, Leigh Chalmers, Sharon Cowan, Jeremy Crang, Karen Dawson, Zoebird Fabion, Gillian Gray, Pia Helbing, Sarah Henderson, Emma Hunter, Kirstin James, Laura Jeffery, Lesley McAra, Carmel Moran, Andrew Morris, Chris Mowat, Bryne Ngwenya, Ailsa Niven, Diana Paton, Wayne Powell, Tobias Schwarz, Mike Shipston, James Smith, Tim Stratford, Melissa Terras, Frank Venter

The Convener, Principal Sir Professor Peter Mathieson, opened the meeting and confirmed that Senate had reached quorum.

1.   **Convener's Communications**

The Convener provided an update to Senate on a range of items:

Financial situation in the University sector

- The sustainability of university finances is causing anxiety and concern across the sector, with some institutions expressing concern regarding their continued existence. This is the case across all types of institutions, including ancient universities.

- Edinburgh remains in a strong position in Scotland and the UK, however is not immune to the financial pressures.

- Financial pressures have arisen due to national discussions around immigration and the role of students within this, as well as inflation and rising costs when compared with income.

Review of the Migration Advisory Committee

- A report was published last week which concluded that the graduate visa route is working as expected.

- This is a good outcome; however, it is unclear what the government's response to the report will be.

University encampment and protests regarding Gaza and the University's investments

- The Convener highlighted two unique elements regarding the Edinburgh encampment and protests:
    - There are students participating in a hunger strike. This is a source of great anxiety to the Convener and he would like to see the hunger strikes come to an end. The University has appointed an independent mediator to offer their services to the protestors.
    - Lord Balfour was the Chancellor of the University for a period of 30 years and this included the time of the Balfour Declaration. The University is undertaking a Race Review and the group responsible for undertaking the review has been asked to extend their remit to include Lord Balfour, and the historical links and current relationship with Israel and Palestine. The Race Review is expected to be published by the end of the year.

Sustainable Travel Policy and University Executive response:

- The University Executive have received the report on the Sustainable Travel Policy and will honour the commitment to provide the report to Senate and the wider University community.

- The report was received late, and has been shared with key colleagues in finance, procurement, and sustainability for a response. These responses were discussed by the University Executive when they met last week.

- The Convener advised that the report and the proposed response would be circulated to Senate in the week commencing 10 June. The response goes beyond the recommendations of the report. The recommendations have been accepted with some minor exceptions.

Letter from the Secretary of State for Science and Innovation in the UK Government:

- The University received confirmation that UK Government funding for a £900 million exascale supercomputer will be awarded to Edinburgh.

- It was also confirmed that Artificial Intelligence research resources would also be situated in Edinburgh, signalling a significant investment in Edinburgh from the current UK Government.

One member questioned the continued delay in sharing the Sustainable Travel Policy report, noting that it is encouraging to hear the recommendations of the report have been accepted, though expressing caution as to whether this is welcome news without the contents of the report being available. The member

also reflected on concerns regarding the usage of business class travel in the context of the University's current financial situation.

The Convener reiterated his commitment that the report and proposed response would be circulated to Senate in the week commencing 10 June and explained that the response goes beyond the recommendations of the report, which explains why the report will not be circulated without the accompanying response.

2. **Senate Minutes & e-Senate Reports - S 23/24 2A**

For approval

- Minutes of 7 February 2024
- Report of 24 April- 8 May e-Senate 2024

The Convener noted that corrections to the 7 February 2024 minute have been incorporated. A further correction will be incorporated as a Clerk's note to the Sustainability item which will include reference to the 2023 QS Sustainability Rankings.

The Convener invited Senate to approve the 7 February 2024 minutes as presented subject to the correction outlined. Senate approved the minutes as presented without requiring a vote.

The Convener invited Senate to approve the Report of E-Senate for 24 April – 8 May 2024 as presented. Senate approved the report as presented without requiring a vote.

One member commented on the lack of response received to questions raised via the e-Senate process. They identified the redirection of Senate items as one matter queried during the recent e-Senate where they would appreciate a response. The member suggested that the e-Senate process and closing the feedback look be considered by the Senate Task and Finish Group. The Senate Clerk confirmed that e-Senate is one of the areas for the Task and Finish Group to consider and the members comments would be shared with the group for consideration.

Action: Senate Clerk to refer comments regarding e-Senate and closing feedback loop to the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.

3. **Matters Arising - S 23/24 2B**

- Senate Action Log

The Convener highlighted that a summary of actions completed from the Senate Action Log was circulated as a paper to note. The Action Log includes an additional column with a brief summary of the outcome. The Action Log remains a live document and will continue to be updated.

One member drew attention to a paper he had submitted for a previous meeting of Senate with regard to what he termed "actionable decisions" that had not been included on the agenda. It had been explained to him that this was because the action log was the appropriate mechanism for tracking decisions of Senate. The member stated that there had been a lack of clarity and mistaken understanding

regarding the purpose of the Action Log and stated that he felt his paper had been suppressed.

The member urged Senate to think about the bigger picture of what Senate does and the consequences of its decisions. The member stated that the Action Log is narrowly tailored around tracking the communication of Senate decisions to areas responsible and that if Senate decisions are to have meaning these should be recorded on the Action Log for tracking as appropriate. The member concluded that it is important to understand whether Senate decisions are being carried out by responsible areas and the Action Log should provide the mechanism for tracking this and providing feedback on Senate's effectiveness.

The Convener explained that the Action Log will record actions for Senate to take forward. The Convener agreed that there needs to be an improved communication pathway for areas reporting back to Senate, and will consider how this can be taken forward.

Action: Senate Convener and Senate Clerk to consider communication pathway for reporting back to Senate.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

4.   Conferral of Awards – CLOSED

- **School of Literature, Languages and Cultures - S 23/24 3C**
- **Undergraduate Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (MVM) students - S 23/24 3D**

Senate approved the conferral of awards on graduates from the School of Literature, Languages and Cultures and College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (MVM) without requiring a vote.

5.   Report from the Honorary Degrees Committee – S 23/24 3E CLOSED

For approval

Ms Lucy Evans introduced this item and highlighted that additional detail has been provided for each nominee based on Senate's feedback. Ms Evans welcomed questions on the report from Senate.

Senate approved the Report from the Honorary Degrees Committee without requiring a vote.

ITEMS TO COMMENT

6.   College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine Modernisation programme - S 23/24 3F
To comment

Professor David Argyle, Head of College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine introduced the paper and accompanying slides. He explained that the paper represented considerable consultation which had taken place within the College over the last 18 months.

The proposal presents a simplified version of the current structure, with a six-School model proposed, and the removal of Deaneries and combining of Institutes. The revised structure would be supported by a revised Professional Services structure.

Professor Argyle explained that the programme is now within its consultation phase, with Senate members invited to contribute via an open portal. He explained the timeframe for the modernisation programme and that a change impact assessment and Equality Impact Assessment were still to take place. The establishment of School names and critical infrastructure will follow once these assessments have taken place.

Senate members made the following points:

- A member reflected on the wide consultation though low response rate from staff. They discussed the changes within their local area and reported that few colleagues were aware of the restructure. They felt there would be value in providing tangible examples of how the restructure will affect staff on a day-to-day basis for staff to provide meaningful feedback and engagement with the consultation. The member's perception was that colleagues were concerned about the potential impact on education and a potential segregation of teaching.

  The Head of College encouraged staff to attend the town halls and provided reassurance around these being a meaningful way to engage with the restructure.

  The College Registrar expanded on the next stage of consultation and acknowledged that a range of communication methods is required to reach all colleagues. Engagement has been focussed on a top-down and ground-up approach with the next stage of engagement to focus on reaching staff not previously covered and clarifying how the structure will affect staff on a day-to-day basis.

- The CAHSS Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation queried where the Dean of Quality for CMVM would be situated in the new structure as this was not included in the diagram presented to Senate.

  The College Registrar confirmed that a Dean of Quality would be included in the new structure and the College are working with the current Dean of Quality to establish where this role fits within the revised structure.

- A member suggested that the restructure was a good opportunity for the College to develop a workload model which aligns with that of other Colleges and they felt this should be explicitly incorporated at an early stage in the restructure plans.

  The Head of College and College Registrar stated that the plans for a College-wide workload model are included in the larger pack of documentation and that work towards expanding a workload model across the College is taking place. The College is working with their counterparts in CAHSS and CSE to share best practice and learn how a wider-scale roll out has been achieved in other areas.

- A member welcomed the College Registrar's comments reflecting the consideration of the impact of changes on academic, clinical, and professional services staff. The member welcomed some elements relating to change management and highlighted other areas which should also be accounted for, including the need for a detailed risk assessment, a need for change to reflect the on-the-ground experience of staff and consideration of the University's relationship with the NHS. The member sought to clarify that the process and timelines for implementation take account of the lessons learnt from other University change management projects.

  The Head of College explained that the timelines presented were for approval of the structure, and not for implementation of the revised structure.

  The Convener also explained that engagement with the NHS on the restructure has been positive at a high level.

- A member sought to clarify what problems the restructure was intended to solve and that it would be helpful for non-CMVM staff to understand what the main issues and risks are. The member also queried what would happen to staff whose research and teaching teams are split in the new structure.

  The Head of College explained that there is currently a high degree of complexity between Deaneries, Institutes and Schools and which areas individual staff belong to, which the revised structure seeks to simplify. The proposals put forward are based on feedback from staff, with a pulse survey undertaken across the College and a significant amount of work taking place toward improvements made in response to staff feedback.

- A member queried whether an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has taken place and whether this includes specific provision for women and minority groups to provide anonymised EQIA will take place in the next phase of work, with the EDI Committees providing input into the Assessment. The EQIA would provide anonymised opportunity for staff to feed into this and this would include provision for gender specific and minority groups to feed into the Assessment.

- The College Registrar noted that the College is planning for the 300-year anniversary of the Medical School in 2026 and considering how these celebrations can be integrated into the restructure plans.

- A member reflected on there being a communication issue with colleagues 'on the ground' unaware of the forthcoming changes. The member believed that the town hall events had been useful, however there are long gaps between updates and suggested that an Action Log be developed on the CMVM SharePoint for staff to access real-time updates via this portal.

  The College Registrar explained that there was a series of FAQs on the CMVM SharePoint site which includes an Action Log and provides real-time updates. The College will consider means to empower local leadership to share these resources in their areas.

The Convener reminded Senate that a link to provide further comments on questions on the CMVM restructure would be posted on the Senate Members Portal and members informed once this link is available.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

7.   Senate Letter from the Encampment - S 23/24 3G

Senate noted the letter.

Student Welfare, Investment Policy, and Research Expertise - S 23/24 3H
For approval

Dr Peter Adkins and Dr Claire Duncanson introduced the item and extended their thanks to the Senate Convener and Senate Clerk for incorporating the late paper into the billet.

Dr Adkins provided an overview of the paper and explained the paper is intended to represent a broad University view on this topic. There are deep concerns amongst the student and staff community regarding the ongoing hunger strike.

Each of the motions within the paper were introduced in turn.

Dr Adkins and Dr Duncanson expressed their concern students felt it necessary to protest through hunger strike and drew on comparable institutions where amicable agreement has been reached with protestors.

The paper seeks to affirm the Principal's statement regarding the right to protest and opposes any disciplinary measures against students who participate in the protests.

The paper calls on Court to divest from two companies, Amazon and Alphabet and highlighted this action as being particularly urgent due to the ongoing hunger strike.

Finally, the paper seeks the formal involvement of academic and research expertise in the Investment Policy setting bodies, including the Investment Committee.

The Convener echoed the concerns regarding the hunger strike and expressed his desire that these come to an end. He confirmed University Executive are meaningfully engaging with the protestors and highlighted that those participating in hunger strike are autonomous adults and the Executive cannot force individuals to end their hunger strike. The Convener invited Mr Lee Hamill, Director of Finance to comment on Motions 2c and 2d.

Mr Hamill explained the University has engaged with Investment and Fund Managers to understand the University's holdings of the two companies in question. There are two distinct ways in which funds are held:

1. Direct holdings: This is where the university holds shares for a named company and it is possible to sell those shares on the approval of the University Court.
2. Indirect holdings: This is where the university holds shares for a fund which contains multiple companies. These funds can contain hundreds of different companies, and it is not possible to exit from the investment of individual named companies without exiting from the entire indirect holding fund.

Mr Hamill confirmed the university holds both direct and indirect holdings for the two companies in question. He explained the process for disposing of direct holding funds was more straightforward than exiting from indirect holding funds.

Mr Hamill also clarified the University's Investment Committee is not responsible for setting the University's Investment Policy. The responsibility for setting the policy sits with University Court. Court provides the Investment Committee with the terms, targets, and exclusions for companies which they can and cannot invest in on the University's behalf.

In response, one of the paper authors, Dr Kevin Donovan, welcomed the explanation regarding direct and indirect holdings and clarified that Motion 2c is seeking the sale of direct holdings of Amazon and Alphabet.

Dr Donovan acknowledged the Convener's point that those participating in the hunger strike are autonomous adults and the paper does not suggest any coercive action take place. Dr Donovan highlighted that those participating in the hunger strike have indicated that they will end their strike if the direct shares are sold, as outlined in Paper S23/24 3G, and stated that there is a clear path forward that falls within the University's remit.

Senate members made the following points in discussion:

- A student member, who is also a member of Court, expressed their support for the paper and the recommendations. They stated that Court receives updates from the Investment Committee, however the student member does not feel there is sufficient detail contained in these updates and they find the governance and bureaucracy around policy making and guidance confusing.

  The student member also sought to clarify the process for urgent Court consideration if Senate is to approve the motions.

  The Convener confirmed in response that the Investment Policy is set by University Court. Court however receives regular updates on Senate business, via the Routine Senate Report to Court, Senate minutes and via the Principal's Report. Additionally, there are two Senate Assessors who sit on University Court. The Convener also confirmed that a Court Exception Committee exists and could meet electronically to consider what urgent action is necessary if Senate passes Motion 2c.

- A member stated that the decision to divest should be made because this is the right thing to do, rather than to end a hunger strike.

- The Convener stated that the wording of Motion 2a assumes a causal link between University Executive engagement and ending the hunger strike, whereas wording should refer to creating conditions to end the hunger strike.

- One of the paper authors, Dr Donovan, explained that the motions are distinct and discreet actions and highlighted that Motion 2a recognises the autonomy of the protestors, but also seeks to reach an agreement as soon as possible.

  Motion 2a is intended to urge the University Executive to act, rather than this being at the request of the hunger strikers.

  Motion 2c is intended to reflect the broader sense of prudency regarding university investments and urges Senate to consider these motions in line with this intention, it is not suggested that Senate approve Motion 2c to end the hunger strike.

- One of the paper authors, Dr Duncanson welcomed the acceptance of the motions, the clarification of onward referral to University Court and the ongoing staff involvement and decision-making regarding investments. She clarified that Motion 2d point to a longer-term intention, which is to ensure ethical expertise of the Responsible Investment Policy and ensuring this is reflected in the Investment Committee. She highlighted the most urgent issue is Motion 2c and the request that the university divest from direct shares in the named companies. The Convener confirmed in response that if Senate supports Motion 2c that this would be relayed to Court with urgency and with a recommendation that this be considered sooner than the next meeting of Court.

- A Senate member, who is also a member of Court, sought to clarify the intention of Motion 2d is to ensure staff expertise is considered in forming the Responsible Investment Policy, which is the responsibility of Court, rather than carrying out the policy, which is the responsibility of the Investment Committee.

- The paper author, Dr Duncanson explained that it is not as straightforward as Court setting the policy and this being carried out by the Investment Committee. She highlighted that the priority of the Investment Committee is to ensure strong returns on the University's investments. There is not staff expertise on the Investment Committee, and she stated that, in her view, this is why investments in Amazon and Alphabet still exist. The paper calls on Court to determine the best way to ensure that there is genuine ethical investment approach, and seeks ongoing structural and institutional means to support such investment.

- Co-author, Dr Donovan echoed this sentiment and explained the intention is for Court to consider the implementation of the policy. He identified that this is the second occasion in 10 years that the University's investments have been the subject of student protests and encampment. He urged Court to consider a means to move away from a reactive approach to such action, and towards a structured approach to managing investments in an ethical way. He expressed a view that a broader remit within Court and expansion of expertise beyond a consultation exercise would be valuable in achieving this.

- In response, Mr Hamill provided greater detail on how the Investment Committee operates. The Committee does not consider individual shares, rather takes the mandate provided by Court and looks to invest in a way that obeys the Responsible Investment Policy, which contains exclusions such as fossil fuels and controversial weapons, whilst also achieving a reasonable return on investment. Fund Managers will only be considered if they comply with the University's Responsible Investment Policy. Mr Hamill explained that the Investment Committee does not go through individual stocks within each fund to check if there are investments with specific named companies, and that changing the membership of the Investment Committee would not achieve the desired outcome as provided in the paper and discussion. He reiterated that engaging with the consultation process is the means to achieve the desired outcome.

- A student member asked if there was an indicative timeframe for how quickly divestment could take place. They expressed concern about the lack of urgency and lack of definite commitment to a timeline for divestment, and expressed that it was fortunate that Senate was meeting in time to consider this paper but disheartening that this timing was by chance.

- The Convener agreed with the urgency of action and confirmed that consideration of action is not linked to the timing of Senate meetings. The Convener expressed a commitment to take forward Senate's decision before the end of the week, though reiterated that it is at the discretion of Court and its Exception Committee to determine how quickly they would consider and enact any action in response. The Convener also noted that the sale and disposal of assets would depend on whether these were held in direct or indirect funds and were dependent on other agencies to carry out any such request to dispose of funds.

- Two Senate members expressed their surprise that investments are not scrutinised line-by-line and expressed a view that this action seems necessary. One of the members stated that urgent action is critical and highlighted that the hunger strike has reached day 22 and reported that 21 days is the duration that someone can survive without food.

- In response, Mr Hamill explained it is standard practice within the fund management model that managers do not scrutinise investments line-by-line, with many indirect funds containing hundreds of companies. He explained that the University provide Fund Managers with criteria for investment of funds and fund managers are obliged to confirm and certify that they comply with this criterion.

- A Senate member expressed their sympathy to the cause but sought to understand why Amazon and Alphabet are expressly identified as companies which the University should divest from.

- In response, paper author Dr Donovan explained that Amazon and Alphabet hold contracts with the Israeli military that allow weapons systems to use cloud services. He indicated one such example is Project Nimbus and further information on this can be found via internet search. He also stated that Amazon and Alphabet have expanded the purposeful contracting with military entities, including the Israeli military, and that the International Criminal Court has been asked to issue warrants of arrest for the Prime Minister of Israel and Minister of Defence of Israel.

Senate approved Motion 2a via a vote of 87%.

Senate approved Motion 2b via a vote of 92%.

Senate approved Motion 2c via a vote of 69%.

Senate approved Motion 2d via a vote of 69%.

Action: The Senate Convener and Clerk to relay Senate's approval of Motion 2c to University Court by 24 May at latest as an urgent matter for consideration.

Action: Senate Clerk to relay Senate's approval of the remaining motions via the routine Senate Report to Court.

8. **Taught Postgraduate Curriculum Framework - S 23/24 3I**
   For approval

   The paper authors noted that the paper is taken as read and welcomed questions and comments on the Taught Postgraduate Curriculum Framework from Senate.

Senate members raised the following comments:

- A member queried the absence of specific elements from the paper which Senate has previously requested be included in future papers on the Curriculum Transformation Project. They identified resourcing and costings of the Project, as well as risk management as being absent from the paper and which Senate has previously requested be included in future proposals relating to Curriculum Transformation. The member also asked the paper authors to expand on why the Edinburgh Student Vision was the next priority for the Project following the Postgraduate Taught Framework.

- A member welcomed the Taught Postgraduate Framework and appreciated the differing stackable options available for postgraduate programmes. They expressed concern that stackable options may require heavy administrative load to support and the potential challenges around continuity of administrative support and knowledge, particularly where some stackable options last up to 15 years, which introduces risks associated with changes to personnel, systems, and programmes.

- Another member expressed concern regarding the currency of knowledge for programmes which are delivered over a long period of time.

- The Project Lead, Dr Jon Turner explained that the risk assessment and costings associated with the Taught Postgraduate Curriculum Framework would be included in the business case when this is presented to the University Initiatives Project Board. The paper presented to Senate focusses on the academic framework, rather than the resourcing and costings for the project.

  Dr Turner also addressed the question regarding the Edinburgh Student Vision. He explained that the understanding following the previous Senate meeting was that the Postgraduate Taught Framework was a priority to return to Senate and that the Edinburgh Student Vision will return to Senate at the first meeting of 2024/25. The Project is currently undertaking market sensitivity testing on the Edinburgh Student Vision with students who have applied to programmes to understand if there are any elements of the Vision which may be viewed differently by different student cohorts.

  Dr Turner explained that the Senate Academic Policy and Regulation Committee (APRC) are scheduled to meet on 23 May and are expected to scrutinise the points raised regarding stackable options. He confirmed that Schools and programmes would continue to have discretion to decide the model and options suitable for programmes, and the intention is to provide options across the institution.

  The Project Sponsor, Vice-Principal Students, Professor Colm Harmon, confirmed that the scrutiny provided by Senate Committees including APRC will include consideration of governance and guidelines required to support the implementation of the Postgraduate Taught Framework and such issues will be reported to Senate.

  Dr Turner addressed concerns regarding the lengthy time periods and administrative challenges, noting that such challenges currently exist within the institution. He explained that the existing University systems and processes are not designed to manage such cases and therefore a significant piece of work is being undertaken in consultation with APRC and the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) to understand the end-to-end processes and what changes may be required to support the new model.

- A member raised specific query on Model E and reflected that this provides priceless opportunity for students to prepare for the job market, but also expressed concern regarding assessing progression of students through this model, and where studies are spread across external assessors and who may not have sufficient insight into the University's assessment processes.

- A member raised a query regarding the Postgraduate Taught models where there is no dissertation or research project and therefore teaching is expected to take place over the summer. They queried whether this means a third semester and staff will be expected to undertake teaching over the summer and raised concern with the impact of this on individuals with heavy teaching loads.

  The Dean of Education in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM), Professor Jamie Davies explained that teaching over the summer is routine across the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum and that CMVM has a 48-week teaching year.

- A member queried what Senate is being asked to approve and the purpose of the Postgraduate Taught Framework and what issues this is seeking to solve. They reflected that, in their view, the Framework presented captures 80% of the University's existing taught Postgraduate provision and that many elements presented are incorporated via other means. They questioned what elements are worthy of the 'transformation' name and sought to understand what the Framework enables that the University does not currently deliver.

  They reflected on Senate's request to receive information regarding the resourcing and risks involved and its desire to understand these elements prior to approving the academic proposal.

- Dr Turner, explained that Model A is the dominant model seen across the University at present. He explained that, at present, programmes that wish to diverge from a 60-credit dissertation or research project need to seek approval via additional approval pathways and that adopting the Postgraduate Taught Framework would allow areas to adopt an alternative postgraduate framework as standard and without additional layers of approval. Dr Turner explained that Models C, D and E are not presently supported by the University regulations and processes, and approval of the Framework would allow regulations and frameworks to be evolved to support these structures.

  Dr Turner addressed the query regarding the forward-looking benefits of the Framework and explained that increasing opportunities for flexibility and lifelong learning are becoming commonplace in the sector. He explained that approving the Framework, provides the University with significant opportunity to develop these changes, and for these to be supported by the University systems, processes, and regulations.

  Dr Turner addressed a query regarding fully taught Masters' programmes and explained that there is scope for local areas to determine which clusters of the Framework they wish to adopt, however it is not anticipated that programmes will offer both fully-taught and taught with dissertation models simultaneously.

  Dr Turner also addressed queries regarding maintaining currency of programmes that are delivered over several years. He explained that this will be discipline specific,

  Dr Turner noted that the paper is seeking approval for the Framework, and that APRC will undertake detailed work on support and implementation before returning to Senate.

- The Convener of SQAC, Professor Tina Harrison reflected that the paper presents options for the delivery of postgraduate programmes and does not compel any areas to change their programmes. Rather, the proposal provides postgraduate taught structures which are available for local areas to adopt without requiring additional approval. Professor Harrison reflected that it is helpful to consider the Models as stackable blocks of study, rather than an overall period of 15 years, with students able to complete blocks and seek accreditation for their learning at various points over a period of time.

- Professor Harmon reflected on the feedback previously received at Senate on the Postgraduate Framework which indicated that the Framework is facilitative and allows a straightforward process for programmes that are seeking to reform.

  Professor Harmon also addressed queries regarding the business case, reflecting that Senate's view, as endorsed by the University Initiatives Project Board (UIPB), was to progress the Postgraduate Framework and continue development and consultation on the Undergraduate Framework over the coming months, with the business case to be considered separately, looking to ensure that resources reside within Colleges and Schools to facilitate and encourage the innovation the Project allows.

- A member expressed a desire to see the Framework approved, but urged caution regarding launching the Project without an Equality Impact Assessment or risk assessment being undertaken. The member reflected on lessons learnt from People and Money and that Senate had asked to see these assessments prior to approving the framework.

  The Convener confirmed that the UIPB will be responsible for considering these elements should Senate approve the Framework.

- A member expressed the view that seeking approval at this stage is premature, and that the paper should be presented for comment. The member felt that when more detail was available from APRC and UIPB, the Framework could be presented for Senate's approval at this stage.

- Another member echoed this view, and highlighted that the motions approved in March 2023 indicated the expectation that any future recommendations relating to the approval of the Project be accompanied by a risk assessment and detailed costings.

- A Head of School indicated their eagerness for the Framework to be approved and reflected on the Framework being facilitative with many elements being essential for Schools to be able to progress as quickly as possible with plans and reshaping in the 2030's and beyond.

- The Convener reminded Senate that the item is presented for approval.

- Professor Harmon stated that it is essential for Senate to give its approval to the Framework to allow APRC and other areas to progress with the technical work that is required to support implementation. The risk and resourcing of the Project has been discussed at UIPB and these will return to Senate for scrutiny following the work undertaken by APRC and UIPB.

- The Provost, Professor Kim Graham, Convener of the UIPB, explained that UIPB needs to understand the broader direction of travel and Senate's support for this. The UIPB has already provided feedback to the Curriculum Transformation Board regarding resources and costings and provided reassurance to Senate that this is a key element of what UIPB considers, and

the capacity for delivery and management of risks alongside other University projects. Professor Graham reiterated that if Senate approves the proposed Framework, then this will allow APRC and UIPB to progress with their work before the Framework returns to Senate.

- The Convener explained that the UIPB was formed in response to lessons learnt from People and Money and is responsible for ensuring that the questions relating to risk and resourcing are considered and properly addressed.

Senate considered the following amendment, proposed by Dr Tamara Trodd and seconded by Dr Steven Morley:

Add to 'Actions requested': 6. Senate welcomes the flexibility and choice signalled by this iteration of the Taught Postgraduate Framework, and notes that the choice of programme archetypes and pathways through programmes offered by Schools should remain at School and subject-area discretion, and should not be mandated by other authorities, including Colleges.

Ahead of a decision on this amendment, the proposer explained the rationale for the amendment, which is to address potential concerns that the pathways and stackable models will be mandated. They sought to clarify that the amendment is intended to ensure that decision making on the Taught Postgraduate Framework is delegated to Schools.

The following comments were raised in relation to the amendment:

- The Head of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, Professor David Argyle expressed concern regarding a vote on the proposed amendment as a fundamental change to the governance structure of the University.

- The Provost echoed these concerns and reflected that the amendment is at odds with the University's governance structures and these structures allow Colleges and Schools to work collaboratively across areas.

- Professor Harmon explained that the Project is silent on this matter and it is up to Colleges or Schools to determine the appropriate structure for their programmes.

- A member explained their reading of the amendment as being in line with the status quo and instead seeking to confirm that this will be maintained. They noted that School Boards of Studies are currently tasked with considering programme related matters.

- A Head of School explained that Schools and Colleges work collaboratively to reach decisions, and it would be difficult for a College-wide approach to be implemented as there are variances across School and subject areas.

- A member explained that at present Schools have discretion to make decisions and Colleges do not mandate these decisions. The member expressed concern regarding the phrase 'not mandated by other authorities' as the University is subject to external Quality Assurance Requirements.

The proposer of the amendment, Dr Trodd noted the points raised regarding the governance structures and reflected that this was not intended by proposing the motion. She accepted that the proposed amendment may break the governance

structure and therefore agreed to withdraw the amendment if an alternative amendment, proposed by Dr Rupert Nash, is approved as an alternative.

Dr Rupert Nash proposed an alternative amendment and this was seconded:

Replace point 4 with "Senate thanks the CTP board for the progress and requests Senate Academic Policy & Regulations Committee (APRC) take forward the technical implementation and detail of policy changes for final approval in a future Senate meeting."

Senate approved the proposed amendment via a vote of 72%.

The Convener explained that the approved amendment means that final approval of the Postgraduate Framework will return to a future meeting of Senate.

In the interests of time, the Convener moved to item 12 on the agenda: S23/24 3P Research and Partnerships in the Defence Sector.

9. **Award of degrees: delegation of authority to Boards of Examiners - S 23/24 3J CLOSED**

For approval. Senate did not reach this item ahead of the conclusion of the meeting.

10. **Senate Committee Administration**

For approval:

- **Senate Exception Committee Membership & Terms of Reference - S 23/24 3K**
- **Senate Standing Committee Membership - S 23/24 3L**
- **Senate Standing Committee Priorities - S 23/24 3M**

For information:

- **Senate Standing Committee Upcoming Business - S 23/24 3N**

Senate did not reach these items ahead of the conclusion of the meeting.

11. **Senate Task and Finish Group Update & Proposals - S 23/24 3O**

For approval. Senate did not reach this item ahead of the conclusion of the meeting.

12. **Research and Partnerships in the Defence Sector - S 23/24 3P**

For approval

Dr Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira introduced the item and explained that the item has originated from discussions with Senate members and colleagues who are not Senate members and who have expressed concern regarding research areas. He highlighted that the paper proposes that a review of projects be undertaken on an annual basis, rather than only at the commencement of each project, and is

seeking greater transparency by publishing this report on an annual basis. The paper authors have been approached by Senate members and have tried to incorporate a series of amendments to the paper to try and achieve a consensus on most motions. He explained that discussions have taken place between Engineering colleagues who work in these areas and the authors seek to achieve the right tone and scope for the item and acknowledged the important humanitarian applications of some research being undertaken in these areas.

He confirmed that further amendments to the paper had been received, with student representatives expressing concern regarding the student impact of Motions 2.3 and 2.6 and proposed that more comprehensive wording be provided for these items to provide protection to students who may be affected by a review.

He also explained that a further amendment was received to include an additional motion, Motion 2.7, which the paper authors agreed to include:

2.7 To enhance the smooth operation of this suite of actions Senate recommends the creation of a working group - with adequate representation from Senate members, staff and students with experience in this area - to refine the scope, definitions and process implied in this paper.

Dr Ribeiro Ferreira also notified Senate that the paper authors received a petition with signatures from 250 students and staff expressing their support for the item.

Senate members raised the following comments:

- The Vice-Principal Research, Professor Christina Boswell thanked the paper authors for the item, noting her appreciation for the spirit in which the paper is written and the openness of colleagues researching in this area in engaging in discussions to develop proposals with paper authors.

  She explained that the paper points to a gap in the University's Ethics Policy on how ethical review and due diligence takes place on external partnerships, coupled with how the University applies broader societal wellbeing within its research. She acknowledged that this merits further clarification and work and notified Senate that there are two Working Groups which the University Executive has agreed to establish in these areas. Within the research space it is beneficial for alignment across how these are identified and operationalised.

  The recommendations from these two Working Groups would be rigorously implemented in research ethics and due diligence approaches. Once these definitions are identified, Colleges and Schools would be supported in examining projects within the scope of the definitions and with clearer guidelines in establishing parameters and undertaking ongoing review. Moving forward, these principles and parameters will be embedded in the University Ethics Policy, which will ensure a joined up and systematic approach across the University.

  Professor Boswell confirmed that she would be happy to bring a paper to Senate which outlines how this work is being operationalised and which will incorporate the additional points into this process. She noted the importance of striking a balance between a rigorous ethics assessment process and not seeking to overburden specific projects and research across the University.

- A member thanked the paper authors for preparing the item and for highlighting the need to understand the University's exposure to projects which present risks. The member sought to understand the practical application of Motion 2.5, adding that guidance was required to understand how Research Ethics Committees are intended to apply this, and operationalise some of the principles.

- A member from the School of Engineering welcomed the open and transparent discussion and disclosed that they undertake research in the defence and security space with the majority of the research funded by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). They outlined their experience of working in this space and explained that work is often within a specific academic research area which has undergone an ethics approval process by the MoD and government. They explained that majority of the work is in uncontentious fields such as mine detection and cyber security.

  The member expressed their concern regarding the potential widespread interpretation of the paper and the use of non-specific language could result in unintended consequences and cover up to 95% of research work undertaken within the School of Engineering. They explained that the paper could apply to companies which work across multiple disciplines spanning security and defence, but where the University's relationship with them is related to an uncontentious context, for example, tidal work.

  They also expressed concern regarding ethical reviews resulting in additional work for Primary Investigators and noted that this is not adequately acknowledged by the paper's resource implications. They also expressed concern regarding the additional complexity and vulnerability of early career staff and PhD students who are undertaking research in legitimate areas and who may be targeted by ill-informed individuals online.

- Another member from the School of Engineering echoed these points and provided an example of having undertaken research which was originally intended for military use but was instead found to be beneficial for search and rescue services within the UK. The member supported seeking greater clarity in the wording for this proposal and welcomed the earlier points raised by the Vice-Principal Research.

- The Head of the College of Science and Engineering echoed the points made by elected members from the School of Engineering and added that work could be undertaken to ensure greater transparency and clarity around its ethics processes. He noted that there is expertise across the institution that can be utilised to ensure that research work is undertaken with greater scrutiny leading to the right benefits being achieved. He welcomed the Vice-Principal Research's proposed approach and reiterated the importance of ensuring there were no unintended consequences.

- One of the paper authors expressed that the intention of the item is to emphasise the need for greater transparency, noting that the University is a publicly funded institution.

- The Director of the Edinburgh Research Office, Dr Lorna Thomson provided explanation on the forthcoming changes to the University's Ethics Policy. She explained that the ethics management system will allow for University-wide reporting on the projects undergoing the ethics review process, and these will be attached to a schedule for returning to the Ethics Committee. There has been investment in the office which provides support around governance, compliance and risk, and this team will provide greater support to Principal

Investigators. The ethics approval process is a complex area with regulatory requirements rapidly changing and the office will provide greater support to ensure due diligence around partners.

Dr Thomson also explained some of the additional governance around projects in the defence sector, noting that the Research Office has access to information and support via a government team; this team has clearance with the MoD and other government departments and can provide advice on partners or research that the University plans to undertake. She noted that Principal Investigators work on this closely with Research Office staff but greater detail cannot be widely shared for confidentiality reasons.

- One of the paper authors welcomed the proposals from the Vice-Principal Research and stated these would be beneficial to receive in writing at a future meeting of Senate. The paper author expressed concern regarding further extending the process and that a report would be beneficial to affirm that proper checks are in place. They explained that the addition of Motion 2.7 is not intended to be attached to the two executive-approved working groups identified by the Vice-Principal Research, rather this group would be additional and proposed to help oversee the reporting work.

- The Senate Convener identified the overlap between work which is already taking place and work which is being proposed within the item. He agreed with the importance of the University being transparent and compliant with the law in this sector.

The Convener invited the paper authors to consider withdrawing the paper and returning this to a future meeting following further work with the Vice-Principal Research to refine the proposals.

- The Vice-Principal Research echoed the Senate Convener and stated that a revised paper could be returned to the October meeting of Senate.

- The paper authors expressed a preference that the item be considered now, and stated that other elected members on Teams were supportive of the item being considered at this meeting.

- A member suggested that the paper be treated as a starting point for implementation by the working group proposed in Motion 2.7 and that a revised proposal for the remaining elements returns to a future meeting of Senate.

Senate approved Motion 2.1 as contained in the paper via a majority vote of 75%.

An amendment to Motion 2.2 was proposed by Professor James Hopgood and seconded by Professor Sean Smith:

2.2: "Senate requests that the Edinburgh Research Office and the Research Ethics and Integrity Review Group (REIRG), in consultation with the Research Ethics Committees (RECs) at School level and relevant bodies, undertake a full consideration of the ethical review process for active research projects in the area of defence and security. This is to ensure that such research projects are not undermining "the interests and well-being" of the "broader society" that need to be safeguarded as per the University Research Ethics Policy, including violations of human rights or international and humanitarian law by the partners or any actors supplied with their products. Senate requests that the REIRG report to Senate on this process, with the intention that Senate subsequently approves a review of defence and security research and partnerships in accordance with that process."

Senate approved the proposed amendment via a vote of 72%.

Senate approved Motion 2.2 as amended via a majority vote of 79%.

The paper authors withdrew Motions 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 as contained in the paper and these would be referred to the proposed working group referred to in Motion 2.7.

Senate approved the addition of Motion 2.7 via a majority vote of 85%:

2.7 To enhance the smooth operation of this suite of actions Senate recommends the creation of a working group - with adequate representation from Senate members, staff and students with experience in this area - to refine the scope, definitions and process implied in this paper.

The Convener closed the meeting and noted that Senate would receive further communication regarding items not considered.

Action: Senate Convener and Senate Clerk to consider process for taking forward items not considered by Senate and communicating to members as soon as practicable.

ITEMS TO COMMENT

13. **People & Money Improvement Plan 24-26 - S 23/24 3Q**

To comment. Senate did not reach this item ahead of the conclusion of the meeting.

14. **Court Resolutions – Personal Chairs - S 23/24 3R**

To comment. Senate did not reach this item ahead of the conclusion of the meeting.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
The following items were provided to Senate for information:

15. Report of the Central Academic Promotions Committee - S 23/24 3S

ITEMS FOR NOTING
The following items were provided to Senate for noting:

16. Senate Election Results - S 23/24 3T

17. Annual Internal Effectiveness of Senate - S 23/24 3U

18. Student Partnership Agreement - S 23/24 3V

19. Communications from the University Court - S 23/24 3W

20. College Management Structure 2024-25 - S 23/24 3X

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Senatus Academicus
Reconvened Meeting

Tuesday 18 June 2024 at 9:45-10:45am
Microsoft Teams

Unconfirmed Minute

Attendees: Peter Adkins, Gill Aitken, Mteeve Amugune, Arianna Andreangeli, Jonathan Ansell, Kate Ash-Irisarri, Michael Barany, Laura Bickerton, Richard Blythe, Catherine Bovill, Holly Branigan, Aidan Brown, Rory Callison, Jeremy Carrette, Leigh Chalmers, Neil Chue Hong, Juan Cruz, Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Sumari Dancer, Luigi Del Debbio, Chris Dent, Charlotte Desvages, Simone Dimartino, Claire Duncanson, Murray Earle, Tonks Fawcett, Samantha Fawkner, Manuel Fernandez-Gotz, Chris French, Vashti Galpin, Soledad Garcia Ferrari, Benjamin Goddard, Richard Gratwick, Colm Harmon, Gareth Harrison, Tina Harrison, David Hay, Pia Helbing, Melissa Highton, James Hopgood, Jenny Hoy, Emma Hunter, Gbenga Ibikunle, David Ingram, Jakov Jandric, Meryl Kenny, Linda Kirstein, David Kluth, Andy Law, Tom Leinster, Ashley Lloyd, Antony Maciocia, Peter Mathieson, Steven Morley, Chris Mowat, Simon Mudd, Lyndsay Murray, Rupert Nash, Pau Navarro, Emmanuel Okunlola, Natalia Penar, Jon Pridham, David Quinn, Rebecca Reynolds, Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira, Ken Rice, Eberhard Sauer, Bernd Schroers, Geoff Simm, Stewart Smith, Tim Stratford, Alex Thomson, Tamara Trodd, Uzma Tufail-Hanif, Nadia Tuzi, Patrick Walsh, Christopher Weir, Ben Wynne, Alper Yildirim

In attendance: Adam Bunni, Olivia Hayes, Cristina Matthews, Dean Pateman, Nichola Kett, Richard Kenway, Sinead Docherty

Apologies: Clark Barwick, Sian Bayne, Shereen Benjamin, Clare Blackburn, Richard Blythe, Christina Boswell, Olivia Eadie, Laura Bradley, Mary Brennan, Tom Bruce, John Cairns, Jane Calvert, Celine Caquineau, Kevin Collins, Martin Corley, Sharon Cowan, Chris Cox, Jeremy Crang, Jo Danbolt, Jamie Davies, Ricardo De Oliveira Almeida, Chris Dent, John Devaney, James Dunlop, Agata Dunsmore, Jite Eferakorho, Darrick Evensen, Anne-Maree Farrell, Susan Farrington, Valentina Ferlito, Emily Ford-Halliday, Stuart Gilfillan, Iain Gordon, Patrick Hadoke, Elaine Haycock-Stuart, Thorunn Helgason, Gavin Jack, Laura Jeffery, Itamar Kastner, Jim Kaufman, Tobias Kelly, George Kinnear, Steff Lewis, Jason Love, Sophia Lycouris, Lorna Marson, Catherine Martin, Lesley McAra, Alistair McCormick, Gavin McLachlan, Heather McQueen, Avery Meiksin, John Menzies, Carmel Moran, Andrew Morris, Susan Morrow, Rachel Muers, Bryne Ngwenya, Diana Paton, Josephine Pemberton, Sarah Prescott, Colin Pulham, Simon Riley, Aryelly Rodriguez Carbonell, Hollie Rowlands, Maximilian Ruffert, Ewelina Rydzewska-Fazekas, Tobias Schwarz, Pablo Schyfter Camacho, Robert Semple, Mike Shipston, Sue Sierra, James Smith, Emily Taylor, Melissa Terras, Jeremy Upton, Stephen Warrington, Michele Weiland, Iain Wright, Ingrid Young, Marion Schmid, Lisa Boden, Tom Booth

The Convener, Principal Professor Sir Peter Mathieson, opened the meeting and noted that Senate had not reached quorum. The Convener confirmed that the meeting would proceed and Senate would be able to consider any non-contentious items of business, indicating that the Senate Clerk would continue to monitor quorum for the duration of the meeting.

The Convener invited the Senate Clerk to provide an update on the attendance of student representatives. The Senate Clerk confirmed that there were fewer student representatives in attendance as many had concluded their term at the end of May and the new student Sabbatical Officers were unable to attend the reconvened meeting due to a prior engagement. The reconvened meeting falls between two student membership cycles with many new undergraduate representatives to take up their positions in early October.

The Convener informed members that there was a strong wish from some members that the meeting take place ahead of the next academic cycle to conclude the incomplete business from the 22 May meeting and expressed his regret that the student involvement will be limited due to the timing of the meeting.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

1. **Award of degrees: delegation of authority to Boards of Examiners – S 23/24 3J - CLOSED**
   For approval

   Dr Adam Bunni, Head of Academic Policy and Regulation, Registry Services introduced the paper. He provided an outline of the paper and noted that degrees are currently conferred by graduation meetings of Senate, which take place immediately prior to graduation ceremonies, with the decisions based on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners. He explained that the graduation meetings do not have arrangements for quorum and do not provide any scrutiny of the decisions made by the Board of Examiners. The paper proposes to permanently delegate the powers for the awarding of degrees to Boards of Examiners. From a student perspective, this would not change their experience of graduation. From an operational perspective, this would not change the operation of Boards of Examiners and would remove the requirement for graduation meetings of Senate to take place prior to graduation ceremonies.

   Dr Bunni explained that there is precedent for the delegation of authority; degree awarding powers were delegated to Boards of Examiners during Covid. He also confirmed that if Senate approved the delegation, this would require an amendment to the Senate Standing Orders which would be brought to the next Ordinary meeting of Senate.

   The Convener informed Senate that the Students' Association representatives had been in touch prior to the meeting to express their support for this item.
   He explained that Senate can proceed to approve this item if they consider this to be uncontentious.

   Senate members made the following points:

   - A member expressed their agreement with the desirability of reducing the timelines around conferral of awards but highlighted concerns regarding the removal of a time lapse between Boards of Examiners and graduation meetings to resolve any administrative errors which may occur.

   - A member stated they felt that the item was highly contentious and should be considered by a quorate meeting of Senate. The member also felt the issue should be referred to the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group for consideration. The member expressed a view that the delegation of authority used

during Covid should not be considered precedent and that there is dissatisfaction among some colleagues with how delegation was managed during this period. The member also expressed a view that scrutiny is not adequate at Boards of Examiners and there needs to be an independent scrutiny function, which Senate should fulfil. The member expressed a view that awardees and their families appreciate the graduation meetings of Senate and that there is a process in place for handling the small number of exceptions which arise during the year and which require consideration sooner than the next graduation cycle.

- Another member felt that the proposal to permanently delegate authority was contentious, and expressed a preference for delegating the authority on a trial basis and then looking to amend the Standing Orders following a trial period during which any issues could be ironed out. The member expressed a view that the ceremonial function of a graduation meeting was nice as a performative piece for students.

- The Deputy Secretary Students, Ms Lucy Evans acknowledged that the item was considered contentious and that a decision would not be taken today. She acknowledged the comments made regarding processing errors and that work will take place to review the process and work to reduce errors. She explained that the proposal is seeking to improve the student experience for students, by not allowing it to be impacted by a small number of isolated errors.

- In response to comments made, Dr Adam Bunni explained that a delay could be built into the process to allow for errors to be captured and resolved ahead of award publication. He also acknowledged that the delegation could be undertaken on a trial basis for a year, though highlighted that the Senate Standing Orders would be contradictory to practices during that time.

  Dr Bunni highlighted that the current process for holding a graduation meeting of Senate does not provide for any scrutiny of Board of Examiner decisions and therefore these would not pick up any errors or corrections. He stated that Senate could still carry out an oversight role by receiving reports of errors where these occur. Finally, he noted that if Senate has wider concerns regarding the robustness of Board of Examiner measures, these are broader than the proposed delegation of authority and greater discussion including identification of the issues would be required.

- A member stated they were unclear on the purpose of Senate graduation meetings and that they believed that students are unaware these take place prior to graduation. They noted that many attendees at these meetings are not members of Senate.

- The Dean of the Edinburgh Medical School, Professor David Kluth, stated that the proposal is an essential change to allow large cohorts of students to graduate outside the standard-graduation cycle. Professor Kluth noted that forthcoming changes to medical education would require large cohorts of medical students to receive their awards in a timely fashion and these would have to continue to be managed by exception if the delegation was not approved.

The Convener explained that as the item was considered contentious and Senate was not quorate a decision could not be taken on the paper. Therefore, Senate did not reach a decision on this item.

2. **Senate Committee Administration**

For approval:

- **Senate Exception Committee Membership & Terms of Reference - S 23/24 3K**

Senate was invited to approve the Senate Exception Committee Membership and Terms of Reference. No comments or objections were raised and therefore this item was deemed uncontentious and Senate approved the item.

- **Senate Standing Committee Membership - S 23/24 3L**

The Convener explained that a series of amendments had been received for the Senate Standing Committees' Membership paper. Accordingly, this item was considered contentious and a decision could not be taken as Senate was not quorate. However, the Convener allowed a short discussion on this item to take place, ahead of the paper returning to a future meeting of Senate.

The Conveners of Senate Standing Committees were invited to introduce the paper. Professor Colm Harmon, Convener of the Senate Education Committee highlighted that the paper acknowledges the work of the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group and that changes to Committees may come forward in the future and that the Committee membership had been formed in line with current practice. He also acknowledged the amendments to the paper had been received. Additionally, Professor Harmon noted that the elected Senate members on Standing Committees had been confirmed in the previous 24 hours, however those members are not named in the paper presented to Senate today.

Senate members made the following points:

- A member queried which amendments were deemed contentious and asked whether the paper and the amendments could be considered as uncontentious. The Conveners of Senate Standing Committees stated that the Convener had the discretion to determine whether an item was considered contentious or not. The member also asked for an explanation of why there were unfilled elected member vacancies on the Senate Committees and queried whether the timing of the elections for these could have been a contributing factor.

  The Convener confirmed that the presence of amendments deemed the item contentious. He explained that Senate is asked to reach a decision on the amendments, ahead of a decision on the item, and therefore this would require a vote be taken. This cannot take place outwith a quorate meeting of Senate.

- A member suggested that the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group be asked to establish why there remain unfilled elected member positions on Senate Committees. The member highlighted the focus of the Committees on teaching-related matters, and noted this may exclude staff who hold research-focussed positions.

- A member highlighted Standing Order 22 which states that members of Senate would be invited to submit nominations for the members of the Committees. They explained that compliance with Standing Order 22 has been raised previously however no changes to the process for establishing Committee membership had taken place. The member expressed a view that some interesting perspectives

could be sought from the wider University community by implementing the process outlined in Standing Order 22.

The member later explained that some individuals who could usefully serve on Committees include staff who are not members of Senate and therefore would not be included in the opportunity to stand for election to a Senate Committee.

- Professor Tina Harrison, Convener of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee explained that Senate members are invited to self-nominate for membership of the Committee via the election process. She also highlighted that the Committees require relevant expertise and individuals with responsibility for defined areas within Colleges and Schools to ensure that any actions or decisions taken by Committees can be implemented at a local level.

  In response to comments regarding the individuals who could usefully serve on Committees, Professor Harrison highlighted the presence of co-opted spaces on the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and welcomed suggestions from members for individuals who could fill co-opted positions. She explained that the paper and associated amendments did not require consideration or approval for co-opted positions to be filled.

- Two members stated that paper authors had had an opportunity to incorporate revisions in response to amendments prior to the paper returning to Senate.

  In response to comments regarding incorporating amendments to the paper, Professor Colm Harmon agreed to consider with the Standing Committee Conveners whether this could take place ahead of a future meeting.

- One member acknowledged the importance of adhering to procedure and referred to the Convener's statement that the item is considered contentious.

  In response the Convener reiterated that the practice and procedure of Senate is that amendments require a decision be taken this would require a vote. This cannot take place out with a quorate meeting of Senate.

- Another member referred to Standing Order 15 and requested that as the meeting was not quorate, further discussion on this item be held over until Senate can reach a decision.

As the item was considered contentious and Senate was not quorate, a decision could not be taken on the paper.

- **Senate Standing Committee Priorities - S 23/24 3M**

The Convener explained that a series of amendments had been received for the Senate Standing Committees Priorities paper and therefore this item was considered contentious and a decision could not be taken as Senate was not quorate. A short discussion on this item would take place, ahead of the paper returning to a future meeting of Senate.

The Conveners of Senate Standing Committees were invited to introduce the paper. Professor Harmon explained that establishing priorities for the Standing Committees is an annual process, and that these have been discussed by the full Committee with revisions made in response to Committee member comments. Professor Harmon also acknowledged the presence of an amendment to the SQAC priorities.

Professor Harrison explained that the proposed amendment to the SQAC priorities raises a specific ask of SQAC which relates to student support. Professor Harrison

explained that oversight of student support is already a priority area for SQAC and the Committee provides oversight and evaluation through this. She explained that this remains an ongoing priority for the Committee and therefore does not require a separate and additional priority to be established.

Senate members made the following points:

- A member reiterated their earlier query on which amendments were deemed contentious and asked whether the paper and the amendments could be considered as uncontentious.

- A member stated that paper authors had had an opportunity to incorporate revisions in response to amendments prior to the paper returning to Senate.

- Another member referred to Standing Order 15 and requested that as the meeting was not quorate, further discussion on this item be held over until Senate can reach a decision.

As the item was considered contentious and Senate was not quorate, a decision could not be taken on the paper.

For information:

- **Senate Standing Committee Upcoming Business - S 23/24 3N**

This paper was provided for information and no comments were raised.

3. **Senate Task and Finish Group Update & Proposals - S 23/24 3O**
   For approval

   The Convener explained that there are a series of proposals regarding meeting format that Senate has been asked to consider and decide on. He explained that discussion of this item would identify whether there were areas of contention and whether a decision could be taken on these.

   The Senate Clerk, Olivia Hayes introduced the item. She explained that the Task and Finish Group had held two meetings to date. At these meetings, the group has discussed the prioritisation of recommendations and is working through these in order of priority. She also explained that the group identified a series of practical measures that are intended to enhance meetings and the procedures surrounding these. These proposals are presented in the paper. She explained that consultation was undertaken via the Members Portal with a 15% response rate. The group strongly encourages member feedback and engagement with future consultation on proposals to help aide the group to formulate proposals for Senate to consider and approve.

   Ms Hayes explained that Senate was asked to decide between a 4x3 hour or 6x2 hour meeting format, and whether meetings should take place in semester time or across the entire academic year. She highlighted that there is a gap in student representation during the period May-September and that meetings which take place during this period may exclude student representation. She also noted previous challenges in reaching quorum for meetings held outside the standard University semester.

   Finally, she explained that the group is seeking in-principle support for the recording of meetings to support the drafting of minutes. If supported, then a formal proposal for recording meetings will return to a future meeting of Senate.

The Convener invited Senate to consider each of the proposals in turn and asked members to raise objections where they felt these were contentious.

The Convener invited Senate to consider increasing the overall meeting time to 12 hours. No comments or objections were raised and therefore this proposal was approved.

The Convener invited Senate members to raise comment on the 4x3 and 6x2 hour meeting format. No comments were raised.

The Convener stated that his view is that a meeting format of 4x3 hours is uncontentious and invited Senate to approve this format. No comments or objections were raised and therefore a 4x3 hour format was approved.

The Convener invited Senate members to raise comment on confining meetings to a standard University semester or holding these across the entire calendar year. No comments were raised.

The Convener stated that his view is that a meeting held within the standard university semester is uncontentious and invited Senate to approve this proposal. No comments or objections were raised and therefore this format was approved.

The Convener invited Senate members to raise comment on revising the meeting time to 1-4pm. One member requested that meetings commence at 1:10pm in line with the standard University timetable. The Senate Clerk confirmed that this change was uncontentious.

The Convener stated that his view is that holding meetings from 1:10-4pm was uncontentious and invited Senate to approve this proposal. No comments or objections were raised and therefore this was approved.

The Convener invited Senate members to raise comment on meetings taking place in hybrid format as standard.

The Convener stated that his view is that meetings taking place in hybrid format as standard was uncontentious and invited Senate to approve this proposal. No comments or objections were raised and therefore this was approved.

The Convener invited Senate members to raise comment on meetings being recorded for the purposes of taking minutes.

The Convener stated that his view is that in-principle support for meetings being recorded was uncontentious and invited Senate to give in-principle support for this proposal. No comments or objections were raised and therefore this in-principle support was given.

Ahead of the conclusion of the meeting, members raised the following points:

- Several items were unable to be considered due to amendments being raised. It was requested that paper authors work with proposers of amendments to refine papers to be returned to Senate.

- A member requested that e-Senate be used to clear any business unable to be considered at the inquorate meeting. The Convener reminded Senate that items for approval cannot be taken through a meeting of e-Senate.

- Members of the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group explained that the group has been discussing measures to engage and consult with membership on papers prior to these being brought to Senate and the group will continue to work towards establishing measures to help facilitate papers being presented in their final format for future meetings.

ITEMS TO COMMENT

Members were invited to comment on the following items via an e-Senate meeting which took place from Monday 3 June - 12pm, Friday 14 June.

People & Money Improvement Plan 24-26 - S 23/24 3Q
To comment

Eight members provided comment on this item.

One member expressed their content with the plan outlined, with another stating it is useful to receive the report though expressing that there appear to be ongoing issues which are not covered in the report.

Four members expressed dissatisfaction with the plan and that the plan did not provide clear deliverables or target dates for addressing the known issues. Members expressed concern that the plan did not sufficiently take account of the impact of staff working with the current system. Two members expressed discontent with the Impact Assessments summary provided within the paper with one member expressing concern regarding the workload implications and impact on staff morale. One member also felt that the plan did not adequately outline the prioritisation process for improvements, however noted that the paper may not be an appropriate avenue for conveying this detail.

Two members queried the absence of detail around what the University is doing in relation to Human Resources related matters and queried whether this indicates that no specific action is taking place.

Three members provided feedback and technical examples on specific issues experienced in relation to the People and Money system. Members provided examples of technical issues experienced within the system which included but were not limited to: challenges with basic functions for end users, feedback on user-functionality of the system including search functions, budget coding and search fields, approval processes, communications with users and access for staff located overseas. Members also expressed concern regarding the ongoing impact of these technical issues on staff workload and morale with particular concern expressed regarding impact on professional services and research staff.

One member stated their concern that the report does not address motions previously approved by Senate.

The comments were passed to the author of the paper.

Court Resolutions – Personal Chairs - S 23/24 3R

To comment

Four members provided comment on this item.

Two members expressed their support for the creation of the Personal Chairs.
One member queried whether the paper was complete and one member expressed their congratulations to the staff successfully nominated for Personal Chairs.

The comments were passed to the author of the paper.

Senate

9 October 2024

Senate Action Log

Meeting date	Paper	Paper status	Action	Responsible	Target date	Action status	Update
22-May-24	S 23/24 2A	OPEN	Action: Senate Clerk to refer comments regarding e-Senate and closing feedback loop to the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.	Senate Clerk	October 2024	Ongoing	Action to be progressed by the Acting Clerk to Senate. The Senate External Review Task and Finish Group will next meet on 29 October.
22-May-24	S 23/24 2B	OPEN	Senate Convener and Senate Clerk to consider communication pathway for reporting back to Senate.	Senate Convener and Senate Clerk	December 2024	Ongoing	Action to be progressed by the Senate Convener and the Acting Clerk to Senate.

Actions completed since the previous meeting

Meeting date	Paper	Paper status	Action	Responsible	Target date	Action status	Update
11-Oct-23	S 23/24 1C	OPEN	Action: Senate members to highlight to Standing Committee Conveners areas where greater information on Committee business is sought for future Annual Reports.	Members of Senate	In time for inclusion in the next Annual Report, normally presented to the May meeting of Senate	Action Closed	The Annual Report of Standing Committees is being presented to the first Senate meeting of 2024/25. As the deadline for submission of papers for this meeting has passed, this action has been marked as closed.
07-Feb-24	S 23/24 2E	CLOSED	Action: University Executive to share the Sustainable Travel Policy Report with Senate once available.	University Executive	Once the report is available	Complete	Senate received an update on the Sustainable Travel Policy on 11 June 2024 via an All-staff communication which provided a link to the Sustainable Travel Policy Report and the University Executive's response and actions taken in response.
22-May-24	S 23/24 3H	OPEN	The Senate Convener and Clerk to relay Senate's approval of Motion 2c to University Court by 24 May at latest as an urgent matter for consideration.	Senate Convener and Senate Clerk	24-May-24	Complete	The Senate Convener and Senate Clerk relayed the approval of Motion 2c, the full paper and the unconfirmed minute extract for the item to the Senior Lay Member of Court by the 24 May.

Senate received an update from Court's Exception Committee via |

Meeting date	Paper	Paper status	Action	Responsible	Target date	Action status	Update
							the Senate Members Portal on 5 June 2024.
22-May-24	S 23/24 3H	OPEN	Senate Clerk to relay Senate's approval of the remaining motions via the routine Senate Report to Court.	Senate Clerk	June 2024	Complete	Court received notification of Senate's approval of Motions 2a, 2b and 2d via the routine Senate Report to Court. Court formally received the report at its meeting held 17 June 2024.
22-May-24	S 23/24 3P	OPEN	Senate Convener and Senate Clerk to consider process for taking forward items not considered by Senate and communicating to members as soon as practicable.	Senate Convener and Senate Clerk	June 2024	Complete	A reconvened meeting of Senate was held on 18 June 2024.

A summary of previous actions can be viewed on the Senate Members Portal.

Senate

9 October 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.

Action requested / recommendation

2. To note and comment.

Background and context

3. Each year a report is presented to 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
Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator

Edinburgh University Students' Association

Presenter

Dylan Walch
Vice President Education 2024-25

Edinburgh University Students' Association

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.

S 24/25 1G

Senate

9 October 2024

Senate Standing Committee Membership 2024/25

Description of paper:

1. Senate Standing Committee Membership for 2024/25.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. Senate is invited to _approve_ the membership of each Standing Committee.

3. Senate is invited to _approve_ reopening the election process to appoint Senate elected members to vacancies on the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

    The methodology approved at the February 2024 meeting of Senate (paper S 23/24 2G refers) will be used to conduct the election, subject to the following amendments:

    A. Fraser Rudge, Committees and Governance Manager, be nominated as the Deputy Returning Officer. The role of Deputy Returning Officer being previously held by Olivia Hayes, Committees and Governance Manager. Lisa Dawson, Academic Registrar, remains as the Returning Officer.

    B. the dates of the nomination and election process be updated as set out below.

Wednesday 16 October 2024	Nominations open
Wednesday 30 October 2024	Nominations close
Wednesday 13 November 2024 (9am) to Wednesday 20 November 2024 (12pm)	Voting open online

Background and context:

4. Under the Senate Standing Orders (22a), Senate may appoint Committees and delegate powers to these committees. Senate approves the membership of these committees annually.

5. Senate currently delegates powers to three Standing Committees: Senate Education Committee (SEC), Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), and Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC).

6. The membership of the Senate Standing Committees is presented to Senate annually for approval. This is an updated paper from the version presented to the May and June 2024 meetings of Senate, and includes changes to Standing Committee membership which have occurred in the intervening period due to role changes and confirmation of election outcomes.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. As at 20 September 2024, there were vacancies for Senate elected members on the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (two vacancies) and the Senate Education Committee (one vacancy).

10. Senate members who are not included in the Senate Committees' membership may have opportunities to contribute to the work of these committees as co-opted members or as members of working groups.

11. Senate members receive notification via email when papers for Senate Standing Committees are available. Members are encouraged to feed into Standing Committee's by sharing comments or feedback with either their College representative(s), the elected Senate representative(s) or in their absence, the relevant Standing Committee Convener.

12. The terms of reference for each Committee are available on the [relevant Committee page](#)

13. Information on the University Court and Senate Committee structure can be accessed on the [University Committees webpage](#).

14. For context, in 2022/23 Senate was the subject of an externally facilitated review. The results of this review were formally received at the 11 October 2023 meeting of Senate. The review contained two recommendations which relate to Senate Standing Committees including a recommendation that a review of the Terms of Reference, coverage, and scope of the three Senate Committees be undertaken. It was recommended these recommendations be adopted, however delegated to the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group to provide oversight and drive the recommendations forward (see Paper S23/24 1I).

Discussion

15. The Committee membership for the Senate Education Committee (SEC), Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), and Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) are provided below. Any changes to the membership are highlighted in yellow.

16. All changes to membership took effect from 1 August 2024.

17. A further election is proposed to appoint to Senate elected member vacancies on the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Quality Assurance Committee; as described in paragraph three.

18. The Standing Committee webpages will be updated with membership once all positions are confirmed.

Resource implications

19. Where an election is required, the cost will be met from within existing budgets.

Risk management

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

Equality & diversity

21. 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 Professional 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

22. The Senate Standing Committees' Membership and Terms of Reference are communicated via the Academic Services website: https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees

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

<table>
<tr><td>Author</td><td>Presenters</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fraser Rudge</td><td>Professor Colm Harmon, Convener of SEC</td></tr>
<tr><td>Senate Clerk</td><td>Professor Tina Harrison, Convener of SQAC</td></tr>
<tr><td>September 2024</td><td>Professor Patrick Hadoke, Convener of APRC</td></tr>
</table>

Freedom of Information: Open

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Education Committee

Role on SEC	Position	Name	Term of Office
Vice-Principal Students	Vice-Principal Students	Professor Colm Harmon (Convener)	Ex Officio
Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Professor Tina Harrison (Vice-Convener)	Ex Officio
2 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for Learning and Teaching – CAHSS	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)	Professor Mary Brennan	
2 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for Learning and Teaching – CAHSS	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)	Dr Lisa Kendall	
1 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for postgraduate research – CAHSS	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)	Professor Laura Bradley	
2 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for Learning and Teaching – CMVM	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching)	Alexandra Laidlaw	
2 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for Learning and Teaching – CMVM	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching)	Professor Gill Aitken	
1 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for postgraduate research – CMVM	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)	Professor Patrick Hadoke	
2 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for Learning and Teaching – CSE	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)	Lorna Halliday	
2 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for Learning and Teaching – CSE	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)	Professor Linda Kirstein	

Role on SEC	Position	Name	Term of Office
1 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for postgraduate research – CSE	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)	Professor Jamie Pearce	
1 x Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice-President Education	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association	<mark>Dylan Walch</mark>	Ex Officio
1 x postgraduate research student representative	Postgraduate Research Student Representative	<mark>TBC – election to be held in October 2024</mark>	Ex Officio
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Callum Paterson	Ex Officio
1 x Head of School from each College chosen by the Heads of College - CSE	Head of School, CSE	Professor Jason Love	
1 x Head of School from each College chosen by the Heads of College - CAHSS	Head of School, CAHSS	Professor Jo Shaw	
1 x Head of School from each College chosen by the Heads of College – CMVM	Head of School / Deanery, CMVM	Professor Mike Shipston	
Director of Academic Services, or nominee	Interim Director of Academic Services	Nichola Kett	Ex Officio
Director of Institute for Academic Development, or nominee	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's nominee)	Professor Velda McCune	Ex Officio
Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions, or nominee	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions	Dr Shane Collins	Ex Officio
Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services, or nominee	Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services	Dr Melissa Highton	Ex Officio
Director for Careers & Employability, or nominee	Director for Careers and Employability	Shelagh Green	Ex Officio

Role on SEC	Position	Name	Term of Office
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener	Co-opted member (Head of Academic Planning – Registry Services)	Marianne Brown	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2027
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener	Co-opted member (Digital Education)	Professor Sian Bayne	1 August 2023 - 31 July 2026
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener	Co-opted member (Student Experience)	Lucy Evans	1 August 2022 - 31 July 2025
3 x elected member of Senate	Representative of Senate (CAHSS)	Dr Tamara Trodd (CAHSS)	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
3 x elected member of Senate	Representative of Senate (CSE)	Professor James Hopgood (CSE)	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
3 x elected member of Senate	Representative of Senate (CMVM)	Vacant (CMVM)	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Patrick Jack	

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Academic Policy and Regulation Committee

Role on APRC	Position	Name	Term of Office
3 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for academic governance and regulation, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience at all levels	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation (CAHSS)	Dr Emily Taylor (Vice-Convener)	
3 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for academic governance and regulation, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience at all levels	Dean of Students (CAHSS)	Professor Jeremy Crang	
3 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for academic governance and regulation, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience at all levels	Head of Taught Student Administration and Support (CAHSS)	Cat Morley	
3 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for academic governance and regulation, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience at all levels	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)	Professor Linda Kirstein	
3 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for academic governance and regulation, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience at all levels	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)	Professor Stephen Warrington	
3 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for academic governance and regulation, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience at all levels	Deputy Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)	Katy McPhail	

Role on APRC	Position	Name	Term of Office
3 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for academic governance and regulation, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience at all levels	Dean of Education (CMVM)	<mark>Professor Gill Aitken</mark>	
3 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for academic governance and regulation, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience at all levels	Dean of Students and Alumni (CMVM)	Professor Mohini Gray	
3 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for academic governance and regulation, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience at all levels	Academic Administration Manager (CMVM)	Isabel Lavers	
1 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for postgraduate research	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)	Kirsty Woomble	
1 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for postgraduate research	Postgraduate Research Manager (CSE)	<mark>Amanda Fegan</mark>	
1 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for postgraduate research	Director of Postgraduate Research and Early Career Research Experience (CMVM)	Professor Patrick Hadoke (Convener)	
1 x Edinburgh University Students' Association sabbatical officer	Vice-President, Education	<mark>Dylan Walch</mark>	
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Advice Place Manager & Deputy Manager, Students' Association	This role is shared between: Charlotte Macdonald and Clair Halliday	
1 x member of staff from Registry Services	Academic Registrar, Registry Services	Lisa Dawson	

Role on APRC	Position	Name	Term of Office
1 x member of staff from the Institute for Academic development	Head of Taught Student Development, Institute for Academic Development (IAD), Director's nominee	Dr Donna Murray	
1 x member of staff from Academic Services	Head of Academic Policy and Regulation	Dr Adam Bunni	
1 x member of staff from Information Services' Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division	Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media	Karen Howie	
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener	Co-opted member (Deputy Secretary, Students)	Lucy Evans	
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener	Co-opted member (Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association)	Callum Paterson	
3 x elected Senate members, one positions is nominally assigned to each College	College of Science and Engineering	<mark>Dr Matt Bell (CSE)</mark>	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
3 x elected Senate members, one positions is nominally assigned to each College	College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science	<mark>Dr Murray Earle (CAHSS)</mark>	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
3 x elected Senate members, one positions is nominally assigned to each College	College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	<mark>Dr Valentina Ferlito (CMVM)</mark>	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Cristina Matthews	

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

Role on SQAC	Position	Name	Term of Office
Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Ex Officio
College Dean of Quality - CMVM	College Dean of Quality (CMVM)	Professor Matthew Bailey (Vice-Convener)	Ex Officio
College Dean of Quality – CSE	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture (CSE)	Professor James Hopgood	Ex Officio
College Dean of Quality - CAHSS	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)	Dr Emily Taylor	Ex Officio
1 x member of staff from each College with experience of and an interest in quality assurance at School level - CMVM	School representative of CMVM (Director of Quality)	Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar	1 August 2023- 31 July 2026
1 x member of staff from each College with experience of and an interest in quality assurance at School level - CSE	School representative of CSE	Faten Adam	1 August 2024 – 31 July 2027
1 x member of staff from each College with experience of and an interest in quality assurance at School level - CAHSS	School representative of CAHSS (Director of Quality)	Dr Anne Desler	1 August 2023- 31 July 2026
1 x member of staff from the Doctoral College	Representative of Doctoral College	Professor Laura Bradley	
1 x member of staff from the Institute for Academic Development	Co-Director, Institute of Academic Development	Olivia Eadie	
1 x external member from within the Scottish Higher Education sector with experience in quality assurance	Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching, Edinburgh Napier University	Professor Nazira Karodia	1 August 2023 – 31 July 2026

Role on SQAC	Position	Name	Term of Office
1 x Edinburgh University Students' Association sabbatical officer	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Dylan Walch	Ex Officio
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Callum Paterson	Ex Officio
1 x member of staff from Academic Services	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services	Brian Connolly	Ex Officio
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener	Co-opted member (Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling)	Marianne Brown	1 August 2024 – 31 July 2027
3 x representative of Senate - CAHSS	Representative of Senate	Dr Michael Barany (CAHSS)	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
3 x representative of Senate - CMVM	Representative of Senate	Vacant (CMVM)	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
3 x representative of Senate - CSE	Representative of Senate	Vacant (CSE)	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Sinéad Docherty	

Senate

9 October 2024

Senate Standing Committee Priorities 2024/25

Description of paper

1. This paper provides Senate with the Senate Standing Committee priorities for academic year 2024/25.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is invited to note and endorse the proposed priorities for 2024/25.

Background and context

3. Senate received the Annual Report of Standing Committees for 2022/23 at its 11 October 2023 meeting. This report contained the Standing Committee priorities for 2023/24 however Senate did not approve this item by a vote of 51%.

4. Following a review of feedback raised by Senate members and in line with the efforts toward continuous improvement and enabling greater oversight of Standing Committee work for Senate, a revised approach is being taken to Committee Priorities and the Annual Report of Standing Committee business.

5. The Annual Report of Standing Committee business will be presented to the first Senate meeting of 2024/25. This change to sequence has been made to allow the full Committee cycle to take place prior to the report being drafted and presented to Senate. The report will be drafted with consideration of the feedback raised at the 11 October 2023 meeting, Senate Standing Committee Conveners will hold discussions with the Senate representatives elected onto their Committee or 2023/24 to identify areas where greater information may be helpful.

6. Senate receives a Standing Committee Upcoming Business report at each meeting of Senate and are notified when the agendas, papers and minutes are published for Senate Standing Committees.

7. At its 7 February 2024 meeting, Senate received a paper (Paper S23/24 2D) which outlined the plans for developing Standing Committee priorities for 2024/25.

8. In line with these plans, each Standing Committee has received a paper with the draft proposed Committee priorities with adequate time provided at meetings for discussion of Committee priorities. The development of the priorities for each Committee is outlined in paragraphs 9-11.

9. SEC received a paper outlining the draft proposed committee priorities at its 7 March 2024 meeting. The feedback provided by members at the meeting was

used to develop a further iteration of the proposal priorities which was shared on the Committee's SharePoint site for further comment. Comments received on this iteration have been used to finalise the proposed priorities presented in paragraph 12.

10. APRC received a paper outlining the draft proposed committee priorities at its 21 March 2024 meeting. The feedback provided by members at the meeting was used to develop a further iteration of the proposal priorities which was shared with APRC for further comment. The finalised proposed priorities for APRC presented in paragraph 13.

11. SQAC received a paper outlining the draft Committee priorities ahead of its April meeting for consultation. The paper was then formally discussed by SQAC at its 25 April meeting. The feedback provided by members was used to develop a further iteration of the proposed priorities which was shared on the Committee's SharePoint site for further comment. Comments received on this iteration have been used to finalise the proposed priorities presented in paragraph 14.

Discussion

12. Senate Education Committee proposed Committee priorities 2024/25

Proposed priority	Curriculum Transformation
Rationale and fit with remit	Curriculum Transformation is a major University strategic priority which aligns to Strategy 2030. It is also relevant to the committee remit: 2.1 Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners 2.2 Promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment, embrace new teaching methods and consider cross-cutting themes such as research-led and technology-enhanced learning, digital and information literacy, education for employability, internationalisation and lifelong learning. Consider and promote local developments or initiatives with substantial implications for University learning and teaching strategy, policy, services or operations
Area of focus and objectives	• Committee to contribute to and guide development and adoption of UG and PGT Curriculum Frameworks • Committee to have oversight of priority areas for enhancement linked to Curriculum Transformation (e.g. programme level assessment, sustainability & climate, accessibility & inclusion)
Regulatory/external requirement?	No

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

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

Area of focus and objectives	• Ensure ongoing implementation of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities, with a focus on principles:
	  1. Assessment will be fit for purpose;
	  3. Assessment and feedback will be inclusive, equitable and fair; and
	  6. Feedback on assessment will be constructive, developmental and timely

	o Ensure mechanisms are in place for the continued monitoring of feedback turnaround times (to the three-week standard) o Ensure mechanisms are in place for the continued monitoring of feedback quality • Consider School-level data and evidence against assessment and feedback priorities, including timeliness and quality/usefulness of feedback.
Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes – This was a recommendation in the QAA ELIR 2021 Report and has been re-emphasised in the QAA QESR Report (published January 2024).

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

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

- The Widening Participation Strategy
- Awarding gaps (aligns with a QESR recommendation so the Committee will also receive updates on the actions being taken to progress this recommendation from the External Quality Review Oversight Group)
- Staff development (would need to ensure alignment with the Committee's remit and also other relevant HR/staff groups/committees)
- Small group teaching
- Employability (a report on Graduate Outcomes will be presented to the May meeting)
- Consider the experience of cohorts of students given the changing student profile, using evidence to identify cohorts (aligns with committee remit 2.4 Give specific consideration to instances in which the experience of one particular cohort of students or learners (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research students, and those involved in non-standard programmes) may diverge from that of others)
- Estates and space
- Look at data across the student journey, including but not limited to awarding gaps

13. *Senate Academic Policy and Regulation Committee proposed Committee priorities 2024/25*

Proposed priority	Curriculum Transformation Programme
Rationale and fit with remit	The Curriculum Transformation Programme is a major University strategic priority which aligns to Strategy 2030. It is also relevant to the committee remit: 2.1 Oversee the development, maintenance and implementation of an academic regulatory framework which effectively supports and underpins the University's educational activities. 2.2 Ensure that the academic regulatory framework continues to evolve in order to meet organisational needs and is responsive to changes in University strategy, and in the internal and external environments.
Area of focus and objectives	- Consider and approve relevant policies to articulate the PGT programme archetypes (contingent on approval of the archetypes by Senate); - Consider regulatory implications of elements of the PGT curriculum, including progression points, awarding criteria, programme length, and Recognition of Prior Learning.
Regulatory/external requirement?	No

Proposed priority	Postgraduate Research students
Rationale and fit with remit	This is the continuation of work initiated in 23/24 via an APRC sub-group. Further work is needed to ensure our regulations and policies provide the most appropriate routes to address situations where students' progress with their research is severely hampered by adverse personal circumstances. This is relevant to the committee remit: 2.1 Oversee the development, maintenance and implementation of an academic regulatory framework which effectively supports and underpins the University's educational activities. 2.6 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.
Area of focus and objectives	• Consider regulatory options for handling cases where students' progress with their research is severely hampered over a prolonged period. • Ensure regulations and policies take account of adjustments which may be offered to students with disabilities. • Take steps to ensure the Annual Review process focuses on academic matters.
Regulatory/external requirement?	We have an anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that our regulations and policies do not discriminate against students with disabilities, and other protected characteristics.

Proposed priority	Scheduled review of policies
Rationale and fit with remit	APRC revised the schedule of reviews for policies in March 2023 to group these more thematically and address a backlog in reviews generated during the pandemic period. Maintenance of the framework of policies and regulations is central to APRC's remit: 2.1 Oversee the development, maintenance and implementation of an academic regulatory framework which effectively supports and underpins the University's educational activities.

Area of focus and objectives	Policies scheduled for review during 2024/25 include the following: • Authorised Interruption of Study Policy • Dual, Double, and Multiple Awards Policy • Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees • Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy and Procedure • Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure
Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes. Regular review of core practices as enshrined in policy is an expectation under the QAA UK Quality Code.

Proposed priority	Students with support needs beyond the scope of the Exceptional Circumstances policy
Rationale and fit with remit	The Watch that Gap project identified gaps in the support offered to some groups of students, e.g. student parents, students with caring responsibilities, students with health issues not covered by learning adjustments. It is expected that the project will lead to recommendations regarding additional support that could be offered to these students. Some of these recommendations are likely to have implications for policies falling within APRC's remit. This is relevant to the committee remit: 2.1 Oversee the development, maintenance and implementation of an academic regulatory framework which effectively supports and underpins the University's educational activities. 2.2. Ensure that the academic regulatory framework continues to evolve in order to meet organisational needs and is responsive to changes in University strategy, and in the internal and external environments.
Area of focus and objectives	The recommendations from the Watch that Gap project include the provision of modifications such as extensions to deadlines, and flexibility regarding attendance. The committee will consider proposals for changes to policy and regulation relating to these areas.
Regulatory/external requirement?	No.

14. Senate Quality Assurance Committee proposed Committee priorities 2024/25

Proposed priority	**Responding to 2023 Quality Enhancement & Standards Review**
Rationale and fit with remit	This priority responds to the recommendations following the 2023 QESR and is relevant to the committee remit: 2.1 Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements. 2.5 Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.

Area of focus and objectives	• Committee to focus on the progress required against the QESR recommendations:
	   i) Assessment & Feedback (turnaround times and quality of feedback)
	   ii) Implementation of the Tutors & Demonstrators training policy
	   iii) Promotion of academic staff based on teaching
	   iv) Learning & Teaching Strategy
	   v) Attainment gap monitoring
	   vi) Pace of change: make progress on recommendations from external reviews which can be evidenced in the next academic year.
	• Committee to support and monitor the work of the QESR oversight group who are taking action to progress the above recommendations. The group will report to SQAC and SEC to allow the Senate Committees to monitor progress against recommendations and ensure that appropriate action is being taken.
	• Committee will also update wider Senate on developments and progress in order to facilitate understanding of QESR and related external QA requirements.
	• Committee to give particular focus to progress against Assessment & Feedback and T&D training which have been identified as time critical recommendations following the external review.

Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes. This is in response to recommendations made in the QAA ELIR 2021 Report and the later QAA QESR Report (published January 2024).

Proposed priority	**Responding to the outcome of the Scottish Funding Council's Tertiary Quality Review**
Rationale and fit with remit	A sector-wide Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) for implementation within 2024-25 is being developed (the University has been represented during this development). As above, this fits with the remit: • 2.1 Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements. • 2.5 Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.
Area of focus and objectives	• Committee to focus on identifying where policy, guidance and practice is updated to align with changes to the TQEF • In line with its remit, the Committee is expected to promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business. • Committee will also update wider Senate on developments and changes in order to facilitate understanding and engagement with the new TQEF.
Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes – mapping to SFC Guidance on Quality is an external requirement.

Proposed priority	**Evaluation and monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the new student support model (SSM)**
Rationale and fit with remit	Relevant to committee remit: • 2.5 Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives. • 2.6 Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.
Area of focus and objectives	• Oversight of the evaluation of the implementation of the model (continuation from 2023/24 academic year). The Committee will look to ensure consistency and identify good practice & lessons learned from the use of the SSM. Any relevant lessons learned from implementation will be shared with the University's change management group. • Oversight of the development of an evaluation mechanism as the model transitions to business as

	usual – including how this mechanism integrates with existing quality assurance processes.
	• Committee to be responsible for assessing the effectiveness of the SSM, through the evaluation model and supported by data to evidence the impact.
Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes. The University has made progress on the recommendation in ELIR 4 to progress with student support services. Under this recommendation, the University was asked to develop an effective mechanism to monitor consistency of implementation and allow it to evaluate the impact of these changes on the student experience. Equally, evaluation and institutional oversight of the SSM will be an ongoing piece of work that will be the responsibility of SQAC as a quality measure once the project team completes its work.

Proposed priority	**Progression and Attainment Monitoring**
Rationale and fit with remit	Relevant to committee remit: • 2.6 Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development. • 2.7 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.
Area of focus and objectives	The Committee established a task group in 2019/20 but the work was impacted by Covid-19 disruption. The Committee intend to revive the task group with the objective to adopt a systematic approach to monitoring student, progression and attainment data. This will include focus on quality data and high standards of evidence collection and use. Where appropriate, the Committee will consult with APRC to understand relevant policies, behaviours & EIQA analysis. Some aspects of the work of this task group are in alignment with the attainment monitoring recommendation of the QESR. The QESR report requires the University to: • Complete the recommendation on attainment gap oversight, coordination and monitoring from ELIR 4, expediting progress to ensure that the work being undertaken is effective.

	• Pay particular attention to sharing good practice and supporting staff in understanding the causes of attainment gaps and taking effective action.
Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes. This was a recommendation in the QAA ELIR 2021 Report and has been re-emphasised in the QAA QESR Report (published January 2024). Furthermore, it is an area of work that the Committee has identified for focus in previous years and now looks to prioritise the package of work that is required.

Resource implications

15. 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 by Committees on an ongoing basis as work on priorities progresses.

Risk management

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

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

17. This paper does not respond to the climate emergency or contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & diversity

18. Equality and diversity implications should be outlined and considered on an ongoing basis as work on priorities progresses. Consideration of the equality and diversity implications of Committee business is the responsibility of all Standing Committee members.

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

19. The proposed priorities will be reported to Senate in May for endorsement. Additionally, the Senate Committees' Newsletter provides information on standing committee business.

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30 April 2024

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Freedom of Information Open

Senate

9 October 2024

Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees

Description of paper

1. The annual report of the Senate Standing Committees 2023-24: Education Committee (SEC); Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC); and Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

Action requested

2. Senate is invited to note the annual report.

Background and Context

3. The Senate Standing Orders require the Standing Committees to report annually on action taken under powers delegated by to them by Senate. This report summarises the actions and achievements of the Senate Standing Committees, and their use of the powers delegated to them by Senate in 2023-24.

4. Changes for 2023-24:

    *   The timing of the annual report has moved from May to October to allow for reporting on a full committee cycle.
    *   Previous version of the annual report included the committees' plans for the next academic year. These are now presented as a separate Senate Standing Committees Priorities paper to the May Senate meeting, with more information provided as requested by Senate members in May 2023.
    *   Inclusion of mappings of agenda items to committee remits.

5. Alongside the annual report, Senate members are kept informed of Senate Standing Committee business through the following mechanisms:

    *   Senate receive a Standing Committee Upcoming Business report at each meeting;
    *   Senate are notified when the agendas and papers are published for Senate Standing Committees and are advised they can provide comments on agenda items through College or elected Senate representatives on the relevant committee;
    *   Senate receive a mid-year reflection on Senate Standing Committee priorities;
    *   The Senate Committees' Newsletter.

Resource implications

6. This paper is a report of past actions and therefore does not have any resources implications.

Risk Management

7. This paper supports good governance. Not meeting governance requirements would present a risk. Failure to fulfil Standing Committee remits raises potential risks

associated with the University's framework of academic policy and regulations and the student experience.

Equality and Diversity

8. This paper does not propose any actions. The equality and diversity implications of any actions which arise from the discussion would need to be outlined and considered. Any Equality and Diversity issues related to Standing Committee business are raised at the relevant Committee.

Next steps / implications

9. Any feedback provided by Senate will be considered for future iterations of the annual report. The annual report will be shared with University Court for information.

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Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees 2023-24

1.	Executive Summary

This report summarises the actions and achievements of the Senate Standing Committees, and their use of the powers delegated to them by Senate, for academic year 2023-24.

2.	Introduction

The three Standing Committees of Senate are Senate Education Committee (SEC), Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC), and Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

Senate has delegated to these Committees a range of its powers, and these powers are set out in the Committees' Terms of Reference. Links to the Terms of Reference and memberships of the Senate Standing Committees are below:

- Education Committee
- Academic Policy and Regulations Committee
- Quality Assurance Committee

3.	Committee meetings and Sub Groups/Committees 2023-24

Name of Committee	No. of meetings
Senate Education Committee	5
Academic Policy and Regulations Committee	6 + one electronic
Senate Quality Assurance Committee	5 + one electronic

Name of Sub Group/Committee	Task Group of:
PGR Concessions Sub-Group	APRC
Annual Monitoring Sub Group	
Student Support Services Annual Review Sub-Committee	SQAC
Data Task Group	SQAC
Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group	SEC
Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group	SEC, ARPC, SQAC
HEAR Recommendation Panel	SEC
External Quality Review Oversight Group	SEC, SQAC

Name of Sub-Committee	Sub-Committee of
Student Appeal Committee	APRC
Student Fitness to Practice Appeal Committee	APRC
Student Discipline Committee	APRC

4.	Senate Standing Committees' Progress in 2023-24

All committees considered:
- University of Edinburgh Students' Association Vice President Priorities
- Committee memberships and Terms of Reference
- Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review
- Committee priorities mid-year reflection
- Committee priorities for the next academic year

4.1	Education Committee

The Education Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for taught and research student matters, particularly strategy and policy concerning learning, teaching and the development of curriculum.

Priorities

1. Curriculum Transformation

September:
- A verbal update was provided to the Committee on work undertaken since the last paper was presented (in March 2023), covering key activities and the impact of MAB on engagement with Schools. The Committee fed back on the need for the Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP) to align with School and College priorities around assessment and on resource implications.

November:
- A paper providing an update on CTP since the last paper was presented to the Committee in March 2023 was given. The update was based around three main areas of activity: The development, testing and validation of new UG and PGT Curriculum Frameworks including engagement with Schools and Colleges; Preparation of an Outline Business Case; Work on an outline project plan to support the adoption of the Curriculum Framework including consideration of what processes could be used to approve changes to programmes and courses.
- Members commented on the differences between honours and pre-honours years, resourcing of teaching staff, approaches to teaching at scale, and the need for the framework to include work streams and competency sets which affect how students work within their own subject area. Discussion also addressed other key elements including assessment and feedback, decolonising the curriculum and the importance of fundamental pillars of delivery such as timetabling and systems. The Committee noted that consideration must be given to how other key strategies of the University interact with CTP, and acknowledged that the continuing consultation with colleagues is vital to the plans and expected implementation

January:
- Members attended and contributed to a CTP session for Senate and SEC members.

March:
- The Committee was asked to consider key questions in relation to the PGT Curriculum Framework and programme archetypes. Discussion included progression points, the importance of flexible routes into study and models within the framework that best support international students who are new to the UK University experience. The Committee highlighted the additional requirements of accreditation that will be relevant to some programmes.
- In response to a question about the timeframe for the proposed framework, the Committee were informed that the intended validation window would be academic year 2024/25 and the roll-out period in 2026/27. Members noted their interest in receiving further clarity on the curriculum design principles and how these will be shaped in the next 5 years.
- The views of the Committee were noted by the CTP Lead and fed into the revised framework proposal subsequently presented to Senate.

May:
- The Committee discussed activity within Colleges relating to challenge courses.

2. Assessment and Feedback Groups

September:
- The Committee were informed that the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group and the Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group are both exploring options for the summer resit diet in 23/24, with a range of options set to be in place to facilitate resits that may not require in-person attendance.
- Assessment and feedback was also discussed in the context of the NSS Survey Results. It was recognised that there is work to do to improve student satisfaction in relation to feedback; this work can be facilitated through the Assessment & Feedback Principles & Priorities, which set out the standards and guidance for Schools.

November:
- Assessment and feedback was discussed, with members expressing the view that assessment design is an important aspect of inclusivity and combatting plagiarism. Following this discussion, the Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) agreed to liaise with IAD colleagues to identify resources which can be shared across the University to support assessment design.

January:
- The Committee reviewed the task groups working on assessment and feedback (the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group and the Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation (AFGPDSE) Group) and were requested to consider disbanding the latter, which had a more operational focus. This proposed change was in response to the QESR visit and its recommendations regarding assessment & feedback.
- The Committee approved the proposal to dissolve the AFGPDSE Group and reconstitute the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group with a refreshed membership and remit focused on delivering the outcome of the QESR and longer-term ambitions for assessment and feedback. The Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group continues to report to SEC with a revised terms of reference and membership

March:
- The Committee discussed assessment & feedback and turnaround times for feedback. Members highlighted that nuanced discussion is needed around student expectations of timely feedback and student concern around the quality of feedback provided. It was felt that data would help to understand assessment & feedback performance across the University, as well as the relationship between performance and student survey results.
- The revised Terms of Reference for the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group were noted.

May
- The Committee noted that assessment and feedback is 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 can be rolled out more widely across the University.
- Positive discussions held with Colleges in relation to assessment and feedback data monitoring were noted. 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.

3. Generative Artificial Intelligence

September:
- The Committee discussed Generative AI in the context of a proposal for firewall website controls. The Committee had been asked for their views, which would be shared with the University Executive. Comments from Committee members addressed firewall limitations, student protection and the need to understand how AI might be legitimately used by both staff and students.

November:
- The Committee were informed that work is underway to review and develop the guidance around Generative AI, and to develop training that will assist colleagues with AI literacy. The Artificial Intelligence Data Ethics task group (AIDE) is being revised and reshaped and will be involved in this work.

March
- Members were informed that the QAA has curated a range of resources relating to Generative AI and the ways it can be used as a positive tool while also maintaining academic standards. The resources are publicly available for the benefit of the sector.

May
- The Committee noted QAA Scotland's event, 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.

Other matters considered during the year
September
- Discussed the limitations regarding the University's firewall website controls and mechanisms which could be utilised. Support was noted from the Committee for taking a position against access to sites which promote academic misconduct.
- Approved the inclusion of the Student Online Information Security Awareness Training course in the essential training suite that students should undertake as part of their matriculation.
- Noted that a draft Learning & Teaching Strategy is in progress.
- Approved the formal closure of the Support for Curriculum Development Group.

November
- Noted the approval of the recommendation to request a message on any website blocked with an explanation of why the site has been blocked and the dangers of interacting with essay mill companies, as well as to highlight support available to students.
- Approved guidance for Schools and Deaneries to help embed the Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators, on behalf of the IAD working group. While approved, views on payment and line management were noted.
- Discussed a working draft of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, agreeing that academic advice should be embedded at every stage of the curriculum.
- Endorsed the next phase of work in the Student Analytics Pilot Study to introduce student analytics as a supporting technology for student support.
- Approved two proposed additional questions to the 2023/24 NSS Survey.

- Approved the recommendation that the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program Climate Leadership Award is added to the HEAR.

January
- Noted that a reshaped ELIR oversight group, which reports to both SEC and Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), will take forward the recommendations from the QESR report.
- Approved the request for Online Data Protection Training to be added to the suite of essential courses on Learn Ultra.
- Received an update on the student support model, feeding back comments and questions to the Deputy Secretary, Students.
- Approved the proposed institutional questions for the 2024 PTES survey.
- Noted that the Doctoral College is working on the Research Cultures Action Plan with the Institute for Academic Development, which will make recommendations in relation to the PGR student experience.

March
- Recommended that Schools affected by lost learning, as a result of industrial action, consider the additional support and financial resource available to bridge gaps in learning.
- Approved revisions to the Student Support Framework ahead of academic year 2024/25. The Committee advised that more emphasis on some specific cohorts of students would be helpful in ensuring that the support required for these students is explicitly captured and discussed the role of the Cohort Lead.
- Noted the annual update on the results of the School Accessibility Reviews. The Committee was supportive of the expectation that all Schools should participate in accessibility activity with the aim of increasing the rate of compliance.
- Noted the Terms of Reference for the QESR Oversight Group, set up following the report of the review.

May
- Approved the draft Learning and Teaching Strategy in principle, feeding back wider comments and queries to the Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement).
- Provided comments regarding the PGR Culture Action Plan, to be shared with the Doctoral College. 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.
- Approved the Student Partnership Agreement for 2024-25.

4.2   Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

The Academic Policy and Regulations Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for the University's framework of academic policy and regulation, apart from those aspects which are primarily parts of the Quality Assurance Framework.

Priorities

1. **Policy and regulatory arrangements for the Curriculum Transformation Programme**

May:
The Committee received an introduction to some of the key policy and regulation discussions that might be required as part of the development and implementation of the Postgraduate Taught Curriculum Framework and Programme Archetypes, subject to approval from Senate. If approved, further detailed proposals concerning specific policy changes will be presented to the Committee for consideration in due course.

2. **Strands of work relating to the Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group (particularly in relation to academic policy and regulation)**

The Committee did not receive work or updates in 2023/24 in relation to the Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group. This Group was reconstituted into the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group in early 2024, with a refreshed membership and remit.

3. **Ongoing work around Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances**

January:
The Committee commented on an updated draft of a proposed Exceptional Circumstances policy, following further work done after the discussions in 2022/23. The Committee also received an update regarding the systems and process changes required to implement such a policy, should it be approved.

March:
The Committee received an update on the project Watch That Gap, commissioned following work from the Committee's Extensions and Special Circumstances Task Group and which considered the needs of student parents and carers undertaking study at the University. The update included a summary of findings and preliminary recommendations from the project.

The Committee considered a further draft of the Exceptional Circumstances policy, taking into account feedback from the Committee at its January meeting. Following detailed discussion, the Committee approved the proposed policy and agreed this would come into effect from September 2024. The new policy would replace the existing Special Circumstances policy and the provisions for coursework extensions in the Taught Assessment Regulations.

May:
The Committee was invited to note and comment on the Exceptional Circumstances Communication Plan.

4. Receive policies for approval in line with agreed updated schedule of review of policies, regulations and guidance

Regulations reviewed by the Committee on an annual basis:

- **Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations (March)**
  As part of the annual review of the UG and PG Degree Regulations, the Committee heard proposals for revisions and made recommendations for revisions, which were then presented to Senate for comment and to the University Court for approval in June 2024 via the Court Resolution process.

- **Taught Assessment Regulations and Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations (May)**
  The Committee approved proposals for amendments to both of these sets of Assessment Regulations at its meeting in May 2024.

Policies reviewed by the Committee as part of their periodic review:

- **Student Maternity and Family Leave policy (March)**
  The Committee considered the proposed amendments to this policy, which incorporated feedback from a wide consultation with key stakeholders. Amendments included the reorganisation and rewording of the information to provide more clarity and also to bring it up to date with current practices and terminology within the University. Other proposed amendments included an amended title of the policy, updates to the information on maternity pay and conditions for postgraduate research students in receipt of specific types of scholarships or stipends and a new section on support for student parents. The Committee approved the proposed amendments as well as further minor amendments, and that the policy should come into effect as soon as possible.

- **Board of Examiners Handbook for Taught Courses and Programmes (May)**
  The proposed Handbook was presented to the Committee for approval following its periodic review and consultation undertaken with Colleges and Schools. The main proposed changes including reducing the duplication between the Handbook and the Taught Assessment Regulations, reflecting aspects of current practice, clarifying the roles of office holders in relation to Boards of Examiners, and providing guidance on the appropriate and efficient size of Boards of Examiners. The Committee approved the proposed policy along with a number of additional minor amendments.

- **Performance Sport policy (May)**
  The Committee considered the proposed amendments following the periodic review of this policy, led by colleagues in Sport and Exercise and Moray House with support from Academic Services. The Committee discussed the options for adjustments for students within the remit of this policy and agreed the proposed wording of the policy, but also agreed to include further guidance for Schools on when to approach their College for guidance in order to ensure consistent implementation of the policy.

- **Programme and Course Handbooks Policy (May)**
  The Committee reviewed the proposed amendments following the periodic review of this policy conducted by Academic Services in consultation with key stakeholders. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful for the policy to clarify that course and programme handbooks may contain degree-specific regulations, and that these requirements should be publicly available. The Committee approved

the proposed amendments as well as further minor amendments agreed in the meeting.

Other matters considered during the year

Redeeming failure or missing credit for taught courses with delayed results (August)
The Committee scrutinised proposed options regarding the redemption of failure or missing assessment for undergraduate students continuing their studies in 2023/24 who were found to have failed courses from 2022/23 and where results had been delayed due to the marking and assessment boycott. The paper also considered students who had been granted null sits due to Special Circumstances. The paper proposed that Schools should exercise discretion over where these options are used, based on what is considered academically appropriate. The Committee approved the paper and provided expert advice on the proposed options, including risks and operational issues which Schools should consider when processing these cases.

Operation of the December 2023 Exam Diet (September)
The Committee considered options for extending the December 2023 examination diet to 11 exam days, an increase from the usual 10 days, to allow a clash free timetable to be developed, and which allows appropriate spacing of exams for individual students. The Committee noted the benefits and challenges relating to each of the options presented, and agreed to approve the introduction of a second examination session into one day of the examination diet.

Academic Year dates 2025/26 and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2026/27 (January)
The Committee approved the academic year dates for 2025/26. The Committee also approved amendments to the provisional academic year dates for 2026/2027, and requested further detail regarding the period of revision and examination diet for December 2026 before these dates return to the Committee for approval as final dates.

Student Appeal Regulations (March, not due for periodic review)
The Committee approved amendments to the Student Appeal Regulations, following a period of consultation with stakeholders, in response to enquiries and issues raised as part of the appeals process. The key amendments included clarification of the scope, grounds and outcomes of appeals, the removal of the Full Appeal Committee due to its redundancy, and clarification of students' responsibilities throughout the appeals process.

Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures (May, not due for periodic review)
The Committee approved amendments to the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures, which were proposed in response to feedback from the Appeals Team, the Students' Association Advice Place and the College Academic Misconduct Officers (CAMOs). Amendments included the addition of penalty options for pass/fail courses, and clarification regarding requirements for reporting academic misconduct investigations where students are in receipt of specific scholarship funding.

Approval of Pass/Fail arrangements for courses (September e-business and May)
The Committee reviewed and approved concessions for a number of courses to Taught Assessment Regulation 35.3, whereby courses with pass/fail assessment may not be offered during the Honours years of a programme unless Academic Policy and Regulations Committee has approved an exemption.

Concessions for Academics Beyond Borders (March)
The Committee approved changes to the approval of concessions for extending the visitor access registration period for PhD students under the Academics Beyond Borders scheme can now be approved by the College, rather than by the Committee. The extension period may be up to, but no longer than, the duration of the student's PhD programme.

Non-standard programmes & programme changes
The Committee has responsibility for approving non-standard programmes and changes to programmes which require exemptions from current policies and regulations. For 2023/24, proposals reviewed included:

- **ChM – maximum period of Authorised Interruption of Study and inclusion in Period of Study Table and Model for Degree Types and Policy (September)**
  The Committee approved the extension of the maximum period for an authorised Interruption of Study for the Master of Surgery (ChM) programmes.

- **Programmes with non-standard semester dates (CMVM) (November)**
  The Committee approved non-standard semester dates for a number of online part-time MSc programmes in CMVM. It was noted that, although these dates are different to the University's standard semester dates, the dates align with those of other online MSc programmes across CMVM.

- **Changes to the approvals for taught-only Masters programmes (March)**
  Given that the Committee has now approved a substantial number of Masters programmes being delivered with fully-taught options, and in light of the forthcoming changes to PGT programme archetypes as part of Curriculum Transformation, the Committee agreed that these requests can be approved by Convener's action hereon. These approvals will be reported to the Committee via Convener's actions.

4.3   Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)

The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for the framework which assures standards and enhances the quality of the student learning experience.

Priorities

1. **Overseeing the implementation of a plan of action in response to the 2021 Enhancement Led Institutional Review**

Following the 2021 Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR), the University undertook the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) in November 2023. The QESR was the method used by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to review higher education institutions in Scotland for the academic sessions 2022-23 and 2023-24. The QESR considered the University's outcome under the previous review method and progress against the recommendations made in 2021.

The recommendations and areas for action as a result of the QESR are as follows:

i) Assessment & Feedback (turnaround times and quality of feedback)
ii) Training for postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach
iii) Promotion of academic staff based on teaching
iv) Learning & Teaching Strategy
v) Attainment gap monitoring
vi) Pace of change (the strategic leadership and management of change)

An External Quality Review Oversight Group has been established (reporting to Senate Education Committee (SEC) and SQAC) to monitor progress against the above priorities and an Action Plan was submitted to the QAA in July 2023.

April

In response to the ELIR/QESR recommendations on attainment/awarding gap monitoring the Committee established the Student Data Monitoring Task Group. The Group is tasked with exploring methodological options and making recommendations to SQAC for a systematic approach to monitoring student data at University-level across key stages in the student lifecycle (e.g. retention, progression and attainment).

2. **Responding to the outcome of the Scottish Funding Council's Tertiary Quality Review**

The new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF), the key outcome of the Scottish Funding Council's Tertiary Quality Review, was launched in August 2024.

During 2023/24 the Committee focused on the following business in relation to the existing external quality framework:

September
The outcomes of annual quality processes were reported to SQAC in September 2023 in the papers School Annual Quality Reports 2022-23 and Internal Periodic Review Themes 2022-23. The Committee identified the following themes/issues for further development at University level: staff experience; student engagement; assessment and feedback; learning and teaching infrastructure; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; staff support and development. The Committee agreed actions and requested responses from key members of staff with relevant responsibility. These responses were subsequently

considered by SQAC (at the May 2024 meeting) and formed the basis of the annual feedback from SQAC to schools/deaneries on the QA processes.

The Committee also considered the Scottish Funding Council Annual Report 2022-23, providing an update on the activities undertaken across the University to effectively manage quality assurance and deliver on enhancement. The report was submitted to the SFC in October 2023 after approval from University Court.

December
The Committee discussed the College Annual Quality Reports and key themes highlighted by the College Deans of Quality. The Committee identified the following themes/issues for further development at University level: space and estate, the PGR student experience, staff wellbeing and workload, and assessment and feedback. The Committee agreed actions and requested responses from key members of staff with relevant responsibility. These responses were subsequently considered by SQAC (at the May 2024 meeting as noted above).

February
The Committee considered the report of the Student Support Service Annual Review (SSSAR) for 2022/23, highlighting areas of good practice and key themes arising from the service reports. The Committee identified the following themes/issues for further development at University level: size and shape of services and staff development; partnership working and interconnectedness; user feedback and impact evaluation. The Committee noted that the SSSAR is the only process which brings all student facing services together and is a valuable activity for sharing good practice.

May
The Committee considered the annual report on the degrees awarded to students who completed their studies in 2022/23 academic year, including outcomes at institutional and School level, and across key student groups. The Committee discussed awarding gaps, the grading scale and areas where more information would be useful to better understand outcomes. The Committee agreed that more granular data was required on awarding gaps and the impact on particular cohorts of students, and requested a clearer indication from School data of which mitigations had been applied.

3. **Strands of work relating to the Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group (particularly in relation to data regarding retention, progression and attainment).**

In response to the QESR recommendations on assessment & feedback Senate Education Committee (at the meeting held in January 2024) agreed to dissolve the Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group and reconstitute the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group with a refreshed membership and remit focused on delivering the outcome of the QESR and longer-term ambitions for assessment and feedback.

SQAC continues to oversee activities in relation to the QESR recommendation on awarding gaps, in particular the work of the Student Data Monitoring Task Group (as noted above in Priority 1).

4. **Evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of the new student support model**

February

The Committee discussed an update paper on the two core strands of activity evaluating the new student support mode: the evaluation of the implementation of the model and the development of a continuous learning model for on-going quality assurance. The paper was based on feedback received from Student Advisors via focus groups. The Committee noted the findings of the paper and proposed areas for ongoing focus (based on feedback received from Student Advisors via focus groups) and was assured that these areas would be considered within the ongoing evaluation.

April

The Committee approved the annual quality monitoring templates for programme, School and College level reporting, with additional guidance included within each section and an increased emphasis on evidence-based reporting. A student outcomes section was included as a new area of focus in 2023-24 and it was agreed that the templates would require specific responses on the following institutional priorities: the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities; the Student Voice Policy; the impact of industrial action; and student support arrangements. The Committee agreed to retain the specific question on student support as an institutional priority in order to gain insight from each School as to how the implementation of the new model has worked. The student support response was directed to include analysis of data from student surveys (NSS, PTES), School/Deanery annual programme reviews, course feedback and SSLC meeting minutes.

May

The Committee received an update on the evaluation framework to measure the effectiveness and impact of the Student Support model. The Committee was informed that the evaluation of the student support model will align with existing quality processes. The Project Board was reported to be establishing the key indicators needed to measure the model, with a further update due for SQAC once the indicators are confirmed.

Other matters considered during the year

Evaluation of Course Level Feedback (December)

The Committee approved a proposal to undertake a review of course level evaluation. The Committee encouraged a research and evidence-led approach to the review and noted that it would not be intended as a move to re-centralise evaluation but instead to understand what is working in School and Deaneries, where the challenges are and how evaluation can be improved.

External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) Thematic Analysis (April)

The Committee considered the key themes highlighted in the report include the overall high number of commendations, low number of issues and appropriate action taken at local level when required. The Committee noted that the inclusion of concrete examples of good practice in the report would be valuable. The Committee also agreed that the report should be presented each year at the April meeting (as a fixed reporting point will enhance year-on-year reflection and progress, and facilitate more comparison between academic years) and should be divided into UG and PGT sections.

Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Curriculum Framework and Programme Archetypes (February)

The Committee considered how best to align the programme framework with existing quality assurance processes. The Committee was supportive of the framework, but

highlighted some areas which need further consideration, including the workload involved with aligning current programmes to the framework. SQAC members also attended a Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP) workshop in May 2024 to further discuss the proposal.

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy Review (May)
The Committee approved amendments in the light of feedback from schools and to align the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) External Examining Principles (which are non-mandatory but provide a framework of good practice for external examining in higher education). Key changes covered: avoiding situations where grouping of subject areas in a department at another institution lead to a technical conflict arising which ought not to be of concern; ensuring Schools prepare External Examiners for their role; clarifying that it is no longer a requirement to attend a meeting in person in the first year of an External Examiner's term of office; and supporting University staff who are External Examiners at other institutions and learning from and reflecting on their experience for enhancement.

Work-based and Placement Learning Policy (May)
The Committee approved amendments to the Work-based and Placement Learning Policy to align with responsibilities and procedures related to the Study and Work Away Service (SWAY) and their work with Schools. All work-based and placement learning (WBPL) credit-bearing activities, whether these are a compulsory part of the degree or not, are now included within the scope of the policy. The amendments also clarify that clinical placements are governed by Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies and are therefore not covered within the scope of this policy.

Internal Periodic Reviews (IPR) – Reports and Responses (each meeting)
Throughout the year, the Committee approved a number of IPR final reports, 14-week responses and year-on responses. This is standard business for the Committee to maintain oversight of the IPR quality process. The role of the Committee is to verify that review teams have adhered to the required quality procedures in relation to the final reports and determine if Schools/Deaneries have made sufficient progress in relation to their 14 week and year-on responses. Comments from the Committee were referred back to Schools for further updates in the quality process.

5   Other Committee Activity in 2023-24

- **Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation Committee**

  SQAC received the annual report of the Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation Committee at the May meeting. It was noted that the Accreditation Committee had affirmed continued accreditation for the BSc Environmental Management and PhD Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies programmes. SQAC also noted many examples of good practice demonstrated by SRUC and the potential for learnings for the University of Edinburgh.

Annex – new regulations/policies/codes, and reviews of and amendments to existing regulations/policies/codes, approved by Senate and its Committees during 2023-24

New and updated policies, regulations and guidance are published on the Academic Services website: https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/new-policies

Senate Committee	Name of document	Type of change (New / Revision / Deletion / Technical Update / Reviewed and no changes made)
SEC	Student Support Framework	Revision
APRC	Exceptional Circumstances Policy	New
APRC	Student Maternity and Family Leave policy (new title: Student Maternity and Parental Leave policy)	Revision
APRC	Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2024/25	Revision
APRC	Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2024/25	Revision
APRC	Taught Assessment Regulations 2024/25	Revision
APRC	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2024/25	Revision
APRC	Board of Examiners Handbook for Taught Courses and Programmes	Revision
APRC	Student Appeal Regulations	Revision
APRC	Performance Sport policy	Revision
APRC	Programme and Course Handbooks Policy	Revision
APRC	Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures	Revision
APRC	Exam Hall Regulations	Minor amendment
SQAC	Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy and associated templates	Minor revision
SQAC	External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy	Revision
SQAC	Work-based and Placement Learning Policy	Revision

Senate Education Committee – Mapping of agenda items to remit

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
September						
Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2023-2024	X	X	X	X		X
Student Experience Update: National Student Survey 2023 Results			X	X		
Draft Learning and Teaching Strategy	X	X	X	X	X	
University Firewall Website Controls – Plagiarism Sites	X		X			
Student Online Information Security Awareness Training	X	X	X			
Curriculum Transformation Programme	X	X		X	X	
Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2022/23	X	X	X		X	X
Support for Curriculum Development Group: ELDeR Requests 2022/23 and Closure of Group						
November						
Curriculum Transformation Programme	X	X		X	X	
Tutor and Demonstrator Training	X	X	X		X	
Student Analytics Pilot Study	X	X				
Student Experience Update: Student Survey Results 2023: PTES and PRES			X	X		
National Student Survey (NSS) 2024 Optional Questions	X	X			X	
Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program Climate Leadership Award	X					
January						
Student Experience Update: Student Support Model Update	X	X	X	X		X
Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2024 Institutional Questions	X	X			X	
Committee Priorities: Mid-year Reflection; Revision to SEC Plan of Activities for 2024	X	X	X	X	X	X
Doctoral College: Postgraduate Researcher Experience Survey College Reponses			X	X		
March						
Curriculum Transformation Programme	X	X		X	X	
Committee Priorities for 2024-25	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Experience Update: Student Support Framework; Student Support Leadership Framework	X	X	X	X	X	
School Accessibility Reviews	X	X				X

Learn Ultra: Evaluation Impact	X	X				
Assessment and Feedback Groups	X	X	X	X	X	X
May						
Student Experience Update: 'Watch That Gap' Project Report	X	X	X	X	X	X
Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030: Update on Development	X	X	X	X	X	
Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report			X	X		
Update on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Learning and Teaching	X	X			X	
Postgraduate Research Culture Action Plan	X	X		X		
Student Partnership Agreement 2024-25	X	X	X	X		
Senate Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review	X	X	X	X	X	X
Committee Priorities 2024/25	X	X	X	X	X	X
Membership and Terms of Reference 2024/25	X	X	X	X	X	X

2.1   Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners.

2.2   Promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment, embrace new teaching methods and consider cross-cutting themes such as research-led and technology-enhanced learning, digital and information literacy, education for employability, internationalisation and lifelong learning. Consider and promote local developments or initiatives with substantial implications for University learning and teaching strategy, policy, services or operations.

2.3.   Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback.

2.4.   Give specific consideration to instances in which the experience of one particular cohort of students or learners (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research students, and those involved in non-standard programmes) may diverge from that of others.

2.5.   Anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in learning and teaching for all cohorts of students and learners.

2.6.   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.

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee – Mapping of agenda items to remit

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
August						
Redeeming failure or missing credit for taught courses with delayed results	X		X		X	
September e-business						
Approval of Pass/Fail arrangement for two History Study Abroad courses	X		X		X	
September						
Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2023-2024	X					
Operation of the December 2023 Exam Diet	X	X				
ChM – inclusion in Period of Study Table and Model for Degree Types and Policy	X	X				
Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2022/23						X
November						
Programmes with non-standard semester dates (CMVM)	X	X				
APRC annual concessions report 2022/23 - CLOSED	X				X	
January						
Exceptional Circumstances policy - update		X	X			
Academic Year dates 2025/26 and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2026/27		X	X			
Committee priorities - mid-year reflection						X
March						
Update on Watch the Gap project						
Exceptional Circumstances policy		X	X			
Student Maternity and Family Leave policy		X	X			
Undergraduate Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study	X	X				
Postgraduate Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study	X	X				
Student Appeal Regulations		X	X			
May						
Board of Examiners Handbook for Taught Courses and Programmes		X	X			

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Taught Assessment Regulations 2024/25	X	X				
Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2024/25	X	X				
Committee membership 2024/25						X
Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review						X
Curriculum Transformation: Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Curriculum Framework and Programme Archetypes		X	X			
Performance Sport Policy		X	X			
Academic misconduct investigation procedures		X	X			
Programme and Course Handbooks policy		X	X			
Exceptional Circumstances policy communications plan	X					
Pass/fail arrangements for HCA year abroad courses					X	

2.1 Oversee the development, maintenance and implementation of an academic regulatory framework which effectively supports and underpins the University's educational activities.

2.2 Ensure that the academic regulatory framework continues to evolve in order to meet organisational needs and is responsive to changes in University strategy, and in the internal and external environments.

2.3 Scrutinise and approve proposals for new or revised academic policy or regulation, ensuring that policy and regulation is only introduced where it is necessary, and that all policy and regulation is suitably accessible to its intended audience.

2.4 Act with delegated authority from the Senate on matters of student conduct and discipline.

2.5 In taking forward its remit, the Committee will seek consistency and common approaches while supporting and encouraging variation where this is beneficial, particularly if it is in the best interests of students.

2.6 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.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee – Mapping of agenda items to remit

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8
September								
Academic Collaborations Report								X
Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2023-2024		X						
School Annual Quality Reports 2022-23: Sub Group Report	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Internal Periodic Review Themes 2022-23	X		X	X			X	
Evaluation of Course Level Feedback	X	X						
Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2022-23							X	
Scottish Funding Council Annual Report 2022-23	X		X					
Membership and Terms of Reference 2023-24	X						X	
December								
College Annual Quality Reports 2022-23	X	X	X	X		X	X	
External Examiner Exceptional Appointments 2022-23	X		X	X				
Evaluation of Course Level Feedback	X	X	X	X		X		
Short Online Courses: Annual Report 2022-23	X		X	X		X		
Internal Periodic Review: Forward Schedule	X		X	X				
Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	X		X	X				
February								
Annual Report 2022-23: Academic Appeals	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Annual Report 2022-23: Student Conduct	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Annual Review of Student Support Services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Student Support: Evaluation of Model	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Curriculum Framework and Programme Archetypes	X		X			X	X	
Quality Enhancement and Standards Review – Final Report	X		X	X	X		X	
Committee Priorities – Mid-Year Reflection	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Postgraduate Researcher Experience Survey College Reponses	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	X		X	X				
April								
Annual Report 2022-23: Complaint Handling	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting: Reporting Templates 2023-24	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Student Data Monitoring Task Group	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Taught External Examiner Reports: UG and PGT Thematic Analysis 2022/23	X		X	X				

	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8
External Examiner Appointments on BVM&S	X				X			
Committee Priorities 2024-25	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	X		X	X				
May								
Degree Awarded Analysis 2022-23	X		X	X	X		X	
Student Support: Evaluation Plan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Student Data Monitoring Task Group	X		X	X	X	X	X	
External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy Review	X		X	X			X	
Work-based and Placement Learning Policy	X		X	X			X	
Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review							X	
Scotland's Rural College Accreditation Committee Annual Report 2022/23	X							X
Annual Monitoring and Internal Periodic Review Themes 2022-23: University Level Actions	X		X	X		X		
Committee Priorities 2024-25	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Membership and Terms of Reference 2024-25	X						X	
Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	X		X	X				

2.1 Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.

2.2 In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University's quality framework.

2.3 Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice.

2.4 Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business.

2.5 Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.

2.6 Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.

2.7 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.

2.8 In relation to academic collaborations with partner institutions: maintain oversight of development, approval, monitoring and review / renewal processes; receive annual reports on activity and identify any areas where action is required to maintain academic standards and the quality of the student experience.

Senate

9 October 2024

Senate Standing Committees - Upcoming Business

1   Description of paper

This paper informs Senate of the main points of activity and business the Senate Standing Committees will consider between October and December 2024.

2   Action requested / recommendation

Senate is invited to <u>note</u> the upcoming business of the Standing Committees.

3   Background and context

As has been established as practice, a note of upcoming key items of business from the Senate Standing Committees is a standing item on the agenda for Ordinary meetings of Senate. This is intended to facilitate Senate awareness and oversight of Standing Committee activity. This note does not include a comprehensive overview of all business that the Standing Committees may consider during this period.

4   Discussion

A summary of the Standing Committee upcoming business paper is provided in Appendix 1. This summary is to inform Senate of the main points of activity and business the Senate Standing Committees will consider between October and December 2024.

5   Resource implications

This paper does not propose any actions. The resource implications of any actions which arise from the discussion would be considered by the relevant Standing Committee.

6   Risk management

This activity supports the university's obligations under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

7   Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

This paper does not respond to the climate emergency or contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

8   Equality & diversity

This paper does not propose any actions. Any Equality, Diversion and Inclusion actions which arise from the discussion would be referred to the relevant Standing Committee.

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

Any comments raised by Senate will be reported to the Standing Committees at their next meeting.

Additionally, the Senate Committees' Newsletter is prepared after each round of Committee business and this will provide information on business undertaken by Senate and its Standing Committees to the wider University community.

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Professor Patrick Hadoke, Convener of Academic Policy and Regulation Committee

<u>**Presenter**</u>

Professor Colm Harmon, Convener of Senate Education Committee
Professor Tina Harrison, Convener of Senate Quality Assurance Committee
Professor Patrick Hadoke, Convener of Academic Policy and Regulation Committee

10   Freedom of Information: Open

September 2024

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Appendix 1: Senate Standing Committees: upcoming business October – December 2024

Senate Education Committee (SEC)

Upcoming business:	Brief description and context:
1. Curriculum Transformation	This is a standing item on SEC agendas and a Committee priority for 2024/25. The exact nature of the business that SEC will consider during this period will depend on the decisions and advice that the project requires.
2. Student Experience – Student Survey Results	A Committee priority for 2024/25. The National Student Survey 2025 optional questions will be approved by the Committee in November.
3. Assessment and Feedback (committee priority 2024/25) and Assessment and Feedback Group (standing item)	The Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group meets every two months and updates will be provided to the Committee. The Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) is leading the development of a paper for the November meeting of the Committee that aims to propose a University position on the use of exams, including the resit diet, working with the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group, Academic Services and liaising with the Senate Education Committee elected Senate representatives which would ultimately be presented to Senate for wider discussion.
4. Learning and Teaching Strategy	A Committee priority for 2024/25. The finalised Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030 will be presented to the Committee for approval in November.
5. Widening Participation	Proposal supported by the Committee to invite the Head of Widening Participation to the November meeting to provide a strategic update.
6. Awarding gaps	Proposal supported by the Committee to include a Senate Quality Assurance Committee update covering awarding gaps, annual monitoring, internal periodic reviews and any other key themes
7. Generative AI	University AI leads to provide the Committee with an update on developments.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)

Upcoming business:	Brief description and context:
1. College Annual Quality Reports	The Committee will consider the annual quality reports from the Colleges at its December meeting. The Committee will discuss themes that have emerged from the reports and agree actions.
2. Student Data Monitoring Task & Finish Group update	SQAC established this task group in April 2024. The group will first meet in October 2024 and will report to SQAC on its initial discussion and actions. The group has been tasked with developing a systematic approach to monitoring student data at university level, which will focus specifically on the awarding gap.
3. Short Courses Annual Update 2023/24	The Committee will receive an update from the Short Course Strategy Group outlining the activities that developed in 2023/24.
4. Annual Reports 2023/24: • Academic Appeals • Student Conduct • Complaint Handling	The Committee will consider the annual reports from these service areas and discuss themes and areas for action. This is routine annual business for the Committee.
5. External Examiners: Exceptional Appointments 2023/24	The Committee will consider the report on College approvals of Exceptional Examiner appointments made in 2023/24. This is a standard annual report received by the Committee.
6. Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	The Committee will review final reports and any responses provided by Schools in relation to their Internal Periodic Review.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

Upcoming business:	Brief description and context:
1. Periodic review of policies	The Committee will consider proposals for essential changes and enhancements to policies due for periodic review in 2024/25, as part of its routine business. At its November meeting, the Committee is expecting to consider for approval amendments to the following policies: - Support for Study policy (review postponed from 2023/24 to 2024/25) - Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy - College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference
2. Postgraduate Taught Curriculum Framework – Regulatory questions	PGT regulatory matters arising from the Curriculum Transformation Project, and around the function of Degree Specific Regulations.
3. Annual concessions report	The Committee will receive an annual report and analysis of concessions to regulations approved for individual students and cohorts of students for 2023/24.
4. Academic Year dates	The Committee is expecting to receive two sets of Academic Year dates for approval: - confirmation of the current provisional dates for 2026/27 - proposed provisional dates for 2027/28

SENATE

9 October 2024

2023-24 Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate and its Standing Committees

1   Description of paper

This paper provides Senate with analysis of the 40 responses received as part of the Senate internal effectiveness review survey conducted in the summer of 2024. The survey response rate was 16%. Internal Effectiveness reviews were also conducted for the Senate Standing Committees. For comparison, the response rate for the Standing Committees was 44% (Senate Education Committee), 54% (Academic Policy Regulations Committee), 73% (Senate Quality Assurance Committee).

2   Action requested / Recommendation

Senate is invited to _note_ the findings of the Senate internal effectiveness review for 2023-24, and the associated responses.

Senate is invited to _note_ the outcomes of the internal effectiveness reviews conducted for its Standing Committees in 2023-24, which are included in appendix 2.

3   Background and context

The Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2023) sets out the expectation that universities conduct an internally facilitated review of the effectiveness of Senate and its Committees on an annual basis; and an externally facilitated review every five years.

In response to the last externally facilitated effectiveness review in the 2022-23 academic year, a Senate External Review Task and Finish Group was established and will continue to operate during the 2024-25 academic session. The Task and Finish Group has responsibility for addressing recommendations arising from the externally facilitated review and developing proposals for Senate to consider, aspects of which overlap with the feedback received for this internally facilitated review.

In summer 2024, questionnaires were issued to members of Senate and its Standing Committees as part of the annual internally facilitated effectiveness review. Separate reports have been drafted for each Senate sub-committee, and Senate will receive these reports at its meeting of 9 October 2024.

As part of this review, Senate members were asked to provide feedback on the following areas:

- Support and facilitation of Senate;
- Clarity on their role, and their ability to engage with the work of the Senate;
- The impact and strategic relevance of Senate's work;
- Oversight of the Senate Standing Committees.

4   Discussion

The Senate Internal Effectiveness Review survey used free text questions and questions using a Likert Scale.

Table one provides an overview of the responses received to questions using a Likert Scale, and full response data is included in appendix one. The table below compares the percentage of respondents who agreed and disagreed with the proposition.

Table One – responses to questions using a Likert scale.	Agreed	Disagreed	Net approval
1) Senate is effectively supported by Senate Support	83%	5%	78%
2) I have a clear understanding of my role as a member of Senate.	70%	15%	55%
3) For new members in 2023/24: I received an effective induction when I joined Senate.	15%	21%	-6%
4) I can engage effectively with and contribute to the work and decisions of Senate.	48%	23%	25%
5) The work of Senate makes a positive impact.	53%	23%	30%
6) The work of Senate links to the University's strategic priorities.	45%	15%	30%
7) The work of Senate is communicated effectively to the wider University.	8%	55%	-48%
8) I have appropriate oversight of the Standing Committees' work via the regular updates provided at Senate.	40%	45%	-5%
9) I have appropriate oversight of the Standing Committees' work through the annual report.	38%	40%	-3%

Analysis of the responses received to questions using a Likert Scale indicated that 83% of the 40 respondents were satisfied with the support provided by the Senate Support team, and that 70% had a clear understanding of their role as a member of Senate. 53% of respondents also commented they considered that the work of Senate made a positive impact.

Excluding responses that were neutral, more staff agreed than disagreed that they were able to engage effectively with the work of the Senate, and that the work of

Senate linked to the University's strategic priorities. The low response rate, and the responses received, do suggest there is room for improvement.

55% of the 40 respondents disagreed that the work of Senate was communicated effectively to the wider University. Separately, five respondents suggested that their induction had been effective against six that did not consider their induction to have been effective. This question did not include a 'not applicable' response, and it is possible that members inducted before 2023-24 may have responded neutrally as opposed to not responding. Finally, excluding responses that were neutral, 16 respondents stated that they felt that they did not have appropriate oversight of the Senate Standing Committees compared to 15 respondents who stated they did.

Free text comments were also received from survey respondents and have been grouped thematically below. While responses were received anonymously, the response ID number has been included by way of a reference.

4.1 Induction and Training

Respondents commented that they felt the induction and training provided to new Senate members was inadequate. Five respondents commented that the official induction did little to prepare them for their roles, or that they were unable to attend the induction event, therefore had to rely on informal assistance from existing members (ID 4, 26, 28, 29, 32). Respondents requested improved training to support new members understand their responsibilities to engage effectively with Senate.

Two respondents felt that more timely and comprehensive training and background information are needed for new members, particularly student representatives (ID 12, 26).

Senate Support Response: Additional resources have been developed and are accessible to Senate members via the Senate Members Portal. Student members attended the induction event held in September 2024, and a presentation on "Supporting the Student Voice on Senate" was given by the Edinburgh University Students Association Vice President Education. Published resources, and the agenda and content of in-person induction events, will continue to be reviewed. New members have been signposted to the handbook and induction video which explains the standing orders as key resources.

4.2 Clarity on the role of Senate and Senate Members

While the majority of respondents commented that they had a clear understanding of their role as a member of Senate (see table one), three responses suggested that there was a need for clearer communication regarding the roles and expectations of Senate members. Respondents noted they were unsure of what was expected of them and found Senate-related documentation overly long and opaque (ID 10, 16, 19). There was also a perception from one member that Senate's role was ambiguous, viewing it as having a wider remit. (ID 16).

Senate Support Response: Further to the additional resources specified in 4.1, consideration will be given on how key information relating to the role of Senate members could be presented more clearly and concisely. Consideration will also be given on how to improve clarity on the University's governance structure.

4.3 Engagement and Participation:

Four members commented on a lack of effective engagement and early involvement of Senate members in the development of strategies, policies, and priorities (IDs 11, 17, 26, 27). Comments included a call for more proactive roles for Senate members and better collaboration with students and faculty before motions reached Senate.

Senate Support Response: These comments relate to the University's wider governance structure, and the operation of committees and groups established to consider specific topics. The relationship between Senate and its Standing Committees is due to be considered by the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.

4.4 Need for Improved Meeting Management

Three comments suggested that better management of meeting agendas and hybrid meetings was necessary. Respondents noted overly full agendas, critical items being missed due to time constraints, and the need for paperwork to be available in good time (ID 27, 37). Managing the volume of business efficiently was highlighted as an area for improvement (ID 40).

Senate Support Response: The topic of agenda setting has been considered by the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group, and that group is currently working on a proposal that will deliver enhanced working with regard to establishing the agenda for Senate meetings.

4.5 Challenges in Engagement and Participation during meetings:

Seven respondents noted challenges in engaging and participating effectively in Senate meetings. The respondents noted they found the environment intimidating and were consequently hesitant to contribute (ID 1, 6, 8, 11). Two mentioned that the debate often strayed from academic matters which makes it difficult to remain engaged (ID 2, 19). A specific reference was made to repeated disruption caused by the contributions of certain named members, anonymised for the purposes of this report (ID 20).

Senate Support Response: Consideration will be given on how to facilitate more collegiate meetings, and on how the student voice could be enhanced during meetings of Senate. Members are asked to contribute in a collegiate manner during meetings.

4.6 Communication of Senate Business:

Eight respondents noted they did not consider the Senate's work and decisions to be effectively communicated to the wider university community (IDs 5, 8, 13, 14, 21, 23, 29, 32). Suggestions were made which included enhancing dissemination of information through newsletters, briefings, and direct interactions with Schools and Colleges.

Senate Support Response: Consideration will be given on how the business of Senate could more effectively be communicated to the University. This may include ways to more prominently showcase the existing Senate Newsletter.

4.7 Senate Support:

Six respondents appreciated the professionalism and efficiency of the Senate Support Team. Respondents noted the Senate Support Team managed the meeting arrangements well (ID 4, 5, 13, 15, 16, 29). Two members noted instances of minutes being delayed (ID 9, 32). Three members noted improvements such as the Senate Members Portal and the Senate Action Log as being positively received (ID 8, 14, 37).

Senate Support Response: The support provided to Senate members by the Senate Support team will continue to be reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of the Committee.

5 Resource implications

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 suggested actions will be presented to a future meeting of Senate.

6 Risk Management

Completion of the Senate Internal Effectiveness Review fulfils the University's obligations under the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2023).

7 Equality & Diversity

Completion of the Senate Internal Effectiveness Review provided an opportunity to identify any equality and diversity challenges in Senate and its Committees, and the way they conduct their business. Specific policies and practices arising from this review will be equality impact assessed where required.

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

An update on progress with suggested actions will be presented to a future meeting of Senate.

9 Author   Presenter

Fraser Rudge   Fraser Rudge
Committees and Governance Manager   Committees and Governance Manager
Registry Services   Registry Services

Dean Pateman
Adviser to Registry Services

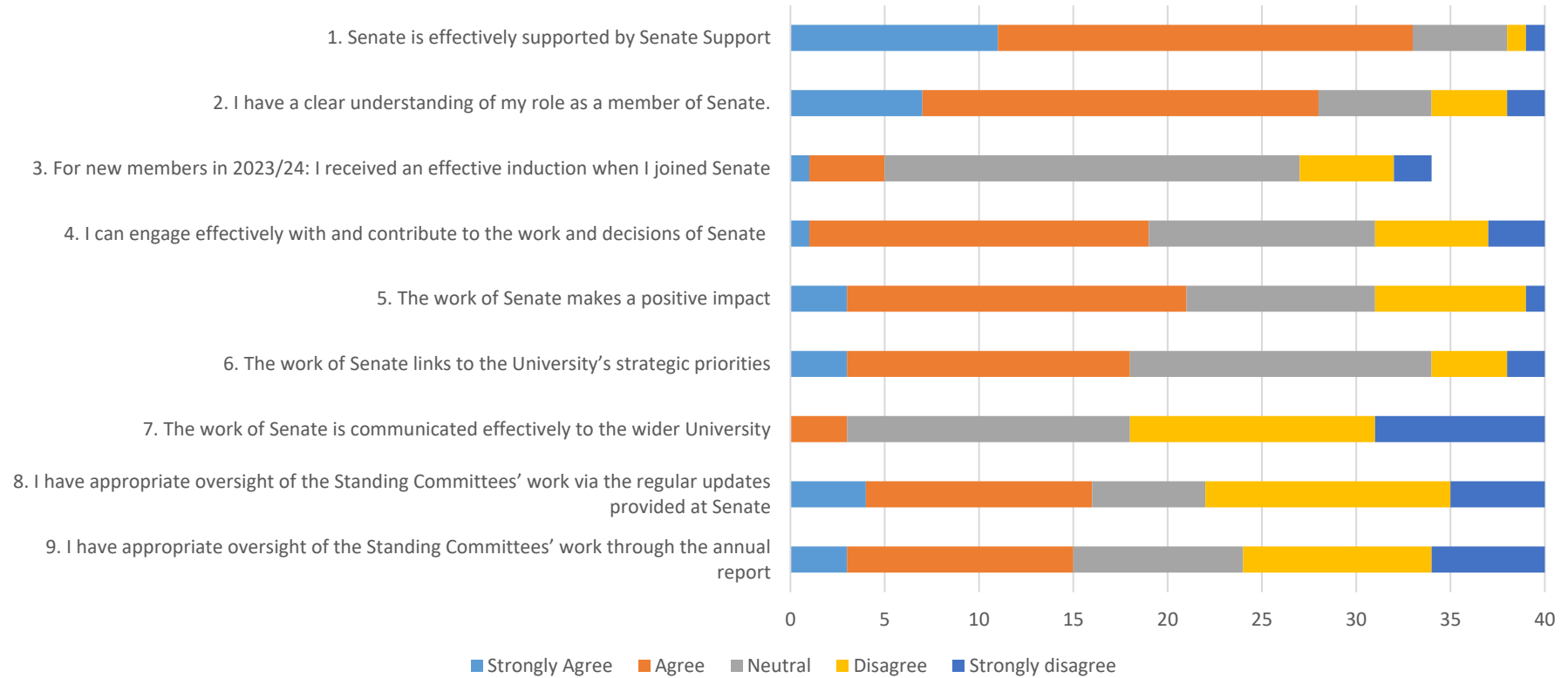Lisa Dawson
Academic Registrar

10 Freedom of Information - Open

20 September 2024

Appendix One

Senate Internal Effectiveness Review 2023-24 - Survey Results

Appendix Two – Internal Effectiveness Review Reports for Senate Standing Committees (2023-24)

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

19 September 2024

Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

Description of paper

1. This paper provides the Committee with the results, analysis and proposed actions drawn from the responses received to the Committee's annual internal effectiveness survey, conducted in summer 2024.

Fit with remit

Academic Policy and Regulations 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, the Committee administrator issued a short survey to members of the Committee and their responses were collated.

Discussion

5. The survey responses received from members, an analysis of these responses, and proposed actions can be found in Appendix 1.

6. Proposed actions for the 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 at its meeting 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 suggested actions will be presented to a future meeting of the 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 8 and 9 above.

Author

Cristina Matthews

Academic Policy Officer

Registry Services

Presenter

Cristina Matthews

Academic Policy Officer

Registry Services

Freedom of Information

Open

APRC REPORT APPENDIX 1: Report of Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

The Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee had 24 members for the academic year 2023/24. 13 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire, equating to a 54% response rate. This is a small drop in response rate compared with 2022/23 when there were 13 responses from 22 members equating to a 59% response rate.

Survey responses

- **Composition of the Committee**

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

🔵	Strongly agree	5
🟠	Agree	8
🟢	Neutral	0
🔴	Disagree	0
🟣	Strongly disagree	0

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

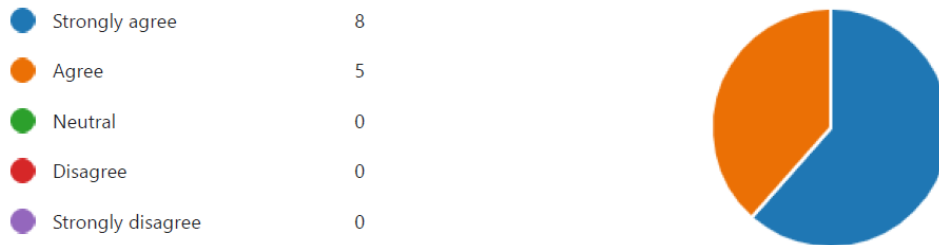|		
🔵	Strongly agree	6
🟠	Agree	5
🟢	Neutral	2
🔴	Disagree	0
🟣	Strongly disagree	0

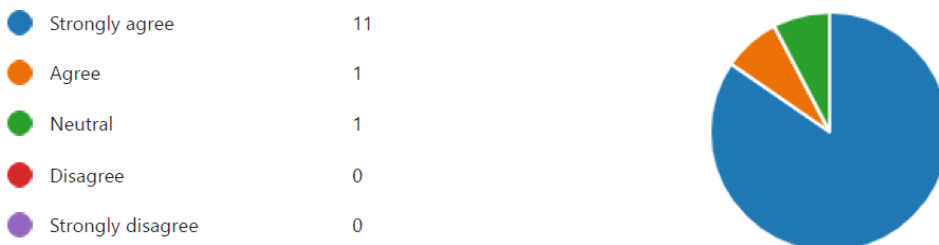Additional comments received in relation to the Composition of the Committee:
- Three respondents commented positively on the balance of professional services staff, academic staff and student members
- Three respondents noted the importance of members having appropriate expertise; one respondent noted it was helpful to have members whose work focussed on the interpretation and implementation of regulations and policies
- Two respondents noted that the Committee is large, with one respondent commenting that it was maybe larger than it needed to be

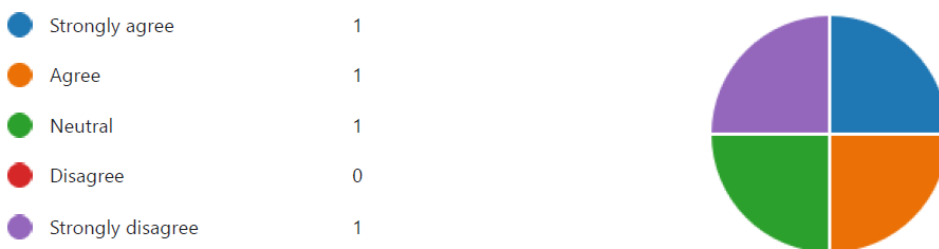- **Support and facilitation of Committee meetings**

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

🔵	Strongly agree	8
🟠	Agree	5
🟢	Neutral	0
🔴	Disagree	0
🟣	Strongly disagree	0

5. The Committee is supported effectively by Registry Services

🔵	Strongly agree	11
🟠	Agree	1
🟢	Neutral	1
🔴	Disagree	0
🟣	Strongly disagree	0

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

🔵	Strongly agree	1
🟠	Agree	1
🟢	Neutral	1
🔴	Disagree	0
🟣	Strongly disagree	1

Additional comments received in relation to the support and facilitation of Committee meetings:
- Three respondents commented positively on the support and advice provided by Registry Services, with one respondent noting that meeting minutes are accurate
- Two respondents noted that Committee papers contain the necessary detail and complexity, with one respondent noting that this can make the papers quite onerous
- One respondent, who joined mid-way through the academic year, noted that they had not received an induction to the Committee

- **Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and Committee remits**

8. The Committee's remit is clear

● Strongly agree	9
● Agree	4
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0

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

● Strongly agree	9
● Agree	3
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0

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

● Strongly agree	8
● Agree	5
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0

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

● Strongly agree	8
● Agree	5
● Neutral	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0

Additional comments received in relation to the engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and Committee remits:

- One respondent commented that the Committee runs in an atmosphere that encourages discussion and contributions from all members
- One respondent noted the importance of members recognising that they are functioning parts of the Committee and take collective responsibility for any decisions reached
- One respondent noted that it might be helpful to clarify the role of College representatives vs Senate representatives in terms of formal consultation with constituents, as there was sometimes confusion about which members where representing the views of the College
- One respondent noted that due to the size of the Committee and the fact that the remit includes both taught and research programmes, not all papers were relevant to all members

- **Impact and Strategic Relevance of Senate Committee's work**

13. The work of the Committee makes a positive impact

Strongly agree	7	
Agree	5	
Neutral	1	
Disagree	0	
Strongly disagree	0	

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

Strongly agree	9	
Agree	3	
Neutral	1	
Disagree	0	
Strongly disagree	0	

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

Strongly agree	5	
Agree	4	
Neutral	3	
Disagree	1	
Strongly disagree	0	

Additional comments on how the work of the Committee can represent the views and needs of our diverse University community to inform decision-making:

- Two respondents commented that equality and diversity had become a more prominent focus of the Committee's work, with one respondent noting that this could be extended further
- Two respondents noted that the inclusion of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) presented alongside policy proposals had made equality and diversity considerations more visible; however, another respondent noted that EqIAs were not obviously part of the development of proposals
- Two respondents noted that it would be challenging to attempt to diversify membership, with one respondent expressing concerns of maintaining relevant expertise and another respondent expressing concerns about tokenism, given that there cannot be representatives of all groups, and that these considerations should be built into the work of the Committee
- One respondent commented that members carefully consider how decisions would affect the diversity of student and staff populations, and that it is particularly helpful in this to have student representatives who can represent the student voice
- One respondent commented that there were no practical ways to improve equality and diversity considerations beyond the current paper format
- One respondent noted that the positive impact of the Committee is possibly largely unseen

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

🔵 Strong agree	1
🟠 Agree	8
🟢 Neutral	1
🔴 Disagree	3
🟣 Strongly disagree	0
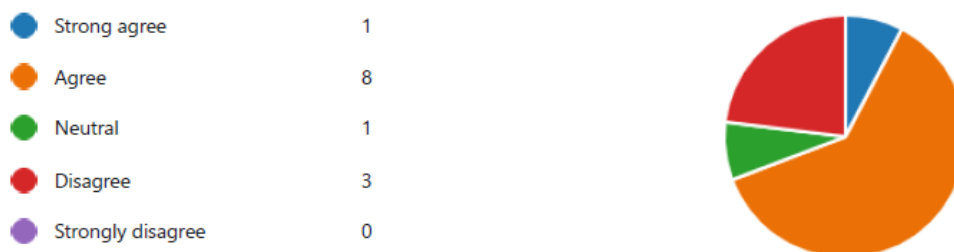
Additional comments received in relation to the impact and strategic relevance of Senate Committee's work:

- Four respondents noted the challenges of communicating the work of the Committee to the wider University, with two respondents noting that the challenges of dissemination and engagement of all staff members remain despite communications being shared
- Two respondents noted that effective communication was an issue for areas across the whole University
- One respondent proposed that Schools could improve communications to staff regarding the work of Senate Standing Committees in order to avoid selective and often simplistic explanations
- One respondent noted that it is hard to know how the wider University views or uses the work which is done at the Committee

- One respondent commented on the need to improve communication with Senate to ensure that the relationship between Senate and the Committee remains constructive.

Good practice

Based on the responses to the survey presented above, the following areas are consistently highlighted as areas where there is good practice:

- **Composition and remit:** All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the composition of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit, that the Committee's remit is clear, and that they are clear on their roles and responsibilities as a member of the Committee
- **Committee support:** All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Committee is supported effectively by Registry Services
- **Impact and strategic relevance:** 12 out of 13 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the work of the Committee makes a positive impact and that the work of the Committee links to the University's strategic priorities

Areas for development

In addition to the response rate, two themes were identified within the feedback as areas where the Committee could seek to focus enhancement:

- **Survey response rate:** The low response rate to the survey over the past two years (54%-59%) makes it difficult to ensure that the results are sufficiently representative of members' views and that the proposed actions reliably reflect members' priorities for improving the internal effectiveness of the Committee. We will therefore aim to improve response rates for next year's survey (see proposed action 2).
- **Equality, diversity and EqIAs:** Whilst most respondents (9 out of 13) agreed or strongly agreed that equality and diversity are appropriately considered by the work of the Committee, three respondents were neutral and one disagreed with this statement. Proposed actions 1 and 3 relate to this area for improvement.
- **Communicating the work of the Committee:** The question with most negative or neutral responses (4 out of 13) was in relation to whether the work of the Committee is communicated effectively to the wider University. Effective communication was identified as a challenge by almost half of the respondents, either specifically regarding the work of the Committee, or regarding the broader challenges of communications across the University. There were mixed responses regarding whether or not the Committee could take further action which would result in improvements to communications. Suggestions included the following areas for improvement, although the mechanism by which to implement these would need to be determined:
    o Improving dissemination of the work of the Committee at School level
    o Improving communications between the Committee and Senate
    o Feeding back to the Committee regarding the impact of its work
    o Consulting with staff and students outside of the Committee regarding the impact of its work

    Proposed actions 4 and 5 relate to this area for improvement.

Proposed actions for APRC:

1. The Committee will consider ways of further highlighting equality and diversity issues in relation to policies and regulations, with particular focus on issues arising from Equality Impact Assessments.

Proposed actions for all Senate Standing Committees:

2. In order to enhance the response rate to the survey, 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 action will be implemented across all three Senate Standing Committees.

3. Committee members to discuss how the work of the Committee can be communicated effectively to the wider University.

4. 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.

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

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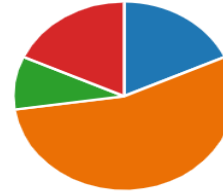
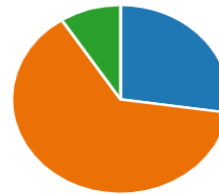2. The size of the Committee is appropriate for it to operate effectively

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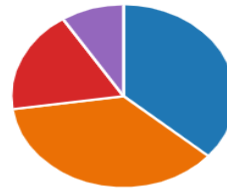
9. The scope of the Committee's remit is appropriate

More Details   💡 Insights

🔵	Strongly agree	3
🟠	Agree	4
🟢	Neutral	2
🔴	Disagree	2
🟣	Strongly disagree	0
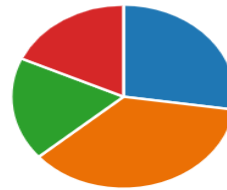
10. I am clear on my role and responsibilities as a member of the Committee

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
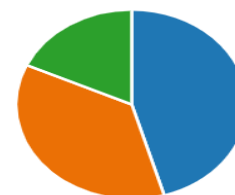
13. The work of the Committee makes a positive impact

More Details   Insights

●	Strongly agree	3
●	Agree	4
●	Neutral	2
●	Disagree	2
●	Strongly disagree	0
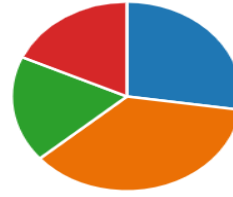
14. The work of the Committee links to University strategic priorities

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 Quality Assurance Committee

10 September 2024

Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

Description of paper

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

2. Fit with remit:

Quality Assurance 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

3. 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

4. The University is required under the 2023 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance to carry out an annual internal review of Senate and its Committees which carry delegated responsibilities.

5. In summer 2024, Academic Services issued a questionnaire to Senate Standing Committee members and their responses were collated.

Discussion

6. An analysis of questionnaire responses received from members and proposed actions can be found in Appendix 1.

7. 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.

8. Senate will receive the analysis of responses and proposed actions for each Standing Committee in October.

Resource implications

9. The resource implications of the proposed actions will be considered within Academic Services alongside other 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

10. This activity supports the University's obligations under the 2023 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.

Equality & diversity

11. 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

12. As detailed in paragraphs 7 and 8.

Author

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August 2024

Presenter

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Freedom of Information *Open*

SQAC REPORT Appendix 1: Report of Senate Quality Assurance Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

In 2023/24 Senate Quality Assurance Committee had 18 members. The Convener, Secretary and representative from Academic Services did not take part in the survey. Therefore, of the remaining 15 members, 11 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire equating to a 73% response rate.

Good Practice

- There were four respondents to the survey who were new to SQAC in 2023/24. In terms of the induction being effective, two strongly agreed, one agreed and one gave a neutral response. The induction was described as "very good" and "helpful".
- All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that SQAC is supported effectively by Registry Services. Support for the Committee was described as "excellent", "of a very high standard" and staff as "congenial and helpful".
- All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the work of SQAC links to University strategic priorities.
- Ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Equality and Diversity are appropriately considered and promoted in the work of the Committee.
- Ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are able to effectively engage with and contribute to the work of the Committee.

Survey Responses

Overview of the responses given within each section:

- **Composition of the Committee**

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

🔵 Strongly agree	6	
🟠 Agree	4	
🟢 Neutral	0	
🔴 Disagree	0	
🟣 Strongly disagree	1	

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

🔵 Strongly agree	7	
🟠 Agree	3	
🟢 Neutral	0	
🔴 Disagree	1	
🟣 Strongly disagree	0	

General comments received in relation the Composition of the Committee remit are as follows:

o Two respondents noted that the external member of the Committee brings in valuable perspectives.
o Two respondents noted their support for more student representation on the Committee.
o One respondent proposed that it would be useful to add an EDI representative to the Committee or invite one for selected sessions/items.
o One respondent noted a deficit in representation amongst teaching-active staff representing the variety of modes of teaching (online, on-campus, experiential, partnered, etc.)
o One respondent noted a high representation of managerial/executive/administrative roles to the exclusion of a more comprehensive and representative composition of those with a governance stake in QA.

- **Support and Facilitation of Committee Meetings**

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

Strongly agree	5	
Agree	5	
Neutral	1	
Disagree	0	
Strongly disagree	0	

5. The Committee is supported effectively by Registry Services

Strongly agree	8	
Agree	3	
Neutral	0	
Disagree	0	
Strongly disagree	0	

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

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

General comments received in relation to the support and facilitation of Committee meetings are as follows:

- One respondent noted that papers could be clearer about the ask on the Committee and shortened where possible.
- One respondent noted that whilst most reports presented to the Committee are excellent, there are occasionally some that are less thoroughly prepared and leave some questions open.
- Two respondents noted preference for expanding the use of the SharePoint and Forms to facilitate out-of-meeting business.
- Three respondents noted the time spent dealing with Committee administration and remit matters within the meetings.
- One respondent noted that the Committee does not really take decisions in the way that would be expected from a governance perspective, but tends rather to provide feedback on already-packaged decisions or reports. This activity was felt to be fairly effective, but not decision-making.
- One respondent noted that their "neutral" response in relation to the induction was
  because they were not new to the Committee in 2023/24 and did not have an induction in 2023/24.

- **Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits**

8. The Committee's remit is clear

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

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

● Strongly agree	8	
● Agree	2	
● Neutral	0	
● Disagree	1	
● Strongly disagree	0	

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

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

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

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

General comments received in relation to the engagement of Committee members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits:

- One response noted that meetings are always very informative, discussion based and helpful.
- One response noted the Committee does not do enough to support the wider Senate's role of governance, with the example of the QESR reporting in September/October side-lining attempts from Committee members and wider Senate members to engage with the report.
- One response noted that Committee members are knowledgeable and understand their role in the Committee. Where this may be not fully aligned with the TOR, the Convener has appropriately reminded members.
- One response noted an issue with the volume of papers, mainly IPR reports, and the length of time given to read these reports.

- **Impact and Strategic Relevance of Senate Committee's Work**

13. The work of the Committee makes a positive impact

🔵	Strongly agree	5
🟠	Agree	5
🟢	Neutral	1
🔴	Disagree	0
🟣	Strongly disagree	0

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

🔵	Strongly agree	5
🟠	Agree	6
🟢	Neutral	0
🔴	Disagree	0
🟣	Strongly disagree	0

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

🔵	Strongly agree	1
🟠	Agree	9
🟢	Neutral	0
🔴	Disagree	1
🟣	Strongly disagree	0

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

🔵	Strongly agree	0
🟠	Agree	4
🟢	Neutral	4
🔴	Disagree	2
🟣	Strongly disagree	1

Responses to the section reflecting on Impact and Strategic Relevance of Senate Committee's Work have informed the areas identified for development below.

Areas for Development

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

1. Effective Communication:

The area in which negative or neutral responses outweighed positive responses was in relation to the statement that the work of the Committee is communicated effectively to the wider University (item 17). Visibility of the Committee, establishing and promoting the relevance of QA and communication with the wider University were all identified as areas to improve.

Two respondents noted the perception that QA is seen as a separate strand of work, whereas it should be considered as central to the operation of the University. It was proposed that there may be a role for the Committee in improving its visibility and perceived relevance to the rest of student business.

One respondent highlighted the challenge of surfacing areas that require further action, and handing the responsibility to another Committee or area of the University to progress and oversee. It was acknowledged that the Committee makes an impact by asking other areas to respond, but there can be frustrations with ownership.

Three respondents highlighted the challenge around communicating the work of the Committee with the wider University, with particular mention of engaging with academic and professional services staff working at School level.

One respondent noted that communication should promote meaningful engagement from the wider University, starting with supporting real governance responsibility from wider Senate.

2. EDI and representation

A theme throughout the free text responses addressed EDI and representation on the Committee. Overall, responses were largely positive to questions about the size and composition of the Committee, and its approach to considering and promoting EDI. One respondent highlighted the discussions of needs and views of the different groups and acknowledgment of the complexity in the area, and another respondent reflected on the thoughtful conversations about how Committee decisions impact on EDI.

However, there were suggestions of increasing student representation on the Committee and the addition of an EDI leader to Committee membership. Another suggestion proposed that the Committee strengthen its relationship with EDIC to use the expertise of that Committee and its subcommittee structures more effectively where relevant.

It was also proposed by one respondent that paper authors should be encouraged to make more use of the EDI box on the paper template. It was highlighted that often they say 'no impact' but that in itself may actually be an impact as the University should be striving to enhance EDI in all its work.

It was noted by one respondent that while the Committee often recognises the need to consider diversity, actual follow-through is less common; there appears to be limitations in the data or other capabilities and a reluctance to formally expect evidence of impact from action on diversity-related QA goals, where the norm is to report forming a working group or studying a problem.

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.
- Committee members to discuss how the work of the Committee can be better communicated throughout the University.
- Committee to continue to focus on, and embed, data and evidence in quality processes.
- Committee Secretary to develop the use of the Committee SharePoint to improve availability of IPR documents and minutes ahead of meeting and facilitate out-of-meeting activity.