



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Senatus Academicus

Wednesday 1 October 2025, 1:10-4pm  
Lecture Theatre G.03, 50 George Square, Central Area / Microsoft Teams  
Voting will be undertaken using Wooclap.

## AGENDA

<b>1 Welcome and Apologies 13:10-13:20, 10 minutes (items 1&amp;2)</b>	
<b>2 Minutes and e-Senate Reports</b>  To <u>approve</u> the minutes of the meetings held on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 April 2025.</li> <li>• 20 May 2025.</li> </ul> To <u>approve</u> the e-Senate report of 27 August - 10 September 2025.	<b>S 25/26 1A</b> <b>S 25/26 1B</b> <b>CLOSED</b>  <b>S 25/26 1C</b>
<b>2.1 Matters arising</b>  To consider any matters arising.	
<b>2.2 Senate Action Log</b>  To <u>note</u> updates to the Senate Action Log.	<b>S 25/26 1D</b>
<b>3 Convener's Communications 13:20-13:30, 10 minutes</b>	Verbal Update
<b>Substantive items</b>	
<b>4 EUSA Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2025/26 13:30 – 13:45, 15 minutes</b> To <u>note</u> and <u>comment</u> on the priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education and the Sabbatical team for 2025/26.	<b>S 25/26 1E</b>
<b>5 Amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations 13:45 – 13:55, 10 minutes</b> To <u>approve</u> the proposed amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations.	<b>S 25/26 1F</b>
<b>6 Award of Degrees 13:55 – 14:15, 20 minutes</b> To <u>approve</u> the proposal to delegate authority to Boards of Examiners to allow them to award or confer degrees.	<b>S 25/26 1G</b>  <b>CLOSED</b>

<b>7 Senate Assessor Election Arrangements for 2025/26 14:15 – 14:35, 20 minutes</b> To <u>discuss</u> and <u>approve</u> an option for the timing and conduct of the Senate Assessor Elections. To <u>approve</u> the election regulations and nomination form.	S 25/26 1H
<b>8 Amendments to the Senate Election Regulations 14:35 – 14:55, 20 minutes</b> To <u>recommend that Court approve</u> the amendments to the Senate Election Regulations. To <u>note</u> the change to the Senate Ex Officio membership.	S 25/26 1I
<b>9 Senate External Review</b>	
<b>9.1 Senate External Review Task and Finish Group – Final Report</b> To <u>note</u> the information contained within the report.	S 25/26 1J
<b>9.2 Senate External Review Task and Finish Group – Recommendations 14:55 – 15:10, 15 minutes</b> To <u>approve</u> the work plan presented in the paper.	S 25/26 1K
<b>10 Portfolio Review and the Size and Shape of the University's Curriculum 15:10 – 15:40, 30 minutes</b> To <u>discuss</u> and <u>approve</u> the questions and recommendations presented in the paper.	S 25/26 1L
<b>11 Transparency, Accountability and Senate Oversight in the Context of Financial Restructuring 15:40 – 16:00, 20 minutes</b> To <u>approve</u> the statements presented in the paper.	S 25/26 1M
<b>Items for information</b> To <u>note</u> the following:	
<b>12 Court Communications</b>	S 25/26 1N
<b>13 Report from Central Academic Promotions Committee</b>	S 25/26 1O
<b>14 Senate Effectiveness:</b> <b>14.1 Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate and its Standing Committees - Report on the post-meeting surveys (2024-25)</b>	S 25/26 1P
<b>15 Senate Standing Committee business:</b> <b>15.1 Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees</b> <b>15.2 Senate Standing Committee Membership</b> <b>15.3 Senate Standing Committees Upcoming Business</b>	S 25/26 1Q S 25/26 1R S 25/26 1S
<b>16 Research Strategy Group Report</b>	S 25/26 1T

<b>Date of next meeting: 10 December 2025</b>	
<b>Deadline for papers: Wednesday 5 November 2025</b>	



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Senatus Academicus

Thursday 24 April 2025, 2.15-3.15pm

Lecture Theatre A, 40 George Square, Central Area / Microsoft Teams

## Unconfirmed Minute

**Attendees:** Peter Adkins, Gill Aitken, Andrew Alexander, Sham Alhousiki, Niall Anderson, Ruth Andrew, Mohammad Amir Anwar, David Argyle, Kate Ash-Irisarri, Liz Baggs, Kasia Banas, Michael Barany, Christine Bell, Matthew Bell, Shereen Benjamin, Philip Best, Ayesha Bibi, Richard Blythe, Lisa Boden, Julian Bradfield, Barry Bradford, Mary Brennan, Paul Brennan, Karl Burgess, Mette Cameron, Carol Campbell, Tony Carbery, Jeremy Carrette, Leigh Chalmers, Seongsook Choi, Sam Coombes, Martin Corley, Miguel Costa-Gomes, Juan Cruz, Jo Danbolt, Kirsty Day, Luigi Del Debbio, Jean-Christophe Denis, Chris Dent, Charlotte Desvages, Simone Dimartino, Kevin Donovan, Julia Dorin, Leonidas Dumas, Claire Duncanson, Olivia Eadie, Murray Earle, Constantinos Eleftheriou, Andrea English, Omolabake Fakunle, Valentina Ferlito, Sue Fletcher-Watson, Emily Ford-Halliday, Chris French, Vashti Galpin, Marc Geddes, Stuart Gilfillan, Benjamin Goddard, Justin Goodrich, Iain Gordon, Liz Grant, Mohini Gray, Patrick Hadoke, Rachel Happer, Colm Harmon, Tina Harrison, Helen Hastie, David Hay, Thorunn Helgason, Melissa Highton, Willem Hollmann, James Hopgood, Jenny Hoy, Emma Hunter, David Ingram, Gavin Jack, Julie Jacko, Jakov Jandric, Amanda Jarvis, Susan Jarvis, Crispin Jordan, Aarnesh Kapoor, Itamar Kastner, Tobias Kelly, Meryl Kenny, David Kluth, Barry Laird, Dave Laurenson, Andy Law, Paul Le Tissier, Tom Leinster, Steff Lewis, Dawn Livingstone, Sophia Lycouris, Antony Maciocia, Cait MacPhee, Lorna Marson, Peter Mathieson, Sarah McAllister, Fiona McClement, Mike McGrew, Gavin McLachlan, Avery Meiksin, John Menzies, Tijana Mitic, James Mooney, Steven Morley, Ben Morse, Simon Mudd, Rachel Muers, Lyndsay Murray, Rupert Nash, Pau Navarro, Bryne Ngwenya, Steven O'Hagan, Richard Oosterhoff, Diana Paton, Jamie Pearce, Josephine Pemberton, Nick Polydorides, Jon Pridham, Colin Pulham, David Quinn, Tianyi Ren, Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira, Simon Riley, Aryelly Rodriguez Carbonell, Enrique Sanchez-Molano, Giulio Santori, Bernd Schroers, Matthias Schwannauer, Pablo Schyfter Camacho, Jo Shaw, David Smith, James Smith, Antonella Sorace, Perdita Stevens, Amer Syed, Emily Taylor, Alex Thomson, Tamara Trodd, Niki Vermeulen, Natasha Vijendren, Patrick Walsh, Stephen Warrington, Charles West, Mark Williams, Iain Wright, David Wyllie.

**In attendance:** Lisa Dawson, Lucy Evans, Patrick Jack, Nichola Kett, Fraser Rudge (Clerk).

**Apologies:** Marialuisa Aliotta, Kelly Blacklock, Christina Boswell, Tom Bruce, Celine Caquineau, Chris Cox, Jeremy Crang, Kate Davison, John Devaney, Kevin Dhaliwal, Agata Dunsmore, Susan Farrington, Laura Glendinning, Richard Gratwick, George Kinnear, Jason Love, Upasana Mandhata, Lesley McAra, Hayley McCormack, Marc J Metzger, Meera Mokashi, Chris Mowat, Judith Newton, Wayne Powell, Sarah Prescott, Brodie Runciman, Carin Runciman, Ewelina Rydzewska-Fazekas, Eberhard Sauer, Ash Scholz, Tobias Schwarz, Mike Shipston, Stewart Smith, Jeremy Upton, Shannon Vallor, Philip Wadler, Ingrid Young.

Prior to the meeting commencing, Senate members were reminded that the Senate meeting would be recorded to aid in the production of the minutes as per the Senate Recordings Privacy Statement.

## **1 Convener's Welcome**

The Convener, Principal Sir Professor Peter Mathieson, welcomed members to the special meeting of Senate which had been called to provide Senate with the opportunity to receive an update, and to ask questions, on the University's finances and on the five workstreams which had been established. It was added that the meeting was intended to be run in a manner similar to a seminar, with two short presentations followed by an open Q&A session. It was confirmed that there were no motions associated with the meeting, and that members would not be required to vote.

The Convener thanked colleagues who had submitted questions in advance of the meeting, and commented that their questions had been helpful in understanding what Senate members were concerned about, and where further information could be provided. Senate were informed that the presenters had analysed the questions received and had provided relevant information within their presentation where possible. The Convener added that the questions would also be used to update the [University Finances SharePoint site](#), and would be used to inform subsequent staff and student communications.

## **2 University Finance Update**

Senate received a presentation on the University's finances from the Interim Director of Finance, Nirmal Borkhataria. Key points made during the presentation are detailed below.

Senate were informed that operational surpluses across the higher education sector, including at the University of Edinburgh and the Russell Group, had been on a downward trajectory over the past three years.

Members received a brief overview of the University's financial scenario planning, and it was explained that the impact of known changes had been used to update the University's June 2024 five-year financial forecast. Amongst other things, known changes had included predicted shortfalls in tuition fee income, the impact of the 2024-25 pay award, and the impact of the additional national insurance contributions. Senate was advised that there had been a subsequent reappraisal of the approach used for student number forecasting, and of the achievability of student recruitment targets for future years.

The Interim Director of Finance commented that initial scenario planning had anticipated the University having a 6% operational deficit for the 2025-26 financial year, with a similar deficit level continuing in future years in the absence of action taken to achieve financial sustainability. It was explained that operating at a deficit would deplete the University's cash balances, and that action had been taken to maintain cash balances at sustainable levels and above the minimum stipulated by Court. Senate were informed that it was important for the University to maintain sufficient cash balances to mitigate against future challenges and difficulties, and to address backlog maintenance across the University's physical and digital estate. The Interim Director of Finance shared revised cash forecasts, and highlighted that without further mitigation the University's treasury cash balances were forecast to reduce below minimum requirements by the end of the 2026-27 financial year.

Senate received an update on the quarter two forecast for 2024-25, and it was reported that initial action taken to contain costs and more prudent management of budgets appeared to be having a positive effect on the University's financial circumstances. However, the quarter two forecast had indicated that the end of year financial position would be very tight; with the potential for the University to record either a deficit, a breakeven position, or a surplus.

Information was provided on cash flow forecast with, and without, achieving £140m in savings. The Interim Director of Finance highlighted the significant disparity between the two scenarios, noting that the University's cash balances would quickly be depleted if no changes were made. An update was also provided on the impact of scheduling capital expenditure.

The Interim Director of Finance concluded by providing data on staffing trends, and explained that the number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff had increased by around 15% across the University in the period since July 2020. It was further explained that recruitment restraint was helping to slow the rate of growth in staff costs, however the overall number of staff at the University remained at an unsustainable level.

### **3 Workstreams Update**

The Provost, Professor Kim Graham, provided an update on the workstreams associated with "Reimagine our size, shape and ways of working to secure the long-term future of our University". The Provost began by reflecting on the challenging financial and geopolitical environment in which the UK and international higher education sectors were operating, and of the desire for the University of Edinburgh to remain a world leading institution capable of strategically investing in, and leveraging, its global impact.

Senate received a brief update on recent actions which had been taken to create financial headroom. This included action to reduce expenditure, achieved through: constraint on staff recruitment, the voluntary severance scheme, a pause on promotions and contribution awards, and savings associated with other operating expenses. Separately, it was reported that action had been taken to keep short-term cash and maintain income by: pausing some capital expenditure, small upsides in treasury income, providing focused support for areas with student growth potential, improved costing of research, additional commercialisation of research, and consolidation of research facilities where appropriate or where it would encourage cross-University collaboration. The Provost emphasised that these actions were insufficient on their own to address the University's financial challenge.

Members of Senate were informed that changes were required to the way that the University operated in order to ensure its ongoing financial sustainability. It was explained that longer term solutions would be developed and implemented through a programme of work entitled "Reimagine our size, shape and ways of working to secure the long-term future of our University". The Provost reported that five workstreams had been established to facilitate activity and collaboration across the institution, assess what could be done differently, and take action to ensure the University's long-term success and financial resilience.

The Provost provided a brief overview of the workstreams, and explained that the university community could access further information on the [University finances SharePoint site](#). It was explained that the 'Teaching & Learning' and the 'Research & Innovation' workstreams would focus on activities in support of the University's core academic mission. Members were informed that the University's staff base would become smaller, and that the 'Staff' workstream would support changes in operations to remove unnecessary activity, reduce duplication where possible, and ensure greater consistency across the University. The 'Physical and Digital Estate' workstream would improve the utilisation of buildings as part of a smaller University estate; and would facilitate digital innovation and the usage of automation to help staff manage their workloads. Finally, the 'Other Operating Expenditure' (OOE) workstream would support more cost-effective procurement across the University and look at other aspects of OOE.

In advance of the question-and-answer session, the Provost thanked colleagues who had taken the time to pre-submit questions. It was explained that, where possible, brief responses to questions had been included within the slide deck that had been shared with Senate. The Provost provided a brief overview of responses to the pre-submitted questions, and added that these would be used to update the [University Finances SharePoint site](#)

#### 4 Open Q&A

Senate members were invited to ask questions of the panel on the University's finances and on the workstreams. The panel was comprised of the Principal, the Provost, the Vice Principal Students and the Interim Director of Finance. Members were invited to raise questions for the Interim Director of Finance first as he was available for 20 of the 50 minutes of the open Q&A.

***Senate Clerk's Note:*** *the dialogue detailed below provides a summary of discussion. Not all questions asked during the meeting were answered, and unanswered questions have been shared with colleagues for consideration and inclusion on the [University Finances SharePoint site](#) as appropriate.*

##### 4.1 What specific benefits to the University's academic mission are anticipated from (a) achieving a 3% operational surplus, as opposed to a lower figure, and (b) achieving this target within 18 months, as opposed to a longer timescale? What costs and risks to the University's academic mission are anticipated from the proposed depth and speed of cuts?

It was explained that the Senior Leadership Team and the University Executive had given careful consideration to what the operational surplus target should be, and that a 3% operational surplus target had been selected. It was added that the 3% target was also near to the EBITDA target that the University Court had set.

Senate was advised that a 3% target had been considered appropriate as that level of operational surplus should generate sufficient levels of cash to restore the University's balances to a reasonable level. It was explained that it was important to hold sufficient cash balances to make the University more resilient to future adverse events, to enable it to maintain its physical and digital estate, and to allow it to invest in strategically important projects. Members were informed that a 3% operational surplus target was a commonly used benchmark, and had been proven to be a reasonable sum when used elsewhere.

On the question of timescale, it was commented taking longer to achieve a reasonable operational surplus would harm the University's ability to invest in improvements that would

benefit the student and staff experience, make it less resilient to future financial shocks, and prolong the period of uncertainty which is currently affecting the University.

**4.2 Based on the presentation shared with Senate, what is the rationale for the difference in student intake targets? Was an increase projected, and was this not achieved?**

It was confirmed that previous forecasting had shown student growth continuing, however planning assumptions had since been revised. It was reported that recent analysis of market conditions had suggested that student numbers would likely remain flat over the next five years. As such, student intake targets had been revised down to levels that were expected to be achievable. Members were advised that student intake targets would continue to be informed by the student intake achieved.

It was reported that colleagues across the University had made significant improvements in offer making and in conversion activity and that, despite these improvements, it appeared that the University was at the market limit in terms of recruitment of students that met the University's admissions criteria.

**4.3 How do the operational surplus, and the level of cash held by the University, affect the University's loans?**

It was explained that there were differing covenant requirements associated with the University's long-term financing arrangements; and that some covenants included ratios which related to the University's cash position relative to its operations, and to its asset base. Senate received a brief explanation on the importance of meeting the covenant requirements associated with its loans.

Separately, it was explained that existing arrangements with the University's lenders did not include specific requirements on the level of cash to be held. However, it was added that holding sufficient levels of cash did help to provide reassurance to lenders that the University's debts could be repaid. The Interim Director of Finance reflected on a recent round of lender engagement, which had indicated that lenders perceived there to be an increased risk of lending to universities.

**4.4 On noting the covenant requirements placed on the University, could the University's cash investments be used to pay off loans to enable increased flexibility in financial planning?**

In response, it was explained that there would be a significant opportunity cost to the University in repaying earlier than was necessary; and that such an approach was considered not to be in the University's best interests. It was further commented that the University's lending arrangements at the time were relatively prudent, and that repaying early would require the University to use a significant proportion of its assets that would then not be able to generate income or be invested elsewhere.

**4.5 What is treasury cash balance? Where can this be found in the University's annual reports? How is it influenced by investment choices?**

The University's treasury cash balance refers to the cash balance available at a particular time to meet short-term obligations and operational needs. This excludes monies that are assigned to specific endowments, which cannot be used to meet the University's



operational needs. 'Cash days' are then calculated by dividing the treasury cash balance by 365 days.

It was explained that the University's statutory accounts were prepared according to specific accounting standards, and included funds held in non-current investments with the University's investment managers. The treasury cash balance specified within the University's statutory accounts was less liquid than the treasury cash balance used within the University's management accounts, and could less readily be used to meet the University's operational needs. Consequently, the figures in the University's statutory accounts were not directly comparable with the information presented to Senate.

**4.6 How did the University move from a stable financial position to one which required a £140m savings target so quickly? What financial planning occurred in relation to the revised pay scales, the move away from personal tutors, and the introduction of People and Money?**

As illustrated in the presentation slides, the financial challenges facing the University had affected all British research-intensive universities. There had been a growing recognition in recent years that there was a series of things beyond the ability of universities to control for, including for example: increases in national insurance; increased inflation, especially in utilities costs; and the introduction of less favourable policies on immigration which had adversely affected the attractiveness of the UK as a destination for international students. Budgets are informed by projections of student income, and forecasts for student income had been revised downwards to levels that were considered more likely to be achievable.

The University's finances are routinely monitored, and financial plans made and re-evaluated in line with changing circumstances. Review of the University's finances had shown that action was required; and action had been taken to address factors that were within the control of the University. For example, by introducing recruitment restraint to address growth in staff expenditure. It was noted that, when the revised pay scales were introduced, communication with the university community had explicitly recognised that paying staff more would likely require the University to have fewer members of staff.

**4.7 To achieve an operational surplus of 3%, what proportion of expenditure reduction could be achieved from sources other than staff costs?**

Of the £140 million savings target, around £90 million was expected to be achieved through a reduction in staff costs and the remaining £50 million through a reduction in other operating expenses.

It was explained that there had been significant growth in staff costs in recent years, and that 58% of the University's expenditure was now attributed to staff costs. To restore the University to a more sustainable financial footing, the target was agreed to reduce this to similar previous levels at 53% of university income.

**4.8 How can the University community support transformative change that is bold, moves at pace, and drives improvements in the student and staff experience?**

It was acknowledged that while change was required to ensure the University's financial sustainability, there was a significant opportunity for the University to identify and implement changes that would improve how the university worked for its community. Senate were advised that the workstream leads had been asked to think boldly and strategically in

proposing changes for the benefit of the university and its community. On how the University community could be involved, it was explained that the University Executive and the workstream leads are always open to constructive suggestions: specific arrangements are under development and would be shared in due course.

**4.9 On the recent closure of a university café, and the associated impact on the university community, how will an appropriate level of consultation with students and staff be ensured?**

In response to the questioners' comments, the strength of feeling amongst students and members of staff regarding the closure of the café was recognised. It was confirmed that the spaces vacated by the closed cafes would remain open for members of the university community to use, and that alternative catering provision was available nearby.

It was explained that a review of the University's catering provision had identified five loss-making cafes. Given the University's challenging financial situation it was explained that the University was no longer able to subsidise certain loss-making activities and that, in some cases, the University Executive would need to take difficult decisions to return the University to a financially sustainable position.

**4.10 To help staff understand the intended balance of savings planned, what savings targets have been attributed to each of the five workstreams?**

It was explained that work was underway to define savings targets for the workstreams, and that the initial focus would be on identifying and prioritising opportunities. This process would include a review of ongoing initiatives to determine which should be reshaped or discontinued. It was added that the value of potential savings would be estimated by workstreams once the associated priorities and activities had been clearly outlined. Separately, it was reported that key budget holders had been provided with information regarding savings targets, and that the budget holders were working on revised budgets.

**4.11 Noting the significant challenge of leading change in difficult circumstances, and noting that members of the university community would like to help, what could be done to enable the university community to better support the changes required? What can be done to create open channels for the university community to provide input into decision making, and make suggestions or recommendations?**

The Senate member's observation around the challenges faced by the University's leadership team was acknowledged and appreciated. It was reported that there was a significant responsibility associated with addressing the University's challenging financial situation, and that there was a need for the University to act quickly and strategically to avoid more significant issues later.

It was added that the University Executive received suggestions from the university community, and acted on viable suggestions. Members were advised that the University Executive were open to suggestions, and that consideration would be given on how the university community could best be engaged through the workstreams. It was recognised that appropriate representation was required to ensure that the needs of the University's diverse schools and colleges were taken into consideration.

**4.12 How will the Teaching and Learning workstream interact with Colleges and Schools? What level of responsibility should be taken at the school level?**

Senate were advised that the Teaching and Learning workstream was anticipated to complement the work that was already being undertaken with the Colleges and Schools.

**4.13 Noting the fast-changing geopolitical situation, is there work underway to understand and act on potential opportunities for increasing student recruitment?**

It was confirmed that the relevant University staff were reviewing student recruitment plans to identify potential opportunities and threats.

**4.14 Noting the extremely low levels of staff satisfaction in the University's senior leadership and change management, evidenced in the recent staff survey, it was asked how the SLT was working to build trust and confidence, including by consulting with Senate wherever possible. Would a commitment be made to providing written responses to the questions pre-submitted by Senate members?**

It was commented that the questions would be used to update the [University Finances SharePoint site](#), and would be used to inform subsequent staff and student communications. Senate members were thanked for the questions submitted.

**4.15 What consideration is being given to assessing the equality impact of workstream activity.**

It was confirmed that equality impact assessments are being undertaken wherever required.

**5 Date of next meeting: 20 May 2025**

**Senate****1 October 2025****e-Senate Report of 27 August to 10 September 2025**

Comments raised via e-Senate can be accessed on the [Senate Members Portal](#).

**1 Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita (e-S 25/26 1A)**

Senate approved the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita on the following professors:

- Professor Timothy Bates, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
- Professor Gert Biesta, Moray House School of Education and Sport
- Professor Ann Bruce, School of Social and Political Science
- Professor Alan Bundy, School of Informatics
- Professor Eleanor Campbell, School of Chemistry
- Professor Tony Carbery, School of Mathematics
- Professor Simon Clark, School of Economics
- Professor Martin Chick, School of History, Classics and Archaeology
- Professor Nick Colegrave, School of Biological Sciences
- Professor Emma Davie, Edinburgh College of Art
- Professor Sergio Della Sala, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
- Professor Adam Fox, School of History, Classics and Archaeology
- Professor Pete Higgins, Moray House School of Education and Sport
- Professor Ruth Jepson, School of Health in Social Science
- Professor Wendy Johnson, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
- Professor Alex Lascarides, School of Informatics
- Professor John Lee, School of Informatics and Edinburgh College of Art
- Professor Bettylou Los, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
- Professor Fiona Mackay, School of Social and Political Science
- Professor Gillen McCluskey, Moray House School of Education and Sport
- Professor Bruce McGorum, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
- Professor Robbie Nicol, Moray House School of Education and Sport
- Professor Pauline Phemister, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
- Professor Wilson Poon, School of Physics and Astronomy
- Professor William Rampen, School of Engineering
- Professor Lynne Regan, School of Biological Sciences
- Professor Don Sannella, School of Informatics

- Professor Richard Sparks, Edinburgh Law School
- Professor Richard Thomson, Edinburgh College of Art
- Professor Stephen Warrington, School of Engineering
- Professor Tim Worrall, School of Economics

Senate noted the special minutes provided for each professor.

Ten members commented on this item.

Seven members communicated their approval, with one member expressing a lack of clarity on the basis for which emeritus/emerita status is conferred. The same member observed that there was a considerable variability in the extent that those conferred Emeritus/Emerita status intend to contribute to the University in retirement.

Two members observed that there were higher numbers of retiring professors presented to Senate than in previous years. Both members queried the impact of the University's voluntary severance scheme on the increased number of departing professors. One member noted that one retiring colleague was promoted to Chair two years prior and that several colleagues have held Professorships for less than ten years. Both members queried how the loss of Professorial-level expertise would be mitigated, with one member querying whether the impact of departing staff had been adequately assessed.

A shorter than usual Special Minute drafted by the School of Health in Social Sciences was identified, however the member raising this also acknowledged that the Minute included all required information.

The same member stated they felt that approving emeritus/emerita status via passive assent was disrespectful. The member believes that Senate approval should be granted through quorate affirmation in an ordinary Senate meeting and they felt the time saving of considering the paper via e-Senate was negligible. The member expressed concern that the use of e-Senate to confer emeritus/ emerita status signified a devaluing of Senate's role in academic governance.

**Clerk's note:** Professor Lynne Regan was originally listed as being part of the School of Engineering. Professor Regan was a colleague in the School of Biological Sciences, her Special Minute was updated during the period which e-Senate was running.

## Senate

01 October 2025

## Senate Action Log

Meeting date	Paper	Paper status	Action	Responsible	Target date	Action status	Update
01-10-25	S 25/26 1J	Open	Completion of External Review Recommendation 11: We recommend that all Senators should get a briefing note on proper use of the Chat Function, and it should be an important section in induction. This should include information on expected standards of behaviour and the proper use of the CHAT function (see, for example, guidance at Glasgow University or UCL). Misuse of the chat should not be tolerated.	University EDI Lead	To be established with EDI Lead	Open	<p>In 2024/25, there was a long standing vacancy in the role of University EDI Lead. A consequence of this is that the associated actions could not be progressed alongside the operation of the External Review Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>The associated actions will be tracked on the Senate Action Log until completed or closed.</p> <p>Detail on the action can be found in paper S 25/26 1J.</p>
01-10-25	S 25/26 1J	Open	Completion of External Review Recommendation 12: Senate would benefit from a special session on enhancing and updating knowledge of EDI.	University EDI Lead	To be established with EDI Lead	Open	As above

01-10-25	S 25/26 1J		Completion of External Review Recommendation 13: An EDI impact assessment/assurance rating should be used in all Senate papers.	University EDI Lead	To be established with EDI Lead	Open	As above
01-10-25	S 25/26 1J		Completion of External Review Recommendation 14: We suggest that the University considers how the developmental membership of Senate could be promoted as part of the induction and development programme. Specifically, the Staff BAME network could promote Senate as part of its mentoring programme.	University EDI Lead	To be established with EDI Lead	Open	As above
01-10-25	S 25/26 1J		Completion of External Review Recommendation 15: Consider adding some nominated members to Senate to widen diversity.	University EDI Lead	To be established with EDI Lead	Open	As above

Meeting date	Paper	Paper status	Action	Responsible	Target date	Action status	Update
26-03-25	S 24/25 4A	OPEN	Senate to receive a report on consideration by the University Court.	Senate Convener	20-05-25	Complete.	At Senate's 20 May 2025 meeting, the Senate Convener reported on associated discussion at the University Court's meeting of 28 April 2025.  Senate also noted the Court Communications paper, see agenda item 9 and paper S 24/25 6P.
26-03-25	S 24/25 4B	OPEN	Senate to receive a report on consideration by the Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Board (SEDaMOB).	Co-Conveners of SEDaMOB	20-05-25	Complete.	At Senate's 20 May 2025 meeting, the Co-Conveners of SEDaMOB provided an update to Senate as part of the Convener's Communications agenda item.

A summary of previous actions can be viewed on the [Senate Members Portal](#).



**Senate**

**01 October 2025**

**Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for  
2024/25**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper articulates the priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education and the Sabbatical Officer team for 2025/26.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. To note and comment.

**Background and context**

3. Each year a paper is presented to Senate and its standing committees, summarising the Sabbatical Officers' priorities for the coming year, enabling Senate and its members to identify areas of common interest and collaboration. These priorities are based on the manifestos the Officers were elected on – this year's Officers received a combined 10,845 votes – and were further refined during the Officers' induction, based on data from the various national student experience surveys and feedback from outgoing student representatives.

**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. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have risk implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals:**

7. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

**Equality & diversity:**

8. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have equality and diversity implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

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

9. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have communication, implementation and evaluation implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

**Author**

**Robin Gay**

Student Voice Manager

Edinburgh University Students'  
Association

**Presenter**

**Katya Amott**

Vice President Education 2025/26

Edinburgh University Students'  
Association

**Freedom of Information: *Open***

**Students' Association Vice President Education priorities for 2025/26:**

- Enhance support for Widening Participation students, and re-commit the University to addressing the attainment gap through strategic and evidence-based initiatives.
- Build on existing work to decolonise the curriculum, and expand it to include discussion of present-day examples, as well as the ways in which historic colonialism has shaped contemporary discourse and institutions.
- Advocate for transparency and accountability in University processes – from timetabling to marking schemes – and decision-making, giving students the power to make informed choices and shape their experience.
- Ensure the ongoing portfolio review addresses student feedback, including calls for a diverse and relevant curriculum, and alternative forms of assessment, supporting them to develop the University's Graduate Attributes.

**Sabbatical Officer team priorities for 2025/26:**

- Ensure that all students have what they need to thrive and succeed, from basic needs like affordable housing and transport, to supportive communities, accessible wellbeing services, and responsive academic processes.
- Centre student experience, particularly that of marginalised communities, in the University's decision-making regarding the ongoing financial challenge.
- Empower students to use their voices and create positive change on the issues that matter to them, whether through traditional feedback mechanisms like course feedback and Student-Staff Liaison Committees, or through campaigning.

**Senate****1 October 2025****Amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations****Description of paper**

1. This paper requests approval of some amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations. The Regulations apply to students seeking to take a year out of study to take up a position as a sabbatical officer in Edinburgh University Students' Association or Edinburgh University Sports Union.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is asked to approve the proposed amendments to the Regulations. The Regulations are owned both by Senate and University Court, so they will also require approval from Court, which will be sought in December 2025. If the proposed amendments are approved by Court, they will come into effect from 1 January 2026.

**Background and context**

3. The Laigh Year Regulations are University Regulations which allow student sabbatical officers in the Edinburgh University Students' Association and the Edinburgh University Sports Union to matriculate as students of the University without (during the academic year concerned) having to fulfil the normal academic requirement of their programme of study.
4. The Deputy Secretary, Students has proposed some amendments to the Regulations based on recent experience of cases where requests for Laigh Years have proven problematic due to issues with students' academic standing at the point of application, leading to potential uncertainty for students.
5. The proposed amendments have been consulted upon with Edinburgh University Students' Association, Edinburgh University Sports Union, Colleges, and relevant staff in Schools (Directors of Students and Postgraduate Directors/Heads of Graduate School). The amendments presented for approval take account of feedback received during the consultation process.
6. The Laigh Year Regulations are approved both by Senate and by Court. If Senate approves the amendments to the Regulations, they will proceed for approval by Court at its December 2025 meeting.

**Discussion**

7. The proposed amendments to the Regulations are outlined below. Senate is asked to **approve** the amendments to the Regulations.

- **Requirements for Laigh Year approval (1.3)**

The Laigh Year Regulations currently require that a student seeking a second Laigh Year demonstrate that the break from studies will be “compatible with successful reintegration into the programme, and that no professional body rules or impediments will apply”. This is not a requirement when applying for an initial Laigh Year. It is reasonable to expect, however, that these requirements may also have relevance to applications for a first Laigh Year. As such, the proposed amendment to the Regulations applies these requirements to both the first and second applications for a Laigh Year alongside the existing requirement that a student be in “good academic standing”, referring to these together as the “Laigh Year Requirements”.

Aside from professional body requirements (where these apply to a student’s programme), factors which may affect the judgement as to whether a Laigh Year may be “compatible with successful reintegration into the programme”, include, for example, where a student’s application for a Laigh Year will follow on immediately from a period of authorised interruption of study.

- **Provision of report regarding Laigh Year Requirements (1.4; 2.1-2.3)**

The Director of Students or Postgraduate Director in the relevant School will be asked to provide a report to the University Secretary stating whether the student meets the Laigh Year Requirements. This would move the responsibility for producing the report from the Student Adviser or supervisor in order to ensure that it rests with someone with an appropriate level of seniority. The Regulations note, however, that the Student Adviser or supervisor will be consulted in the production of the report.

The revised wording clarifies that the University Secretary will request the report from the Director of Students or Postgraduate Director on receipt of a Laigh Year application, rather than the student needing to request the report. This reflects current practice.

- **Payment to students during a Laigh Year (3.1)**

A further minor amendment to the Regulations removes the reference to a specific amount paid to students in receipt of a Laigh Year, in order to avoid this requiring an update annually. By agreement between EUSA and the University, Laigh Year payments will no longer be increased annually in line with the percentage increase applied to the UKRI National Minimum Doctoral Stipend, but instead will increase in line with the University’s annual pay award. Previously alignment with the UKRI National Minimum Doctoral Stipend has led to officer stipends becoming significantly out of step with the

rest of the sector. The intention is for the level of payments to be reviewed on a five-yearly basis.

- **Provisional approval (3.3)**

The Regulations clarify that, when provisional approval of a Laigh Year is not followed by firm approval (i.e. because the Laigh Year Requirements have not been met), the Laigh Year will end on 30 September, or when the student demits office, whichever is earlier. This reflects existing practice.

### **Resource implications**

8. The proposed amendments transfer responsibility for providing a report regarding whether an individual student meets the Laigh Year Regulations from the Student Adviser or supervisor to the Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of Graduate School (as appropriate). Directors of Students and Postgraduate Directors/Heads of Graduate School have been consulted on the proposed amendment and have raised no concerns regarding the additional workload this entails for them. The requirement to provide such a report relates to only a small number of students across the University each year.

### **Risk management**

9. The proposed amendments mitigate against the risk of students standing for election and proceeding to be elected where their academic standing is not compatible with taking a year out of study to take up a sabbatical position. The amendments provide greater transparency for students regarding the considerations involved in the approval process and will help to manage students' expectations regarding the process.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

10. This paper does not contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Equality & diversity**

11. The proposed amendments are not anticipated to present any implications in terms of equality, diversity, or inclusion.

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

12. Should Senate approve the proposed amendments, they will proceed for approval by University Court in December 2025. If the proposed amendments are approved by Court, they will come into effect from 1 January 2026. The University Secretary's office will maintain records of requests for Laigh Years, including data regarding rates of approval of Laigh Year applications.

**Author**

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Deputy Secretary, Students

Adam Bunni  
Academic Policy Manager  
Academic Quality and Standards

**Presenter**

Lucy Evans

**Freedom of Information - Open**



# Laigh Year Regulations

## Summary

The Laigh Year Regulations are University Regulations which allow student sabbatical officers in the Edinburgh University Students' Association and the Edinburgh University Sports Union to matriculate as students of the University without (during the academic year concerned) having to fulfil the normal academic requirement of their programme of study.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

The regulations apply to all students intending to apply for a Laigh Year.

## Contact

Academic Quality  
and Standards

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## Document control

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Version Approved:</b> 29.03.23	<b>Effective Date:</b> 29.03.23	<b>Equality impact assessment:</b> 30.07.15	<b>Last Review:</b> N/A	<b>Next Review:</b> 2026/2027
<b>Approving authority</b>	Court and Senate				
<b>Related policies, procedures, guidelines &amp; regulations</b>	Code of Practice relating to the Edinburgh University Students' Association <a href="https://assets-cdn.sums.su/ED/Your%20Students%20Association_YSA/YSA_TrusteeMinutes/Code-of-Practice.pdf">https://assets-cdn.sums.su/ED/Your%20Students%20Association_YSA/YSA_TrusteeMinutes/Code-of-Practice.pdf</a>				
<b>Alternative format</b>	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk">academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk</a>				
<b>Keywords</b>	Laigh, sabbatical, regulations				



## Laigh Year Regulations

### 1. Definition and Conditions

1.1 The Laws of the Students' Association and of the Sports Union require that all officebearers must be matriculated students throughout their year of office. The Senatus Academicus has agreed that certain of these office-bearers may be granted Laigh Years, i.e. the office-bearer may matriculate as a student of the University without (during the session concerned) having to fulfil the normal academic requirements of ~~his or her~~their programme of study.

1.2 The Senatus and Court will from time to time, and after considering recommendations from the Students' Association or the Sports Union as appropriate, determine the offices whose holders are eligible to apply for a Laigh Year (the "approved offices").

1.3 In order to be eligible for the award of a Laigh Year a student must~~;~~ in addition to having been elected to an approved office~~;~~

(a) be in good academic standing, that is either:

(i) the student must be a matriculated student in attendance of the final year of a programme of study, and satisfactorily complete the requirements for the award of a degree or diploma of the University, during the session<sup>1</sup> in which the application for the Laigh Year is made; or

(ii) the student's academic standing must be such that the student would be allowed to continue with their programme of study in the following session if no Laigh Year were awarded; and-

(b) demonstrate that the break from studies required by the Laigh Year would be compatible with successful academic reintegration into their programme, and that no professional body rules or impediments will apply.

and together the above requirements shall be referred to as the "Laigh Year Requirements".

1.4 Students are advised to seek confirmation from the Director of Students (undergraduate students and postgraduate taught students), or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School (postgraduate research students) within the relevant School that they meet the Laigh Year Requirements before putting themselves forward for election to an approved office.

1.5 The academic concessions associated with the Laigh Year relate strictly to the academic year beginning on 1 August following the assumption of approved office. ~~No student may be granted more than two Laigh Years under these regulations.~~

1.6 A Laigh Year office-bearer must remain the holder of an approved office throughout the period of the Laigh Year.

~~4.4.1.7~~ No student may be granted more than two Laigh Years under these regulations. Should a student wish to apply for a second Laigh Year, the application process set out below shall apply, and the student must demonstrate that they meet the Laigh Year Requirements in relation to that second Laigh Year.

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<sup>1</sup> The session is considered to be the academic year in question and its associated resit examination diet.

## 2. Application

- 2.1 An application for each Laigh Year must be made to the University Secretary, in writing, by the student concerned (or a nominee) not later than 3 June following election to an approved office, ~~and must be accompanied by. The University Secretary will request a report from the Director of Students (undergraduate students and postgraduate taught students), or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School (postgraduate research students) within the relevant School the Student Adviser or Supervisor on whether the student meets the Laigh Year Requirements student's academic standing. The Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School will consult with the student's Student Adviser or supervisor (as appropriate) when producing the report.~~
- 2.2 The ~~Student Adviser or Supervisor~~Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School may be unable to confirm whether or not the student is in good academic standing will meet the Laigh Year Requirements by 3 June, for example because confirmation is dependent on the successful completion of assessments, including resit assessments, in August. In that event, the University Secretary will request a further report from the Student Adviser or Supervisor Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School, to be received shall be lodged by the student with the University Secretary by 13 September or as soon as possible thereafter.
- ~~2.3 Where a student applies for a second Laigh Year which involves a continuation of the interruption of their programme of study, the application must also demonstrate that a break of that length would be compatible with successful reintegration into the programme, and that no professional body rules or impediments will apply. In that event, a report from the Student Adviser or Supervisor shall be lodged on whether a further break from study will be appropriate. Students are advised to seek this confirmation from their Student Adviser or Supervisor before putting themselves forward for re-election for a second term.~~
- 2.34 The award of a Laigh Year may be approved firmly or provisionally. The award will be firmly approved when the holder of an approved office is confirmed by the relevant Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School to be in good academic standing meet the Laigh Year Requirements. The award will be provisionally approved if in the relevant Director of Student's or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School's view a student is not able to meet the academic requirements demonstrate they meet the Laigh Year Requirements for the award of a Laigh Year by 3 June following election but may still be able are judged to be likely to be able to meet these requirements by 13 September following election.
- 2.45 When the University Secretary, on behalf of the Court, formally approves an application (firmly or provisionally), they will notify the student by letter (with a copy to the Chief Executive of the Students' Association or the Senior Treasurer of the Sports Union as appropriate). They will also provide a copy to Student Administration and Student Administration will matriculate the student for the next academic session on this basis.

## 3. Payments to Laigh Year Office-Bearers

- 3.1 Laigh Year office-bearers are paid a stipend monthly from University funds made available to the Students' Association or the Sports Union. The annual rate of the Laigh Year payments shall be £30,060 in 2023/24 and thereafter shall be communicated to office-bearers following approval (whether firmly or provisionally) of the Laigh Year, and will be increased annually by the percentage increase in the UKRI National Minimum Doctoral Stipend in line with the University annual pay award.
- 3.2 Should a Laigh Year office-bearer be in receipt of an award for Disabled students allowance from the SAAS, or would be eligible for such an award if domiciled in Scotland, then an equivalent payment may be made upon agreement between the Students' Association/EUSU as applicable and the University Secretary to the University Court

3.3 The Laigh Year payments commence from the date on which the student takes up office. Where the Laigh Year has been firmly approved, the payments will end on 30 June the following year, or when the student demits office, whichever is earlier. Where the Laigh Year has been approved only provisionally, the payments will cease on 30 September of the year in which the student takes up approved office, or when the student demits office, whichever is earlier, and the Laigh Year will formally end. unless-if the Laigh Year is subsequently approved firmly (in which case, the payments will end on 30 June the following year).

3.4 No Laigh Year payment may be made to an office bearer until they receive notification from the University Secretary that the Laigh Year has been approved.

#### 4. **Obligations of the Students' Association and the Sports Union**

4.1 The Chief Executive of the Students' Association or the Senior Treasurer of the Sports Union as appropriate shall provide a copy of these regulations to each student who accepts nomination for election to one of the approved Laigh Year offices immediately after the nomination papers are lodged.

4.2 The Chief Executive of the Students' Association or the Senior Treasurer of the Sports Union as appropriate shall provide a further copy of these regulations to those elected to approved Laigh Year offices within 3 days of their election.

4.3 No payments shall be made by the University to the holder of an approved office other than those provided for in these regulations.



# Laigh Year Regulations

## Summary

The Laigh Year Regulations are University Regulations which allow student sabbatical officers in the Edinburgh University Students' Association and the Edinburgh University Sports Union to matriculate as students of the University without (during the academic year concerned) having to fulfil the normal academic requirement of their programme of study.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

The regulations apply to all students intending to apply for a Laigh Year.

## Contact

Academic Quality  
and Standards

[academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk)

## Document control

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Approving authority	Court and Senate				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Code of Practice relating to the Edinburgh University Students' Association <a href="https://assets-cdn.sums.su/ED/Your%20Students%20Association_YSA/YSA_TrusteeMinutes/Code-of-Practice.pdf">https://assets-cdn.sums.su/ED/Your%20Students%20Association_YSA/YSA_TrusteeMinutes/Code-of-Practice.pdf</a>				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk">academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk</a>				
Keywords	Laigh, sabbatical, regulations				

## **Laigh Year Regulations**

### **1. Definition and Conditions**

- 1.1 The Laws of the Students' Association and of the Sports Union require that all officebearers must be matriculated students throughout their year of office. The Senatus Academicus has agreed that certain of these office-bearers may be granted Laigh Years, i.e. the office-bearer may matriculate as a student of the University without (during the session concerned) having to fulfil the normal academic requirements of their programme of study.
- 1.2 The Senatus and Court will from time to time, and after considering recommendations from the Students' Association or the Sports Union as appropriate, determine the offices whose holders are eligible to apply for a Laigh Year (the "approved offices").
- 1.3 In order to be eligible for the award of a Laigh Year a student must: in addition to having been elected to an approved office:
- (a) be in good academic standing, that is either:
    - (i) the student must be a matriculated student in attendance of the final year of a programme of study, and satisfactorily complete the requirements for the award of a degree or diploma of the University, during the session<sup>1</sup> in which the application for the Laigh Year is made; or
    - (ii) the student's academic standing must be such that the student would be allowed to continue with their programme of study in the following session if no Laigh Year were awarded; and
  - (b) demonstrate that the break from studies required by the Laigh Year would be compatible with successful academic reintegration into their programme, and that no professional body rules or impediments will apply,
- and together the above requirements shall be referred to as the "Laigh Year Requirements".
- 1.4 Students are advised to seek confirmation from the Director of Students (undergraduate students and postgraduate taught students), or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School (postgraduate research students) within the relevant School that they meet the Laigh Year Requirements before putting themselves forward for election to an approved office.
- 1.5 The academic concessions associated with the Laigh Year relate strictly to the academic year beginning on 1 August following the assumption of approved office.
- 1.6 A Laigh Year office-bearer must remain the holder of an approved office throughout the period of the Laigh Year.
- 1.7 No student may be granted more than two Laigh Years under these regulations. Should a student wish to apply for a second Laigh Year, the application process set out below shall apply, and the student must demonstrate that they meet the Laigh Year Requirements in relation to that second Laigh Year.

### **2. Application**

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<sup>1</sup> The session is considered to be the academic year in question and its associated resit examination diet.

- 2.1 An application for each Laigh Year must be made to the University Secretary, in writing, by the student concerned (or a nominee) not later than 3 June following election to an approved office. The University Secretary will request a report from the Director of Students (undergraduate students and postgraduate taught students), or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School (postgraduate research students) within the relevant School on whether the student meets the Laigh Year Requirements. The Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School will consult with the student's Student Adviser or supervisor (as appropriate) when producing the report.
- 2.2 The Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School may be unable to confirm whether or not the student will meet the Laigh Year Requirements by 3 June, for example because confirmation is dependent on the successful completion of assessments, including resit assessments, in August. In that event, the University Secretary will request a further report from the Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School, to be received by 13 September or as soon as possible thereafter.
- 2.3 The award of a Laigh Year may be approved firmly or provisionally. The award will be firmly approved when the holder of an approved office is confirmed by the relevant Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School to meet the Laigh Year Requirements. The award will be provisionally approved if in the relevant Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of the Graduate School's view a student is not able to demonstrate they meet the Laigh Year Requirements by 3 June following election but are judged to be likely to be able to meet these requirements by 13 September following election.
- 2.4 When the University Secretary, on behalf of the Court, formally approves an application (firmly or provisionally), they will notify the student by letter (with a copy to the Chief Executive of the Students' Association or the Senior Treasurer of the Sports Union as appropriate). They will also provide a copy to Student Administration and Student Administration will matriculate the student for the next academic session on this basis.

### **3. Payments to Laigh Year Office-Bearers**

- 3.1 Laigh Year office-bearers are paid a stipend monthly from University funds made available to the Students' Association or the Sports Union. The annual rate of the Laigh Year payments shall be communicated to office-bearers following approval (whether firmly or provisionally) of the Laigh Year, and will be increased annually in line with the University annual pay award.
- 3.2 Should a Laigh Year office-bearer be in receipt of an award for disabled students allowance from the SAAS, or would be eligible for such an award if domiciled in Scotland, then an equivalent payment may be made upon agreement between the Students' Association/EUSU as applicable and the University Secretary.
- 3.3 The Laigh Year payments commence from the date on which the student takes up office. Where the Laigh Year has been firmly approved, the payments will end on 30 June the following year, or when the student demits office, whichever is earlier. Where the Laigh Year has been approved only provisionally, the payments will cease on 30 September of the year in which the student takes up approved office, or when the student demits office, whichever is earlier, and the Laigh Year will formally end. If the Laigh Year is subsequently approved firmly, the payments will end on 30 June the following year.
- 3.4 No Laigh Year payment may be made to an office bearer until they receive notification from the University Secretary that the Laigh Year has been approved.

### **4. Obligations of the Students' Association and the Sports Union**

- 4.1 The Chief Executive of the Students' Association or the Senior Treasurer of the Sports Union as appropriate shall provide a copy of these regulations to each student who

accepts nomination for election to one of the approved Laigh Year offices immediately after the nomination papers are lodged.

- 4.2 The Chief Executive of the Students' Association or the Senior Treasurer of the Sports Union as appropriate shall provide a further copy of these regulations to those elected to approved Laigh Year offices within 3 days of their election.
- 4.3 No payments shall be made by the University to the holder of an approved office other than those provided for in these regulations.

**SENATE****1 October 2025****Senate Assessor Election Regulations****Description of paper**

1. Two members of Senate are elected to serve on the University's governing body, the University Court, holding positions known as Senate Assessors. This paper provides draft Senate Assessor Election Regulations for discussion and approval. The Election Regulations would normally be submitted later in the academic year but as one of the two positions is now vacant, the Election Regulations and associated arrangements have been accelerated should Senate wish to fill this vacancy promptly.

**Action requested / Recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to consider the options set out in the paper and the appended draft Election Regulations and nominations form. Noting the rationale for the proposed changes in Table 3 below, there are recommendations to approve:
  - i) Option 2 for the timing of the election, including that the candidate elected to the non-professorial position serve the remainder of the existing term, to 31 July 2026 and then a new four year term from 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2030 inclusive;
  - ii) the election regulations in Appendix 1 with proposed updates marked up, with a clean version in Appendix 2 incorporating the updates for ease of reading; and,
  - iii) the nomination form in Appendix 3 with proposed updates marked up, with a clean version in Appendix 4 incorporating the updates for ease of reading.

**Background and context**Senate members on the University Court

3. Seven of the twenty-four members of the University's governing body, the University Court, are also Senate members. They are:
  - i) The Principal (appointed by the University Court, with a statutory ex officio position as President of Senate) – Professor Sir Peter Mathieson;
  - ii)-iii) Two Senate Assessors (elected by Senate itself, with one Professorial position and one non-Professorial position) – the non-Professorial position is now vacant, having been held by Dr Shereen Benjamin until late July (see notification to Senate on 22 July 2025). The Professorial position is held by Professor Richard Blythe, who is currently serving a term of office until 31 July 2026;
  - iv) Academic Staff Member on the University Court (elected by all academic staff to join the Court, with an ex officio position as a member of Senate if not already an elected member) – Professor Tobias Kelly;
  - v) Professional Services Staff Member on the University Court (elected by all professional services staff to join the Court, with an ex officio position as a member of Senate) – Sarah McAllister; and,
  - vi-vii) Students' Association President and Vice-President Education (elected by all students in annual sabbatical officer elections with the President and one of the Vice-Presidents then joining Court, currently the Vice-President Education) – Ash Scholz and Katya Amott



### Senate Assessors – legislative and governance framework

4. Senate Assessors are referenced in:

i) The [Universities \(Scotland\) Act 1966](#):

‘The term of office of assessors elected by the Senatus Academicus . . . shall be four years or such lesser period as may at the time of election or, as the case may be, co-opted be determined by the University Court, and different periods may be prescribed for different persons’

‘In the event of a casual vacancy among the assessors elected by the Senatus Academicus . . . the person elected to fill such vacancy shall demit office at the date when the person whom he succeeded would have retired.’

*Note: Dr Shereen Benjamin’s term of office was due to conclude on 31 July 2026 meaning that any person elected to succeed Dr Benjamin before the original term was due to conclude will fill this casual vacancy and have their term end on the same date. A recommended option (set out in the Discussion section below) of holding a single election to elect a successor to both fill this casual vacancy to 31 July 2026 and then to a new four year term from 1 August 2026 is proposed to avoid the problems of otherwise holding two elections in quick succession or leaving the post unfilled until 1 August 2026.*

‘All assessors on such a University Court shall be eligible for further nomination or, as the case may be, re-election’

ii) University of Edinburgh Ordinance No. 211 (Composition of the University Court), which states the University Court shall include ‘two persons appointed by being elected from among its members by the Senatus Academicus’ and that the provisions of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 that apply to assessors apply to these two persons.

iii) Senate’s [Standing Orders](#):

#### REPRESENTATION ON UNIVERSITY COURT

23. When a vacancy arises in the representation of the Senatus on the University Court, the Secretary shall invite nominations to fill it. Each nomination shall be signed by two members of Senatus who will be deemed to have formally proposed and seconded the nominee.

24. A Committee, to be known as the Scrutinising Committee, shall be appointed by the Senate to scrutinise nominations and confirm the validation of the nominations and hear any appeal against disqualification by the Returning Officer. The Committee shall consist of a representative of the University Court, a representative of the Senatus and a representative of the University Secretary. The decision of the Scrutinising Committee is final.

25. Regulations for the conduct of an election will be approved by an Ordinary Meeting of Senatus and circulated to members of Senatus.

iv) Senate [Election Regulations](#) (relevant text emboldened):

**8. Election of Senate Assessors** and Professional Services Staff to the University Court **operates under separate regulations relating to election to University Court. Senate Assessors on the University Court will comprise two Senate Assessors.** The Professional Services Staff Member elected to the University Court will also serve on Senate. **Assessors** and Professional Services Staff **are elected for a four-year term on Court; they hold Senate membership as ex officio members for the duration of**

**their term as Court members if their term as a Senate member would otherwise have concluded.**

22. The Senate Support team will inform Colleges of the number of vacancies in each elected academic staff category and will report on an annual basis the members of each College in each category who will continue in office. **Senate Assessors will be included in the count of College elected members if they are continuing a term of office as a College elected member, otherwise they are classed as an ex officio member and are not included in the count.**

v) Senate Assessor Election Regulations – these were last approved by Senate in February 2022. They are summarised in the Discussion section below and included in Appendix 1 with proposed changes marked up.

vi) University Court's [Standing Orders](#):

2.5 Senate will elect its Assessors for a period of up to four years in accordance with the provisions of the University (Scotland) Act 1966 and arrangements agreed by Senate.

2.14 Members of Court only in exceptional circumstances are likely to be re-appointed beyond two consecutive periods of office subject to the regulations applying in respect of the elections held by the Senate.

vii) The [Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance](#):

'Service beyond three terms of three years, or two terms of four years, should be avoided . . . Maximum total periods of office within such limits must also be observed by those constituencies which appoint or elect members to the governing body.'

## Discussion

### Timing options

5. Elections for both Senate Assessor positions were originally envisaged to be held around January/February 2026, before the main Senate elections. This was to enable the then incumbent Senate Assessors to be able to stand for re-election to Court in the first instance (as mentioned above, a statutory entitlement under the 1966 Act) and then for re-election to Senate. This would have been to enable them to continue to have an opportunity to stand for re-election to Senate on an equal basis alongside other elected Senate members with terms ending without a dependency on the result of the election to Court. With one position having become vacant earlier, Senate has different timing options to address this, set out in the table overleaf:

Table 1: Timing options for Senate Assessor elections

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
1 – Continue as originally planned, with an election for both positions around January / February 2026 and those elected taking office on 1 August 2026. Vacancy held open until then	Simplest option to administer and for candidates and voters to engage with	Leaves a vacant position for a Senate Assessor on the University Court unfilled until 1 August 2026
2 ( <b>recommended</b> ) – Bring forward the election, with the successful candidate for the non-professorial position filling the current vacancy until 31 July 2026 and then serving a new four year term from 1 August 2026 (a 'double' election for that position). The successful candidate for the professorial position would take office on 1 August 2026 as originally envisaged	The second simplest option to administer and for candidates and voters to engage with  Allows the vacancy to be filled before 1 August 2026	Unusual to have a 'double' election to serve the small remainder of one term and then a full new term
3 – hold an election to fill the non-professorial vacancy as soon as possible and then a later election for both the professorial position and the non-professorial position for terms beginning on 1 August 2026	Fills a vacancy while keeping to the regular pattern of Senate Assessor elections	Would mean two sets of elections in quick succession (and then the regular Senate member elections). This would be complex for candidates, voters and administratively. A candidate might be elected to the non-professorial vacancy in the first election and then not be elected in the second election for the four year term from 1 August 2026 meaning they would only hold office for a short period

6. ***Senate is invited to approve Option 2 for the timing of the election, including that the candidate elected to the non-professorial position serve the remainder of the existing term, to 31 July 2026 and then a new four year term from 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2030.***

#### Election Regulations

7. The Senate Assessor election regulations last approved by Senate in February 2022 are included in Appendix 1 with proposed changes marked-up. Requirements or expectations within the legislative and governance framework and the rationale for the proposed changes are both set out below:

Table 2: Requirements and expectations in the election regulations

Requirements and expectations in the election regulations
Regulations must be approved at an Ordinary Meeting of the Senate – required by Senate Standing Orders
Scrutinising Committee consisting of one representative each from the Senate, University Court and the University Court. Role of confirming validity of nominations and hearing any appeals against disqualification by the Returning Officer, with any decisions being final – all required by Senate Standing Orders
Student members of Senate not eligible to vote or stand for election – when the composition of the University Court was last amended, in 2020, this was on the expectation of all parties consulted, including Senate, that the number of academic staff on the University Court would remain at four, including two academic staff member Senate Assessors and the number of student members would remain at two, appointed following the Students' Association sabbatical officer elections

Table 3: Proposed changes and rationale

Proposed changes and rationale
Election date brought forward from late March (as was the case in 2022) to late November to early December and voting extended from one week to two weeks – as per Option 2 on timing, to fill the vacancy for a non-professorial member more promptly than would be otherwise be the case, while still allowing sufficient time for the compilation of the electoral roll, a call for nominations, scrutiny of nominations, advertising of valid nominees and voting (around 8 weeks in total, including four weeks for the call for nominations and two weeks for voting)
Compilation of electoral roll and call for nominations brought forward to early and mid-October respectively– to fit with the proposed change to the election date from late November to early December
<p>Extending those eligible for nomination to include all academic staff members of Senate aside from Vice-Principals/the Provost (i.e. extending those eligible for nomination to include ex officio members of Senate provided that they are academic staff and not a Vice-Principal or a Provost) – this is a proposed compromise between the pre-2022 position when all staff members of Senate could be nominated and the 2022 position when only elected academic staff members of Senate could be nominated. This would allow for individuals holding ex officio positions on Senate such as College Deans or Heads of School to stand for election but not those with a University-wide ex officio executive role on the University Executive (as Vice-Principals and the Provost have) or are professional services staff (as professional services staff are elected or nominated to the University Court by two other routes). It would also ensure that a Senate Assessor who was originally an elected Senate member but has become an ex officio member by virtue of the four year Court term running for longer than the three year elected Senate member term is eligible for re-election, a legislative requirement under the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966. To list the ex officio inclusions and exclusions, these would be:</p> <p>Exclusions – Provost and Vice-Principals, ex officio professional services staff</p> <p>Inclusions – Heads of School, the up to five academic staff nominated by each College (e.g. Deans), Assistant Principals (if academic staff) as not members of the University Executive, Director of the Institute for Academic Development (if academic staff)</p>

Not applicable – Principal, already a member of Court
Allowing someone who fills a casual vacancy of under one year (as will occur if Option 2 or Option 3 is chosen) to stand for re-election for up to two further terms of four years, giving a total maximum of nine years. If not changed, the current regulations would only allow someone who fills a casual vacancy of under one year to serve for the casual vacancy plus one full term of four years, giving a maximum in this case of under five years, rather than the normal maximum of eight years (two terms of four years, if re-elected). An alternative option might be to allow re-election for up to three terms as long as total length of office is the normal maximum of eight years – the reason this is not proposed is that it would put the two Senate Assessor positions on different electoral cycles rather than keeping to the same cycle
Specifying at the nomination stage that those nominated must declare that they are not disqualified from serving as a charity trustee under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, which applies to members of the University Court. This is already included in the election regulations but at the end of process for the elected candidates. Moving this to the nomination stage reduces the risk of having to re-run an election should an elected candidate be legally disqualified from taking office

### Resource implications

8. Election costs will be met from within existing budgets.

### Risk Management

9. The Election Regulations have been drafted with close attention to the legislative and governance framework to mitigate any risks of non-compliance. Option 2 for the election timing is recommended to ensure that a full complement of elected Senate Assessors is returned to in an efficient manner without multiple elections in a short period of time.

### Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals

10. N/A

### Equality and Diversity

11. All eligible members of Senate are encouraged to consider nomination for the positions. University Court members are encouraged to report equality and diversity data and information on the gender balance of the University Court is published as required by the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018.<sup>1</sup>

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

12. If approved by Senate, the Election Regulations, call for nominations, candidate information and election arrangements will be communicated to the Senate membership by the Deputy Returning Officer via email and the Senate Members' Portal.

### Consultation

13. Senate is the forum for both consultation and decision-making on this item and the draft Election Regulations are based upon the version last approved by Senate in February 2022. The rationale for notable proposed amendments are set out in the Discussion section earlier in the paper. The paper author has understood from informal discussion that there is interest from some Senate members in seeking to fill the vacant position promptly and the paper has been accelerated from the usual timeframe given this interest.

<sup>1</sup> Section 3 of the [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Report 2025](#)

14. The three individuals who served on the Scrutinising Committee during the last election in 2022 have confirmed that they are willing to undertake this role for this election if appointed and are listed in the draft election regulations.

**Further information**

**Author(s)**

Lewis Allan, Governance & Court Services  
Office

**Presenter(s) (if required)**

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal and  
University Secretary

**Freedom of information**

Open

## University of Edinburgh

### **Regulations for the Conduct of the election of two Assessors from the ~~Elected Academic~~ Staff Members of Senate to the University Court, governed by Ordinance of the University Court No. 211 (Composition of the University Court)**

1. The Senate Assessor Election/Elections shall be held from 9.00 am on ~~23 March 26 November~~ 2022~~25~~ until 12 noon on ~~30 March 10 December~~ 2022~~25~~.

#### *Role of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers*

2. ~~Leigh Chalmers~~Lisa Dawson, ~~Deputy Secretary Governance & Legal~~Academic Registrar, shall be the Returning Officer. The Senate Clerk has been designated Deputy Returning Officer and shall be responsible for the management of the election and the declaration of the result of the election.
3. The Deputy Returning Officer shall publicise the election/elections and voting procedure to Senate members and make arrangements as appropriate to secure the good conduct of the election.
4. The Deputy Returning Officer shall provide nomination forms calling for nominations and draw attention to the correct form of procedure for making nominations. The call for nominations shall be published by the Deputy Returning Officer ~~via~~on the Senate Members' Portal and notified to Senate members by email and on the University website and the Senate webpages.

#### *Electoral Roll*

5. The compilation of the electoral roll for the Senate Assessor Elections shall be ~~9 February 2022~~ 1 October 2025.
6. The ~~e~~Electoral Roll will consist of all staff members of Senate, as of ~~9 February 2022~~ 1 October 2025. Members of Senate who are elected via the Students' Association elections are not included on the electoral roll ~~le~~ regardless of whether they also hold a staff appointment. The electoral roll will be available on the Senate Members' Portal webpages, and members of staff may request access to the Electoral Roll in an alternative format [drafting note: propose providing this note on the Members' Portal instead as part of the usual approach to ensuring accessibility of documentation].

#### *Nominations and Validation of Candidates*

7. The call for nominations shall commence on ~~9 February 2022~~ 8 October 2025. No nominations shall be accepted before this date and time.
8. The Deputy Returning Officer shall provide nomination forms on the Senate Members' Portal and call for nominations by email ~~and on the Senate website~~. The Deputy Returning Officer will draw attention to the correct form of procedure for making nominations as well as advising that failure to comply with the procedure shall invalidate a nomination and that nominees are required to confirm that they are not disqualified under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from acting as a Trustee of a charity [drafting note: was previously the final stage of the process and now propose including at the nomination stage to reduce risk of an individual being elected who is not eligible to become a member of the University Court, who are the charitable Trustees of the University].



9. ~~The call for nominations shall also be published in appropriate issues of the Staff News and on the University website.~~ [drafting note: replaced by Senate Members' Portal and email to Senate members.]
10. All nominations must be submitted on the approved form and lodged with the Deputy Returning Officer by 12 noon on ~~Wednesday 9 March 2022~~ Wednesday 5 November 2025. No nominations shall be accepted after this date and time.
11. Only those members of the electorate, as defined in paragraph 6, who are ~~elected~~ academic staff and are not Vice-Principals or the Provost, shall be eligible for nominations and nominations may be made only by members of the electorate.
12. Each nomination must be subscribed by no fewer than two members of the electorate. Members of the electorate must only make one nomination each. Reciprocal nominations are not permitted.
13. Nominations must be submitted by electronic means as outlined in paragraph 8 and received by the Deputy Returning Officer ~~by email~~.
14. If the Deputy Returning Officer believes there is any cause for concern regarding the validity of a nomination, this matter shall be drawn to the attention of the nominee/candidate, who shall be given the opportunity to address the cause for concern, if practicable, prior to the meeting of the Scrutinising Committee.
15. The Deputy Returning Officer shall acknowledge receipt of the nomination to each nominee indicating the date and time the nomination was received.
16. Senate Assessors are eligible to stand for no more than two consecutive terms of office, unless one of those terms is to fill a casual vacancy as described in the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 for a period of less than one year, in which case a Senate Assessor is eligible to stand for three consecutive terms of office. [drafting note: proposed to ensure that an individual is not disadvantaged by filling a casual vacancy, subject to a maximum time on the University Court of 9 years (1 year + 4 years + 4 years), the upper usual limit under the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance]
17. The following Committee, to be known as the Scrutinising Committee, shall be appointed by the Senate to scrutinise nominations and confirm the validation of the nominations and hear any appeal against disqualification by the Returning Officer:  
~~Sheriff Principal~~ Alastair Dunlop KQC, Chancellor's Assessor – Representative of the University Court  
Professor Tina Harrison – Representative of Senatus Academicus  
Dr Lewis Allan, Governance & Court Services Office – Representative of the University Secretary  
The decision of the Scrutinising Committee is final.
18. As soon as practicable, each nominee shall be notified of the outcome of the Scrutinising Committee's deliberations and the list of candidates for the election shall then be confirmed and published.
19. In the event of there being only one valid candidate for each vacancy and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer shall declare and publicise as soon as practicable and no later than 48 hours after the meeting of the Scrutinising Committee the name of the valid candidate elected for each vacancy.



### *Conduct of election process*

20. Each candidate shall receive from the Deputy Returning Officer a copy of these Regulations. In order to assist in the interpretation of these Regulations a meeting with candidates may also be held if required.
21. Canvassing in the form of poster campaigns is not allowed. Candidates should not seek to influence their colleagues by behaviour that may be perceived to be bullying, harassment or intimidation. If these prohibitions are breached, it may lead to disqualification.
22. If the Deputy Returning Officer has reason to believe that a breach of these Regulations may have occurred the Deputy Returning Officer shall request a written explanation or clarification from the candidate. If the Deputy Returning Officer concludes that a material breach has occurred the Deputy Returning Officer shall inform the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer has the authority to disqualify a candidate subject to the right of appeal by the candidate to the Scrutinising Committee within 48 hours of receiving written notification of the disqualification. The decision of the Scrutinising Committee shall be final.
23. The validity of the election shall not be affected in the event that a candidate is unavailable to continue for any reason prior to the results of the election being announced and where there are more than two candidates remaining the election shall proceed as planned. In the event of there being only one remaining candidate for each vacancy and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer shall declare and publicise as soon as practicable and no later than 48 hours after confirmation of the uncontested election status the name of the valid candidate(s) elected.
24. After the declaration of the elected candidate(s), arrangements to hold a new election shall be undertaken only in the event of that declared elected candidate being unable for whatever reason to continue to hold the position of Senate Assessor.
25. The Deputy Returning Officer shall distribute to each member of the electorate via email a link to the voting system along with a link to the relevant web page to view the candidates' biographies for information. The emails shall be required to comply with the University's computing regulations and the Deputy Returning Officer shall reserve the right to require amendments to be made to the content particularly if the text contains inappropriate comments about other candidates.

### *Voting arrangements*

26. Since both a professorial and a non-professorial member of the ~~elected~~ academic staff must be elected, election arrangements will vary according to the nominations received. If multiple nominations are received both for professorial and non-professorial candidates, the election will be conducted by means of the Single Transferrable Vote, Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (STV WIGM). The candidate in each category with the greatest share of the vote will automatically be elected. If a single nomination for one category and multiple nominations for the other category is received, the candidate in the category with the single nomination will be automatically elected, and the election of the candidate in the other category will be conducted by means of the Alternative Vote (AV).
27. Voting shall be conducted by staff on-line ~~using a secure University portal~~ [drafting note:](#)

we expect to use external partner Civica for voting, as is now done for the other Senate elections]. All those on the electoral roll for the Senate Assessor Election shall be permitted access and shall be able to vote on the on-line voting system from 9.00 am on 23 March 2022-26 November 2025 until 12.00 noon on 30 March 2022-10 December 2025.

#### *Counting*

28. All votes cast on-line shall be counted together using an electronic counting system.
29. In the event of a tie, the successful candidate or candidates will be determined by the drawing of lots. The Returning Officer will draw lots from the pool of candidates whose votes are tied until the available vacancies are filled.

#### *Declaration*

30. The Deputy Returning Officer shall ensure that a notice of the result of the election is communicated to Senate members via email and posted to the Senate Members' Portal and Senate webpages as soon as is practicable after the result has been declared.
31. ~~The successful candidate shall be required to confirm in writing that they are not disqualified under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from acting as a Trustee of a charity.~~ [drafting note: propose including at the nomination stage instead, see paragraph 8]

## **University of Edinburgh**

### **Regulations for the Conduct of the election of two Assessors from the Academic Staff Members of Senate to the University Court, governed by Ordinance of the University Court No. 211 (Composition of the University Court)**

1. The Senate Assessor Election/Elections shall be held from 9.00 am on 26 November 2025 until 12 noon on 10 December 2025.

#### *Role of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers*

2. Lisa Dawson, Academic Registrar, shall be the Returning Officer. The Senate Clerk has been designated Deputy Returning Officer and shall be responsible for the management of the election and the declaration of the result of the election.
3. The Deputy Returning Officer shall publicise the election/elections and voting procedure to Senate members and make arrangements as appropriate to secure the good conduct of the election.
4. The Deputy Returning Officer shall provide nomination forms calling for nominations and draw attention to the correct form of procedure for making nominations. The call for nominations shall be published by the Deputy Returning Officer on the Senate Members' Portal and notified to Senate members by email.

#### *Electoral Roll*

5. The compilation of the electoral roll for the Senate Assessor Elections shall be 1 October 2025.
6. The electoral roll will consist of all staff members of Senate, as of 1 October 2025. Members of Senate who are elected via the Students' Association elections are not included on the electoral roll regardless of whether they also hold a staff appointment. The electoral roll will be available on the Senate Members' Portal.

#### *Nominations and Validation of Candidates*

7. The call for nominations shall commence on 8 October 2025. No nominations shall be accepted before this date and time.
8. The Deputy Returning Officer shall provide nomination forms on the Senate Members' Portal and call for nominations by email. The Deputy Returning Officer will draw attention to the correct form of procedure for making nominations as well as advising that failure to comply with the procedure shall invalidate a nomination and that nominees are required to confirm that they are not disqualified under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from acting as a Trustee of a charity.
9. All nominations must be submitted on the approved form and lodged with the Deputy Returning Officer by 12 noon on Wednesday 5 November 2025. No nominations shall be accepted after this date and time.
10. Only those members of the electorate, as defined in paragraph 6, who are academic staff and are not Vice-Principals or the Provost, shall be eligible for nominations and nominations may be made only by members of the electorate.

11. Each nomination must be subscribed by no fewer than two members of the electorate. Members of the electorate must only make one nomination each. Reciprocal nominations are not permitted.
12. Nominations must be submitted by electronic means as outlined in paragraph 8 and received by the Deputy Returning Officer.
13. If the Deputy Returning Officer believes there is any cause for concern regarding the validity of a nomination, this matter shall be drawn to the attention of the nominee/candidate, who shall be given the opportunity to address the cause for concern, if practicable, prior to the meeting of the Scrutinising Committee.
14. The Deputy Returning Officer shall acknowledge receipt of the nomination to each nominee indicating the date and time the nomination was received.
15. Senate Assessors are eligible to stand for no more than two consecutive terms of office, unless one of those terms is to fill a casual vacancy as described in the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 for a period of less than one year, in which case a Senate Assessor is eligible to stand for three consecutive terms of office.
16. The following Committee, to be known as the Scrutinising Committee, shall be appointed by the Senate to scrutinise nominations and confirm the validation of the nominations and hear any appeal against disqualification by the Returning Officer:  
Alastair Dunlop KC, Chancellor's Assessor – Representative of the University Court  
Professor Tina Harrison – Representative of Senatus Academicus  
Dr Lewis Allan, Governance & Court Services Office – Representative of the University Secretary  
The decision of the Scrutinising Committee is final.
17. As soon as practicable, each nominee shall be notified of the outcome of the Scrutinising Committee's deliberations and the list of candidates for the election shall then be confirmed and published.
18. In the event of there being only one valid candidate for each vacancy and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer shall declare and publicise as soon as practicable and no later than 48 hours after the meeting of the Scrutinising Committee the name of the valid candidate elected for each vacancy.

#### *Conduct of election process*

19. Each candidate shall receive from the Deputy Returning Officer a copy of these Regulations. In order to assist in the interpretation of these Regulations a meeting with candidates may also be held if required.
20. Canvassing in the form of poster campaigns is not allowed. Candidates should not seek to influence their colleagues by behaviour that may be perceived to be bullying, harassment or intimidation. If these prohibitions are breached, it may lead to disqualification.
21. If the Deputy Returning Officer has reason to believe that a breach of these Regulations may have occurred the Deputy Returning Officer shall request a written explanation or clarification from the candidate. If the Deputy Returning Officer concludes that a material breach has occurred the Deputy Returning Officer shall inform the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer has the authority to disqualify a candidate subject to the right of appeal

by the candidate to the Scrutinising Committee within 48 hours of receiving written notification of the disqualification. The decision of the Scrutinising Committee shall be final.

22. The validity of the election shall not be affected in the event that a candidate is unavailable to continue for any reason prior to the results of the election being announced and where there are more than two candidates remaining the election shall proceed as planned. In the event of there being only one remaining candidate for each vacancy and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer shall declare and publicise as soon as practicable and no later than 48 hours after confirmation of the uncontested election status the name of the valid candidate(s) elected.
23. After the declaration of the elected candidate(s), arrangements to hold a new election shall be undertaken only in the event of that declared elected candidate being unable for whatever reason to continue to hold the position of Senate Assessor.
24. The Deputy Returning Officer shall distribute to each member of the electorate via email a link to the voting system along with a link to the relevant web page to view the candidates' biographies for information. The emails shall be required to comply with the University's computing regulations and the Deputy Returning Officer shall reserve the right to require amendments to be made to the content particularly if the text contains inappropriate comments about other candidates.

#### *Voting arrangements*

25. Since both a professorial and a non-professorial member of the academic staff must be elected, election arrangements will vary according to the nominations received. If multiple nominations are received both for professorial and non-professorial candidates, the election will be conducted by means of the Single Transferrable Vote, Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (STV WIGM). The candidate in each category with the greatest share of the vote will automatically be elected. If a single nomination for one category and multiple nominations for the other category is received, the candidate in the category with the single nomination will be automatically elected, and the election of the candidate in the other category will be conducted by means of the Alternative Vote (AV).
26. Voting shall be conducted by staff on-line. All those on the electoral roll for the Senate Assessor Election shall be permitted access and shall be able to vote on the on-line voting system from 9.00 am on 26 November 2025 until 12.00 noon on 10 December 2025.

#### *Counting*

27. All votes cast on-line shall be counted together using an electronic counting system.
28. In the event of a tie, the successful candidate or candidates will be determined by the drawing of lots. The Returning Officer will draw lots from the pool of candidates whose votes are tied until the available vacancies are filled.

#### *Declaration*

29. The Deputy Returning Officer shall ensure that a notice of the result of the election is communicated to Senate members via email and posted to the Senate Members' Portal and Senate webpages as soon as is practicable after the result has been declared.

# Election of Senate Assessors on the University Court

## Nomination form for ordinary term vacancies

This form is valid only in respect of the election to be held by Senate from ~~23 March 2022 to 30 March 2022~~ 26 November 2025 to 10 December 2025 for two vacancies for Senate Assessors on the University Court (term runs ~~1 August 2022 to 31 July 2026 for the non-professorial member from the day election results are announced to 31 July 2026 and then from 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2030 and term runs 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2030 for the professorial member~~). Only ~~elected~~-academic staff members of the Senate who are not Vice-Principals or the Provost are eligible to be nominated.

Further information, including the Senate Assessor Election Regulations, the Electoral Roll and relevant Privacy Notice, is available on the Senate Members' Portal ~~website: Senate Assessor Election~~

## Deadline

Nominations must be received by the Deputy Returning Officer by **12 noon on Wednesday 5 November 2025** ~~9 March 2022~~.

## Process

- Please add the full name and University email address of each person in the spaces below. The form must then be sent by email (as a Word document) to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk)
- **The email MUST be sent from the University email address of the nominee, and MUST be copied to the University email addresses of the proposer and seconder.** Please note that the Election Regulations state:  
“~~12~~1. Each nomination must be subscribed by no fewer than two members of the electorate. Members of the electorate must only make one nomination each. Reciprocal nominations are not permitted.”
- Nominations that do not comply with the requirements above will not be considered valid.
- When a valid nomination is received, confirmation will be sent by email to the proposer, seconder and nominee.

### 1. Declaration of the proposer and seconder

We, named below, declare that we are members of the Senate, and that we nominate the person named in section 2 as a candidate for election as a Senate Assessor on the University Court.

Full name and University email address of proposer

Click or tap here to enter text.

Full name and University email address of seconder

Click or tap here to enter text.

## 2. Declaration of the nominee

I declare that I am a member of the Senate and that I consent to the above nomination. I declare that I am not disqualified under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from acting as a Trustee of a charity [drafting note: this is a legal requirement and it is proposed to include this at the nomination stage rather than post-election, as previously].

Full name and University email address of candidate

Click or tap here to enter text.

## 3. Candidate information and statement

To be completed by the nominee

Preferred title

Click or tap here to enter text.

Full name

Click or tap here to enter text.

School / Unit

Click or tap here to enter text.

College / Unit

Click or tap here to enter text.

Professorial or non-professorial member of Senate

Click or tap here to enter text.

### **Candidate statement (maximum 500 words)**

Please enter a statement supporting your candidacy for the role of Senate Assessor to Court. This statement, along with your name and School / Unit, will be made available to Senate members in advance of the election date via the Senate [websiteMembers' Portal](#).

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Election of Senate Assessors on the University Court

## Nomination form for ordinary term vacancies

This form is valid only in respect of the election to be held by Senate from 26 November 2025 to 10 December 2025 for two vacancies for Senate Assessors on the University Court (term runs for the non-professorial member from the day election results are announced to 31 July 2026 and then from 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2030 and term runs 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2030 for the professorial member). Only academic staff members of the Senate who are not Vice-Principals or the Provost are eligible to be nominated.

Further information, including the Senate Assessor Election Regulations, the Electoral Roll and relevant Privacy Notice, is available on the Senate Members' Portal.

## Deadline

Nominations must be received by the Deputy Returning Officer by **12 noon on Wednesday 5 November 2025**.

## Process

- Please add the full name and University email address of each person in the spaces below. The form must then be sent by email (as a Word document) to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk)
- **The email MUST be sent from the University email address of the nominee, and MUST be copied to the University email addresses of the proposer and seconder.** Please note that the Election Regulations state:  
"11. Each nomination must be subscribed by no fewer than two members of the electorate. Members of the electorate must only make one nomination each. Reciprocal nominations are not permitted."
- Nominations that do not comply with the requirements above will not be considered valid.
- When a valid nomination is received, confirmation will be sent by email to the proposer, seconder and nominee.

### 1. Declaration of the proposer and seconder

We, named below, declare that we are members of the Senate, and that we nominate the person named in section 2 as a candidate for election as a Senate Assessor on the University Court.

Full name and University email address of proposer

Click or tap here to enter text.

Full name and University email address of seconder

Click or tap here to enter text.



## 2. Declaration of the nominee

I declare that I am a member of the Senate and that I consent to the above nomination. I declare that I am not disqualified under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from acting as a Trustee of a charity.

Full name and University email address of candidate

Click or tap here to enter text.

## 3. Candidate information and statement

To be completed by the nominee

Preferred title

Click or tap here to enter text.

Full name

Click or tap here to enter text.

School / Unit

Click or tap here to enter text.

College / Unit

Click or tap here to enter text.

Professorial or non-professorial member of Senate

Click or tap here to enter text.

### **Candidate statement (maximum 500 words)**

Please enter a statement supporting your candidacy for the role of Senate Assessor to Court. This statement, along with your name and School / Unit, will be made available to Senate members in advance of the election date via the Senate Members' Portal.

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Senate****1 October 2025****Senate Election Regulations****Description of paper**

1. The paper requests approval for changes proposed to the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to *recommend that Court approve* the following motions to alter text within the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations as detailed below:
  - A. Paragraph 23: removal of text (where specified).
  - B. Paragraph 24: alteration of specified text.
3. Senate is invited to *recommend that Court approve* the motion to insert a new paragraph clarifying what happens when a non-Professorial member of Senate has been awarded the title of personal or established chair. The options for insertion are outlined in paragraph 21.
4. Senate is invited to *note* the change to the Senate Ex Officio membership to reflect changes to organisational structure within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and the Senior Leadership Team. The changes are as detailed in table 1, and in Appendix 1.

**Background and context**

5. Under University Ordinance 212 (Composition of the Senatus Academicus) academic staff elect from their own number 200 members of the Senatus Academicus.
6. The Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations govern the election of academic staff to Senate. A copy with track changes is included as appendix one.
7. An externally facilitated review of Senate and its committees by AdvanceHE took place in 2022/23, and it was suggested that a proposal for four Senate meetings a year be discussed. At its meeting of 18 June 2024, Senate approved a proposal to adopt a meeting format of four, three hour long, meetings. This increased the number of meetings held within an academic year from three to four, and was implemented in 2024/25.
8. An additional Senate meeting was added in December 2024, with the other meeting dates set on a like-for-like basis with the 2023/24 academic year. A consequence of this approach was that there was significantly less time than usual to prepare for the February 2025 Senate meeting. Arrangements were also affected by the proximity of the University's closure period and staff annual leave.

9. Separately, at its meeting of 11 December 2024, Senate approved the formation of the Senate Business Committee. The remit of the Senate Business Committee includes scrutiny of Senate papers; and Senate papers are now required at least five weeks prior to a Senate meeting. This would mean papers for a meeting in early February would be due soon after the December Senate meeting.

## Discussion

### Proposed changes to existing text (paragraph 23)

10. To address concerns relating to meeting timings, in 2025-26 Senate meeting dates have been set more evenly throughout the academic year. See table 1 below for a comparison with prior years. To facilitate this change, an amendment is required to paragraph 23 of the Senate Election Regulations.

*Table 1 Senate meeting schedule*

<b>Meeting</b> (Work days since last meeting)	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>11-10-2023</b> (101 days)	-	<b>07-02-2024</b> (78 days)	<b>22-05-2024</b> (76 days)
<b>2024-25</b>	<b>09-10-2024</b> (101 days)	<b>11-12-2024</b> (46 days)	<b>05-02-2025</b> (33 days)	<b>20-05-2025</b> (75 days)
<b>2025-26</b>	<b>01-10-2025</b> (97 days)	<b>10-12-2025</b> (51 days)	<b>04-03-2026</b> (53 days)	<b>19-05-2026</b> (55 days)

11. Paragraph 23, extract below, specifies that Senate will agree the deadline for the submission of nomination forms following 31 January each year.

*“The call for nominations for each election will be made after 31 January each year, normally at the next Senate meeting. No nominations will be accepted before this date. At this meeting, Senate will agree a deadline for the submission of nomination forms.”*

12. It is proposed that the text *“At this meeting, Senate will agree a deadline for the submission of nomination forms”* be removed. Removal of this text would enable Senate to approve arrangements at its December meeting, and would allow a more evenly distributed meeting cycle. See table 1 above.

13. In addition, it is proposed that the text “normally at the next Senate meeting” be removed as this does not reflect contemporary practice. Senate has approved different timescales for the past three years, as shown in table 2 below.

*Table 2 Senate election schedule*

	2023	2024	2025
<b>Nominations open</b>	01-03-2023	28-02-2024	26-02-2025
<b>Nominations close</b>	29-03-2023	27-03-2024	26-03-2025
<b>Voting opens</b>	19-04-2023	17-04-2024	16-04-2025
<b>Voting closes</b>	26-04-2023	01-05-2024	30-04-2025

Proposed changes to existing text (paragraph 24)

14. Paragraph 24, extract below, refers to elections occurring on a single date. Recent practice has been for elections to take place online and over an extended period, most recently two weeks. See table 2 above.

*“The elections will be conducted on **a date** which will be determined by the Senate in each year and all elections to Senate will usually take place on the **same date in a given year**. The elections must take place in time to communicate the results to Senate before its final meeting of the academic session, and the results must be communicated to Senate no later than 30 June each year.”*

15. It is proposed that the highlighted text be replaced with “*Each year, elections will be conducted to a timescale that has been approved by Senate*”.
16. Senate approval of dates for the nomination and election periods, and approval of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers, will be requested at the December meeting of Senate.

Proposed addition of a new paragraph

17. During the 2024-25 academic year, there were five Senate members who held non-Professorial membership positions and who had been promoted to Professor during their term of office. During the year there was no agreed process for revising a non-Professorial member’s position if they were promoted to Professor during their term on Senate. This was highlighted by one such member at the February 2025 meeting of Senate, and they queried whether provision could be made within the Senate Election Regulations for staff who are promoted during their term of office. Consideration of this issue is detailed below, and three options are presented for Senate to select from.
18. For context, the election of academic staff members to Senate occurs once per year. As such, a vacancy arising mid-year in either the ‘Professorial’ or ‘non-Professorial’ membership categories would not be filled until the next scheduled election. Consequently,

a Senate member who has been promoted to Professor would not be preventing the election of a 'non-Professorial' Senate member during that year. However, they may prevent the election of a 'non-Professorial' member should they continue in Senate membership as a 'non-Professorial' member into a second or third year of their term of office.

19. Paragraph 16 of the election regulations states that *"Members of the academic staff who hold a personal or established chair will not be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category."*
20. A benchmarking exercise conducted against other Scottish universities did not reveal any relevant cases to draw example from. Various different Senate compositions are used across the Scottish higher education sector.
21. Three options are presented below for Senate consideration.

**Option 1: Continue in office for the remainder of the current year, be required to demit office, and be invited to stand for election as a 'professorial' member.**

**Pros:** Of the options presented, this method provides the greatest degree of democratic legitimacy. Further information is provided alongside option 2.

**Cons:** This option requires additional effort by the member should they wish to continue in membership of Senate.

If this option is approved, the following paragraph would be inserted into the Election Regulations between paragraphs 16 and 17:

*"Where a non-Professorial member of Senate has been awarded the title of personal or established chair, they will be required to demit office at the end of the current academic year (and will cease to be a non-Professorial member by 31 July). The member will be invited to stand for election to the relevant 'Professorial' membership category in the next election process".*

**Option 2: automatically transfer to the 'Professorial' membership category, where a vacancy existed.**

Automatic transfer would occur during the year of promotion, where a vacancy existed.

If no vacancy existed that year, then the member would fill a vacancy arising from a 'Professorial' Senate member who was demitting office at the end of that academic year. Consequently, the number of vacancies to be filled at election would reduce by one.

Were there to be no vacancies arising at the end of the academic year, then the member would continue as a 'non-professorial' Senate member until either the end of their current term of office or when a vacancy arose.

In each case, the member's term of office would not exceed three-years from the point at which they were elected as a 'non-professorial' Senate member.

**Pros:** This option does not require additional effort by the member should they wish to continue in membership of Senate.

**Cons:** This option could lead to questions of the members legitimacy on Senate, potentially for the following reasons:

- The member would take on an 'elected' position without standing as a candidate for that membership category.
- Transferring the term of office received from election as a 'non-Professorial' member may prevent the election of another 'Professorial' member who had greater support from the relevant college.
- Remaining as a 'non-professorial' member would similarly prevent the election of a 'non-professorial' member.

If this option is approved, the following paragraph would be inserted into the Election Regulations between paragraphs 16 and 17:

*"Where a non-Professorial member of Senate has been awarded the title of personal or established chair, they will automatically transition into the relevant Professorial membership category. This would be dependent on a vacancy existing during the year, or a vacancy arising in a subsequent academic year. Should no vacancy arise, then the member would continue as a 'non-professorial' until the end of their current term."*

**Option 3: no change to existing practice.** Continue as a ‘non-professorial’ member until the end of their current term of office.

**Pros:** This option does not require additional effort by the member should they wish to continue in membership of Senate.

**Cons:** This option could lead to questions of the members legitimacy on Senate. Further information is provided alongside option 2.

If this option is approved, the following paragraph would be inserted into the Election Regulations between paragraphs 16 and 17:

*“Where a non-Professorial member of Senate has been awarded the title of personal or established chair, they will continue as a ‘non-professorial’ member until the end of their term of office.”*

#### Changes to Table 1 / Appendix 1 of the Senate Election Regulations

22. Paragraph four of the Election regulations states that *“Staff ex officio roles are detailed in Appendix 1. This list may be amended by the University Secretary from time to time, to reflect changes in organisational structures and job titles. Any changes will be notified to Senate at the next meeting of Senate.”*
23. The Associate Principal is to be added to the list of ex officio members, this has necessitated the following change within the Election Regulations:
  - Appendix 1: the ‘membership breakdown’ column has been amended as follows:  
Addition of *“Associate Principal”*
24. The organisation structure for the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine changed on 1 August 2025, with the move from three deaneries to six schools. Consequently, two additional ex officio positions for heads of school were created.
25. The revised organisation structure has necessitated the following changes within the Election Regulations:
  - **Table 1:** The ‘membership’ associated with ‘Heads of Schools’ increased from 21 to 23.
  - **Appendix 1:** the ‘membership breakdown’ column has been amended as follows.  
*“Heads of Schools (Required under Ordinance 212) and Heads (Deans) of the Deaneries of the Edinburgh Medical School.”*

#### **Resource implications**

26. Changes to permit more evenly distributed Senate meetings should contribute to improved allocation of resources in the preparation of Senate documentation and arrangements. It is possible that requiring non-professorial members, who are promoted to professor during their term, to demit office and stand for election may necessitate the need for an election to be held. Elections incur financial and staff costs, with further information being provided as part of papers detailing annual election arrangements. The addition of three ex officio

members has resource implications associated with time spent by the new members engaging with Senate business.

### **Risk management**

27. Changes to permit more evenly distributed Senate meetings should contribute to more robust documentation being presented to Senate for consideration. The specification of arrangements for non-professorial members who are promoted during a term of office will help to clarify University practice.

### **Equality & diversity**

28. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted and is available on the [Equality and Diversity webpages](#). This assessment assumes a regular rotation/refreshment of members and the filling of most elected vacancies.

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

29. The Vice Principal and University Secretary has contributed to this paper.
30. Changes approved by Senate and Court, will take effect from the date approval was granted. Revised Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations will inform arrangements for the 2026 election process.
31. The Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations are published on the Senate website, and are shared with candidates standing for election.

### **Author**

Registry Services  
August 2025

### **Presenter**

Olivia Hayes  
Senate Clerk

### **Freedom of Information Open**





## Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations

### Composition of the Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 1-3 and 5)

1. The Principal of the University will preside at any meeting of the Senate.<sup>1</sup>
2. The Senate model will comprise the following categories with numbers apportioned as follows<sup>2</sup>:

Table 1

Position	Membership
Principal	1
Heads of Schools	<a href="#">24</a> <a href="#">23</a>
Heads of Colleges	3
Other <i>ex officio</i> appointments	Approximately 50
<b>Total <i>ex officio</i></b>	<b>Approximately 70 (maximum 80)</b>
Elected academic staff (Professorial)	100
Elected academic staff (Non-professorial)	100
Elected students	30
<b>Total elected</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Total Senate membership</b>	<b>Approximately 300</b>

3. The elected membership of Senate will be broken down as follows:

Table 2

Position	Membership	Membership Breakdown
Elected academic staff (Professorial)	100 <sup>3</sup>	34 Professors from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
		33 Professors from the College of Science and Engineering
		33 Professors from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Elected academic staff (Non-professorial)	100 <sup>4</sup>	34 academic staff members from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, with 3 positions prioritised for early career academic staff.
		33 academic staff members from the College of Science and Engineering, with 3 positions prioritised for early career academic staff.

<sup>1</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 2, 3, and 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3a.

<sup>4</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3a.

		33 academic staff members from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, with 3 positions prioritised for early career academic staff.
Elected students	30 <sup>5</sup>	See Appendix 2

4. Staff *ex officio* roles are detailed in Appendix 1. This list may be amended by the University Secretary from time to time, to reflect changes in organisational structures and job titles. Any changes will be notified to Senate at the next meeting of Senate.
5. The Students' Association will determine the office holders whose roles will entitle them to take up Senate membership and will be responsible for appointing these students to Senate.
6. The Students' Association must inform the Senate Support team if it is necessary to make any alteration to the list of office holders in Appendix 2 whose roles entitle them to Senate membership. Any changes will be notified to Senate at the next meeting of Senate.
7. Should a relevant Students' Association position become vacant for a period of time or a relevant student office holder be otherwise unavailable, the Students' Association will identify another appropriate elected student office holder to fill the vacant Senate position.
8. Election of Senate Assessors and Professional Services Staff to the University Court operates under separate regulations relating to election to University Court. Senate Assessors on the University Court will comprise two Senate Assessors. The Professional Services Staff Member elected to the University Court will also serve on Senate. Assessors and Professional Services Staff are elected for a four-year term on Court; they hold Senate membership as *ex officio* members for the duration of their term as Court members if their term as a Senate member would otherwise have concluded.

## Term of Office (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 4 and 6)

### Elected academic staff

9. Elected academic staff will stand for a term of office which will not exceed three years from the first day of August of the year of election.<sup>6</sup> Elected academic staff will demit office on 31 July of their final year in office.
10. There is no cap on the number of terms of office for which academic staff members may stand; academic staff members will be eligible for re-election for the same term of office provided that they demit office on ceasing to hold a contract of employment with the University.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4a.

11. Elected academic staff members may resign membership at any time.<sup>8</sup> Their membership will remain vacant until the next scheduled Senate election.

#### Elected students

12. The term of office for undergraduate student members will be one year, starting on the first day of August in the year of election. The terms of office for postgraduate student members will be one year, starting on the first day of November in the year of election. Students will be eligible to stand for multiple terms of office consecutively. There is no cap on the number of terms of office for student members.
13. A student member will demit office on ceasing to be a student at the University. Student members may resign membership at any time.<sup>9</sup>

### The Electoral Roll (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 3 and 5)

#### Elected academic staff

14. Academic staff members who are eligible to stand for membership of Senate and elect members from their own number will hold appointments from the University Court, as attested by a contract of employment issued by the University.<sup>10</sup> In practice, 'Academic staff' will apply to all members of staff who are categorised as 'academic' in the University's Human Resources records.
15. All members of staff who are categorised as 'academic', and who also hold a personal or established chair, will be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (professorial)' category. All members of staff who are categorised as 'academic,' and who do not hold a personal or established chair, will be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category. Members of staff who are categorised as early career academic staff, including both early career research and teaching staff who hold a position up to and including Grade 08 on the University Grade Structure, will be eligible for election to the reserved early career academic staff positions contained within the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category.
16. Members of the academic staff who hold a personal or established chair will not be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category. Members of the academic staff who do not hold a personal or established chair will not be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (professorial)' category. Members of staff who are categorised as early career academic staff, including both early career research and teaching staff who hold a position up to and including Grade 08 on the University Grade Structure, will be eligible for election to the reserved early career academic staff positions contained within the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category.

#### 17. Insertion of a new paragraph relating to non-professorial members who are promoted to professor during a term.

- ~~17.18.~~ Academic staff members who hold any of the posts or offices which qualify them for *ex officio* membership will not be eligible to stand for membership of Senate in either of the elected academic staff categories,<sup>11</sup> but are entitled to vote in the election for the academic staff category relevant to their role.

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<sup>8</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4b.

<sup>9</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 6a, 6b.

<sup>10</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3

<sup>11</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3b

18-19. The electoral roll will be compiled from Human Resources' records on 31 January preceding the call for nominations meaning that nominees for the elected academic staff places will need to have been in their posts from this date in order to be eligible for nomination. Academic staff members who are allocated to the University Secretary's Group or Information Services Group will be included in the electoral roll for College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

19-20. Academic staff in both elected categories will be eligible to stand for the places which have been allocated to the College of which they are a member. If an academic staff member is a member of multiple Colleges, they will stand in the College where they work a greater proportion of their time (based on full-time equivalent). If an academic staff member works for equal amounts of time across multiple Colleges, they will be permitted to select the College in which they intend to stand, on condition that they only stand for election in one College, and that they declare in writing to the Senate Support Team in which College they intend to stand.

#### Elected students

20-21. The eligibility for students to stand for offices which can entitle them to Senate membership will be determined according to the eligibility criteria used by the Students' Association to appoint students to official roles. All students who are registered on credit-bearing courses, or who hold sabbatical offices, will be eligible for student membership.

#### Election of Academic Staff Members to Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraph 7)

21-22. Elections for academic staff members will be held annually and will be run by the Senate Support team. There will be two elections for each College each year, one for eligible professorial staff vacancies and one for eligible non-professorial academic staff vacancies. Both elections will usually be held on the same day.

22-23. The Senate Support team will inform Colleges of the number of vacancies in each elected academic staff category and will report on an annual basis the members of each College in each category who will continue in office. Senate Assessors will be included in the count of College elected members if they are continuing a term of office as a College elected member, otherwise they are classed as an *ex officio* member and are not included in the count.

#### Election Dates

23-24. The call for nominations for each election will be made after 31 January each year, ~~normally at the next Senate meeting.~~ No nominations will be accepted before this date. ~~At this meeting, Senate will agree a deadline for the submission of nomination forms.~~

24-25. ~~The elections will be conducted on a date which will be determined by the Senate in each year and all elections to Senate will usually take place on the same date in a given year. Each year, elections will be conducted to a timescale that has been approved by Senate.~~ –The elections must take place in time to communicate the results to Senate before its final meeting of the academic session, and the results must be communicated to Senate no later than 30 June each year.

## Role of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers

~~25-26.~~ On an annual basis, Senate will appoint a Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer, who will be responsible for the management of the elections and the declaration of the results of the elections.

~~26-27.~~ The Deputy Returning Officer will provide nomination forms calling for nominations and will draw attention to the correct procedure for making nominations. The call for nominations will be published by the Deputy Returning Officer and advertised via agreed channels.

## Nomination and Validation of Candidates

~~27-28.~~ Only members of the electorate in each category, as defined in paragraph 15, will be eligible to stand for election in that category. Eligible individuals will be entitled to nominate themselves as a candidate using the process specified in the call for nominations.

~~28-29.~~ All nominations must be received by the deadline agreed by Senate. No nominations will be accepted after this date and time.

~~29-30.~~ If the Deputy Returning Officer receives a nomination from an individual who is not eligible to stand for election under the terms defined in these regulations, the Deputy Returning Officer will contact the individual to inform them that their nomination will not be accepted. Where the individual whose nomination has not been accepted wishes to challenge the rejection of their nomination, they may do so by contacting the Returning Officer. The decision of the Returning Officer is final.

~~30-31.~~ In the event of there being only one valid candidate for each vacancy and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer will declare and publicise as soon as practicable the name of the valid candidate elected for each vacancy.

## Conduct of election process

~~31-32.~~ Each candidate will receive from the Deputy Returning Officer a copy of these Regulations.

~~32-33.~~ If the Deputy Returning Officer has reason to believe that a candidate may have breached these Regulations, the Deputy Returning Officer will request a written explanation or clarification from the candidate. If the Deputy Returning Officer concludes that a material breach has occurred, the Deputy Returning Officer will inform the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer has the authority to disqualify a candidate, subject to the right of appeal by the candidate to the University Secretary (or specified delegated authority) within two working days of receiving written notification of the disqualification. The decision of the University Secretary (or delegated authority) will be final.

~~33-34.~~ The validity of the elections will not be affected in the event that a candidate is unavailable to continue for any reason prior to the results of the election being announced and, where there is a greater number of candidates remaining than vacancies in any category, the election will proceed as planned. In the event of there being only one remaining candidate for each vacancy in any category and therefore an uncontested election in that category, the Deputy Returning Officer will declare and publicise as soon as practicable, and no later than two working days after confirmation of the uncontested election status, the names of the valid candidates elected.

~~34-35.~~ The Deputy Returning Officer will distribute to each member of the electorate via email a link to the voting system along with a link to the relevant web page to view information about the candidates.

#### Voting arrangements

~~35-36.~~ The elections will be conducted by means of the Single Transferrable Vote, Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (STV WIGM). The candidates with the greatest share of the vote will automatically be elected.

~~36-37.~~ Voting will be conducted by staff online. All those on the electoral roll will be permitted access and will be able to vote on the online voting system on the election date(s).

~~37-38.~~ Members of staff who are formally employed in more than one College will be entitled to vote in all Colleges in which they are employed.

#### Counting

~~38-39.~~ All votes cast online will be counted together using an electronic counting system.

~~39-40.~~ In the event of a tie, the successful candidate or candidates will be determined by the drawing of lots. The Returning Officer will draw lots from the pool of candidates whose votes are tied until the available vacancies are filled.

#### Declaration

~~40-41.~~ The Deputy Returning Officer will ensure that the result of the election is posted to the Senate webpages as soon as is practicable after the result or results have been declared. The result of the election will be communicated to Senate at the first meeting following the elections.

### Election of Student Members to Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraph 8)

~~41-42.~~ Elections for student members will be held annually on dates to be determined by the Students' Association. Elections for student members will be conducted by the Students' Association in accordance with election regulations determined by the Students' Association, and with section 16 of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

## 2 December 2019

#### Document control

Date of approval / amendment	Details
2/10/19	Approved by Senate
2/12/19	Approved by University Court
5/2/20	Amended under section 4 by the University Secretary, Senate informed 5/2/20
27/1/21	Amended under section 6 by the Edinburgh University Students' Association, Senate informed 27/1/21
9/2/22	Amended under sections 4 and 6, Senate informed 9/2/22
8/2/23	Amended Appendix 1, Senate informed 8/2/23
7/2/24	Amended Table 2, Section 8, 15, 16, 22, 40 and Appendix 1
<a href="#">01/10/25</a>	<a href="#">Addition of section 17. Amended section 24, 25 and Appendix 1.</a>

## Appendix 1

Senate *Ex Officio* membership  
(See regulations 2 and 4)

Position	Membership	Membership Breakdown
Principal	1	<b>(Required under Ordinance 212)</b>
<i>Ex officio</i> appointments	Approximately 70, with a  <i>officio</i> members in total.	Heads of Schools <b>(Required under Ordinance 212)</b> <del>and Heads (Deans) of the Deaneries of the Edinburgh Medical School.</del>
		Heads of College <b>(Required under Ordinance 212)</b>
		Provost
		Vice-Principals
		<a href="#">Associate Principal</a>
		Assistant Principals
		Director of Library and University Collections
		Director of the Institute for Academic Development
		University Leads on Climate Responsibility and Sustainability; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
		Up to 6 College-level office holders per College nominated by that College. 5 office holders must hold academic posts (for example, Deans and Associate Deans). 1 office-holder will be a professional services staff member elected to that role by their peers.
		Office-holders who are specifically entitled to Senate membership under the terms of collaborative agreements.
		2 Senate Assessors on the University Court if not serving a term as an elected member.
		1 Academic Staff member on the University Court if not already a Senate member.
		1 Professional Services member on the University Court

## Appendix 2

Student membership  
(See regulations 5 and 6)

Position	Membership	Membership breakdown
Elected students	30	5 Sabbatical Officers
		8 Section Representatives
		5 Liberation Officers
		6 Undergraduate School Representatives
		6 Postgraduate School Representatives





## Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations

### Composition of the Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 1-3 and 5)

1. The Principal of the University will preside at any meeting of the Senate.<sup>1</sup>
2. The Senate model will comprise the following categories with numbers apportioned as follows<sup>2</sup>:

Table 1

Position	Membership
Principal	1
Heads of Schools	23
Heads of Colleges	3
Other <i>ex officio</i> appointments	Approximately 50
<b>Total <i>ex officio</i></b>	<b>Approximately 70 (maximum 80)</b>
Elected academic staff (Professorial)	100
Elected academic staff (Non-professorial)	100
Elected students	30
<b>Total elected</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Total Senate membership</b>	<b>Approximately 300</b>

3. The elected membership of Senate will be broken down as follows:

Table 2

Position	Membership	Membership Breakdown
Elected academic staff (Professorial)	100 <sup>3</sup>	34 Professors from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
		33 Professors from the College of Science and Engineering
		33 Professors from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Elected academic staff (Non-professorial)	100 <sup>4</sup>	34 academic staff members from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, with 3 positions prioritised for early career academic staff.
		33 academic staff members from the College of Science and Engineering, with 3 positions prioritised for early career academic staff.

<sup>1</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 2, 3, and 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3a.

<sup>4</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3a.



		33 academic staff members from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, with 3 positions prioritised for early career academic staff.
Elected students	30 <sup>5</sup>	See Appendix 2

4. Staff *ex officio* roles are detailed in Appendix 1. This list may be amended by the University Secretary from time to time, to reflect changes in organisational structures and job titles. Any changes will be notified to Senate at the next meeting of Senate.
5. The Students' Association will determine the office holders whose roles will entitle them to take up Senate membership and will be responsible for appointing these students to Senate.
6. The Students' Association must inform the Senate Support team if it is necessary to make any alteration to the list of office holders in Appendix 2 whose roles entitle them to Senate membership. Any changes will be notified to Senate at the next meeting of Senate.
7. Should a relevant Students' Association position become vacant for a period of time or a relevant student office holder be otherwise unavailable, the Students' Association will identify another appropriate elected student office holder to fill the vacant Senate position.
8. Election of Senate Assessors and Professional Services Staff to the University Court operates under separate regulations relating to election to University Court. Senate Assessors on the University Court will comprise two Senate Assessors. The Professional Services Staff Member elected to the University Court will also serve on Senate. Assessors and Professional Services Staff are elected for a four-year term on Court; they hold Senate membership as *ex officio* members for the duration of their term as Court members if their term as a Senate member would otherwise have concluded.

## Term of Office (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 4 and 6)

### Elected academic staff

9. Elected academic staff will stand for a term of office which will not exceed three years from the first day of August of the year of election.<sup>6</sup> Elected academic staff will demit office on 31 July of their final year in office.
10. There is no cap on the number of terms of office for which academic staff members may stand; academic staff members will be eligible for re-election for the same term of office provided that they demit office on ceasing to hold a contract of employment with the University.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4a.

11. Elected academic staff members may resign membership at any time.<sup>8</sup> Their membership will remain vacant until the next scheduled Senate election.

#### Elected students

12. The term of office for undergraduate student members will be one year, starting on the first day of August in the year of election. The terms of office for postgraduate student members will be one year, starting on the first day of November in the year of election. Students will be eligible to stand for multiple terms of office consecutively. There is no cap on the number of terms of office for student members.
13. A student member will demit office on ceasing to be a student at the University. Student members may resign membership at any time.<sup>9</sup>

### The Electoral Roll (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 3 and 5)

#### Elected academic staff

14. Academic staff members who are eligible to stand for membership of Senate and elect members from their own number will hold appointments from the University Court, as attested by a contract of employment issued by the University.<sup>10</sup> In practice, 'Academic staff' will apply to all members of staff who are categorised as 'academic' in the University's Human Resources records.
15. All members of staff who are categorised as 'academic', and who also hold a personal or established chair, will be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (professorial)' category. All members of staff who are categorised as 'academic,' and who do not hold a personal or established chair, will be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category. Members of staff who are categorised as early career academic staff, including both early career research and teaching staff who hold a position up to and including Grade 08 on the University Grade Structure, will be eligible for election to the reserved early career academic staff positions contained within the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category.
16. Members of the academic staff who hold a personal or established chair will not be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category. Members of the academic staff who do not hold a personal or established chair will not be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (professorial)' category. Members of staff who are categorised as early career academic staff, including both early career research and teaching staff who hold a position up to and including Grade 08 on the University Grade Structure, will be eligible for election to the reserved early career academic staff positions contained within the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category.
17. *Insertion of a new paragraph relating to non-professorial members who are promoted to professor during a term.*
18. Academic staff members who hold any of the posts or offices which qualify them for *ex officio* membership will not be eligible to stand for membership of Senate in either of the elected academic staff categories,<sup>11</sup> but are entitled to vote in the election for the academic staff category relevant to their role.

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<sup>8</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4b.

<sup>9</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 6a, 6b.

<sup>10</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3

<sup>11</sup> Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3b

19. The electoral roll will be compiled from Human Resources' records on 31 January preceding the call for nominations meaning that nominees for the elected academic staff places will need to have been in their posts from this date in order to be eligible for nomination. Academic staff members who are allocated to the University Secretary's Group or Information Services Group will be included in the electoral roll for College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
20. Academic staff in both elected categories will be eligible to stand for the places which have been allocated to the College of which they are a member. If an academic staff member is a member of multiple Colleges, they will stand in the College where they work a greater proportion of their time (based on full-time equivalent). If an academic staff member works for equal amounts of time across multiple Colleges, they will be permitted to select the College in which they intend to stand, on condition that they only stand for election in one College, and that they declare in writing to the Senate Support Team in which College they intend to stand.

#### Elected students

21. The eligibility for students to stand for offices which can entitle them to Senate membership will be determined according to the eligibility criteria used by the Students' Association to appoint students to official roles. All students who are registered on credit-bearing courses, or who hold sabbatical offices, will be eligible for student membership.

#### Election of Academic Staff Members to Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraph 7)

22. Elections for academic staff members will be held annually and will be run by the Senate Support team. There will be two elections for each College each year, one for eligible professorial staff vacancies and one for eligible non-professorial academic staff vacancies. Both elections will usually be held on the same day.
23. The Senate Support team will inform Colleges of the number of vacancies in each elected academic staff category and will report on an annual basis the members of each College in each category who will continue in office. Senate Assessors will be included in the count of College elected members if they are continuing a term of office as a College elected member, otherwise they are classed as an *ex officio* member and are not included in the count.

#### Election Dates

24. The call for nominations for each election will be made after 31 January each year. No nominations will be accepted before this date.
25. Each year, elections will be conducted to a timescale that has been approved by Senate. The elections must take place in time to communicate the results to Senate before its final meeting of the academic session, and the results must be communicated to Senate no later than 30 June each year.

### Role of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers

26. On an annual basis, Senate will appoint a Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer, who will be responsible for the management of the elections and the declaration of the results of the elections.
27. The Deputy Returning Officer will provide nomination forms calling for nominations and will draw attention to the correct procedure for making nominations. The call for nominations will be published by the Deputy Returning Officer and advertised via agreed channels.

### Nomination and Validation of Candidates

28. Only members of the electorate in each category, as defined in paragraph 15, will be eligible to stand for election in that category. Eligible individuals will be entitled to nominate themselves as a candidate using the process specified in the call for nominations.
29. All nominations must be received by the deadline agreed by Senate. No nominations will be accepted after this date and time.
30. If the Deputy Returning Officer receives a nomination from an individual who is not eligible to stand for election under the terms defined in these regulations, the Deputy Returning Officer will contact the individual to inform them that their nomination will not be accepted. Where the individual whose nomination has not been accepted wishes to challenge the rejection of their nomination, they may do so by contacting the Returning Officer. The decision of the Returning Officer is final.
31. In the event of there being only one valid candidate for each vacancy and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer will declare and publicise as soon as practicable the name of the valid candidate elected for each vacancy.

### Conduct of election process

32. Each candidate will receive from the Deputy Returning Officer a copy of these Regulations.
33. If the Deputy Returning Officer has reason to believe that a candidate may have breached these Regulations, the Deputy Returning Officer will request a written explanation or clarification from the candidate. If the Deputy Returning Officer concludes that a material breach has occurred, the Deputy Returning Officer will inform the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer has the authority to disqualify a candidate, subject to the right of appeal by the candidate to the University Secretary (or specified delegated authority) within two working days of receiving written notification of the disqualification. The decision of the University Secretary (or delegated authority) will be final.
34. The validity of the elections will not be affected in the event that a candidate is unavailable to continue for any reason prior to the results of the election being announced and, where there is a greater number of candidates remaining than vacancies in any category, the election will proceed as planned. In the event of there being only one remaining candidate for each vacancy in any category and therefore an uncontested election in that category, the Deputy Returning Officer will declare and publicise as soon as practicable, and no later than two working days after confirmation of the uncontested election status, the names of the valid candidates elected.

35. The Deputy Returning Officer will distribute to each member of the electorate via email a link to the voting system along with a link to the relevant web page to view information about the candidates.

#### Voting arrangements

36. The elections will be conducted by means of the Single Transferrable Vote, Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (STV WIGM). The candidates with the greatest share of the vote will automatically be elected.
37. Voting will be conducted by staff online. All those on the electoral roll will be permitted access and will be able to vote on the online voting system on the election date(s).
38. Members of staff who are formally employed in more than one College will be entitled to vote in all Colleges in which they are employed.

#### Counting

39. All votes cast online will be counted together using an electronic counting system.
40. In the event of a tie, the successful candidate or candidates will be determined by the drawing of lots. The Returning Officer will draw lots from the pool of candidates whose votes are tied until the available vacancies are filled.

#### Declaration

41. The Deputy Returning Officer will ensure that the result of the election is posted to the Senate webpages as soon as is practicable after the result or results have been declared. The result of the election will be communicated to Senate at the first meeting following the elections.

### Election of Student Members to Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraph 8)

42. Elections for student members will be held annually on dates to be determined by the Students' Association. Elections for student members will be conducted by the Students' Association in accordance with election regulations determined by the Students' Association, and with section 16 of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

## 2 December 2019

#### Document control

Date of approval / amendment	Details
2/10/19	Approved by Senate
2/12/19	Approved by University Court
5/2/20	Amended under section 4 by the University Secretary, Senate informed 5/2/20
27/1/21	Amended under section 6 by the Edinburgh University Students' Association, Senate informed 27/1/21
9/2/22	Amended under sections 4 and 6, Senate informed 9/2/22
8/2/23	Amended Appendix 1, Senate informed 8/2/23
7/2/24	Amended Table 2, Section 8, 15, 16, 22, 40 and Appendix 1
01/10/25	Addition of section 17. Amended section 24, 25 and Appendix 1.

## Appendix 1

Senate *Ex Officio* membership  
(See regulations 2 and 4)

Position	Membership	Membership Breakdown
Principal	1	<b>(Required under Ordinance 212)</b>
<i>Ex officio</i> appointments	Approximately 70, with a <i>officio</i> members in total.	Heads of Schools <b>(Required under Ordinance 212)</b>
		Heads of College <b>(Required under Ordinance 212)</b>
		Provost
		Vice-Principals
		Associate Principal
		Assistant Principals
		Director of Library and University Collections
		Director of the Institute for Academic Development
		University Leads on Climate Responsibility and Sustainability; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
		Up to 6 College-level office holders per College nominated by that College. 5 office holders must hold academic posts (for example, Deans and Associate Deans). 1 office-holder will be a professional services staff member elected to that role by their peers.
		Office-holders who are specifically entitled to Senate membership under the terms of collaborative agreements.
		2 Senate Assessors on the University Court if not serving a term as an elected member.
		1 Academic Staff member on the University Court if not already a Senate member.
		1 Professional Services member on the University Court

## Appendix 2

Student membership  
(See regulations 5 and 6)

Position	Membership	Membership breakdown
Elected students	30	5 Sabbatical Officers
		8 Section Representatives
		5 Liberation Officers
		6 Undergraduate School Representatives
		6 Postgraduate School Representatives

**Senate****1 October 2025****Senate External Review Task and Finish Group – Final Report****Description of paper**

1. This paper provides Senate with a final report on progress made by the External Review Task and Finish Group against the AdvanceHE External Effectiveness Review of Senate recommendations.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to note the information contained within final report.

Please note that this paper is not intended for discussion during the meeting as it provides a minor update on information shared with Senate previously.

**Background and context**

3. An externally facilitated review of Senate and its committees by AdvanceHE took place in 2022/23. The final report and proposed actions in response to the review were considered at the Senate meeting of 11 October 2023.
4. Senate approved the formation of the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group at its meeting of 7 February 2024; with the Group to be responsible for considering the recommendations arising from the external review and for developing proposals for consideration by Senate.
5. The term of office for the group was 1 March 2024 – 31 July 2025, and nine meetings were held within this period.
6. Further information on the Group can be accessed via the [Senate Members Portal](#).

**Discussion**

7. In considering the Task and Finish Group's progress against the AdvanceHE External Effectiveness Review of Senate recommendations, the majority of the review recommendations and suggestions have been addressed. Of the recommendations identified as 'ongoing', these are for response by the University EDI Lead in conjunction with the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. These outstanding recommendations will be added to the Senate Action Log to ensure Senate members are updated on the agreed outcomes.
8. At the Group's meetings of 1 and 27 May 2025, members discussed progress against the review of the Senate standing committees' terms of reference and associated levels of delegated authority (recommendations 17 and 18, and suggestions 8, 9, and 10). Members of the Group agreed that a holistic review would be required to properly address the recommendations, suggestions, and concerns of the Senate membership;

and that such a review should also include the development of terms of reference for Senate. Members noted that such a review would exceed the external review recommendations and the remit of the Task and Finish Group.

9. The Group's recommendation for such a holistic review is presented to Senate as paper S 25/26 1K for consideration.

### **Resource implications**

10. There are no resource implications associated with providing this paper. Resource implications have and will continue to be considered as part of actions identified to address recommendations.

### **Risk management**

11. No risk management implications have been identified in association with provision of this paper. There was a risk to the institutional governance of the University if the recommendations and actions arising from the Senate External Review had not been taken forward in a timely and considered manner.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

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

### **Equality & diversity**

13. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with providing this paper. Equality impact assessments will be completed where required for any further proposals to be developed in response to the AdvanceHE review of Senate and its committees.

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

14. Senate is invited to note this final report at its meeting of 1 October 2025. A plan for evaluation of changes implemented in response to the recommendations will be developed.

### **Author**

Professor Richard Kenway,  
Convener of the Senate External Review  
Task and Finish Group

Fraser Rudge, Senate Clerk  
August 2025

### **Freedom of Information Open**



**Appendix one:** summary of progress made against the external review recommendations and suggestions

Theme	Recommendation / Suggestion	Responsible	Status
Composition of Senate	Recommendation 1	Academic and Quality Standards / Deputy Secretary Students	Complete
	Recommendation 2	Academic and Quality Standards	Complete
	Suggestion 1	Task and Finish Group	Complete, albeit with discussions to continue with appropriate staff outside of the Group.
	Suggestion 2	Task and Finish Group	Complete
Recruitment & Induction	Recommendation 3	Academic and Quality Standards	Complete, albeit subject to continuous improvement.
	Recommendation 4	Deputy Secretary Students	Complete
	Recommendation 5	Academic and Quality Standards	Complete, albeit subject to continuous improvement.
	Suggestion 3	Deputy Secretary Students	Complete
Agenda setting & chairing	Recommendation 6	Task and Finish Group	Complete, subject to review in 2025/26.
	Recommendation 7	Senior Leadership Team	Complete
Format of Senate	Recommendation 8	Task and Finish Group	Complete
	Recommendation 9	Task and Finish Group	Complete
	Recommendation 10	Task and Finish Group	Complete
	Recommendation 11	Task and Finish Group / University EDI Lead	Complete, recommendation reallocated.
	Suggestion 4	Task and Finish Group	Complete
	Suggestion 5	Task and Finish Group	Complete, suggestion not adopted.
	Suggestion 6	Task and Finish Group	Complete
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Recommendation 12	University EDI Lead	The University EDI Lead will progress these in the 2025-2026 academic year, and will report directly to Senate. These will be added to the Senate Action Log.
	Recommendation 13	University EDI Lead	
	Recommendation 14	University EDI Lead	
	Recommendation 15	University EDI Lead	
Senate & Research	Recommendation 16	Vice-Principal Research and Enterprise	Complete, albeit subject to Senate consideration.
Senate Support	Suggestion 7	Academic and Quality Standards	Complete
	Suggestion 8	Academic and Quality Standards	Closed. See paper S 25/26 1K for a recommendation on how to address these recommendations and suggestions.
Senate Committees	Recommendation 17	Vice-Principal Students	
	Recommendation 18	Task and Finish Group	
	Suggestion 9	Vice-Principal Students	
	Suggestion 10	Vice-Principal Students	

## Appendix two: progress made against external review report recommendations and suggestions

Recommendations extracted from Advance HE Report	Proposed actions in response	Final report on actions
<b>R1.</b> Given the mission of the University we recommend the addition of a specific membership category in Senate for a Doctoral Student or Junior Research associate.	<p>This recommendation be adopted.</p> <p>Academic and Quality Standards to work with the Students' Association and Deputy Secretary Students to formulate a proposal for Senate membership to include dedicated positions for doctoral students or junior research associates.</p> <p>Senate considered the proposal at its meeting of 7 February 2024 (paper S 23/24 2G).</p>	<p>COMPLETE.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations</a> have been updated.</p> <p>Within the Elected academic staff (Non-professorial) membership category, there are now three positions prioritised for early career academic staff within each college.</p> <p><i>"Members of staff who are categorised as early career academic staff, including both early career research and teaching staff who hold a position up to and including Grade 08 on the University Grade Structure, will be eligible for election to the reserved early career academic staff positions contained within the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category."</i></p>
<b>R2.</b> We recommend that Senate has 3 non-executive professional staff members on Senate.	<p>This recommendation be adopted.</p> <p>Academic and Quality Standards to formulate a proposal for Senate membership to include positions for professional services staff. Any positions dedicated to professional services would be filled in a democratic manner and in a similar way to the election of professorial and non-professional representatives.</p>	<p>COMPLETE.</p> <p><a href="#">Senate College Professional Services Election Regulations</a> have been developed, and three Elected College Professional Services Staff members commenced terms of office on 1 August 2024.</p>
<b>S1.</b> We suggest that Edinburgh consider making Senate Membership for elected members' part of the WAM as a way to raise the profile of Senate membership and to give value to membership.	<p>These suggestions and feedback will be taken forward by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.</p>	<p>COMPLETE, albeit with discussions to continue with appropriate staff outside of the Group.</p> <p>At the Group's meeting of 25 February, it was observed that there was not a single university workload allocation model, that some areas of the University did not use such models, and that such models were not used for grant funded research</p>

Recommendations extracted from Advance HE Report	Proposed actions in response	Final report on actions
		<p>staff. The Group suggested that indicative timings be developed for staff to engage with Senate business.</p> <p>At the Group's meeting of 1 April 2025, the Academic Registrar reported on discussions with the Provost and Heads of College where an indicative allocation of six hours per meeting had been agreed. Further discussion would take place on recognising the contribution of student members.</p> <p>The following indicative time commitment has been <a href="#">published online</a> to support staff considering nominating themselves for membership of Senate:</p> <p><i>"There are four ordinary meetings a year which can last up to three hours. Ordinary Senate meetings are preceded by a meeting of e-Senate, which seeks observations from Senate members and presents items for information or for formal noting. E-Senate is held over a two-week period. The length of time required to engage with Senate and e-Senate papers will vary, but is estimated at 6 hours per ordinary Senate meeting."</i></p> <p>Separately, Academic and Quality Standards have committed to a series of actions in response to feedback received via the annual internal effectiveness review. Some actions are relevant to suggestions raised by the external review and are noted below for information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of a Senate Members' Portal to bring together key resources to support Senate members in effectively carrying out their role.</li> <li>• The development of an action log to provide transparency and update on the progress of actions undertaken in response to decisions at Senate.</li> </ul>

Recommendations extracted from Advance HE Report	Proposed actions in response	Final report on actions
<p><b>S2.</b> With reference to our comments in the overview above we suggest that Senate considers how, in conjunction with Schools, the University can help to promote the role and visibility of Senate in the University.</p> <p>This may include, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide open seats at Senate and its sub-committees for members of staff to observe as development opportunities.</li> <li>• Ask current members to offer short summaries, podcasts or video casts about the role and the opportunity.</li> <li>• Enhance the university communications to provide more information about what Senate does to enhance its visibility in the university.</li> </ul>	<p>These suggestions and feedback will be taken forward by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.</p>	<p>COMPLETE.</p> <p>At the Task and Finish Group meeting of 25 February 2025, the Group discussed briefly whether parts of Senate's ordinary meetings could be open to members of the wider University to join as observers. It was commented that the suggestion could be considered alongside recommendations 12-15, which related to Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion.</p> <p>Separately, Academic and Quality Standards have developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Senate SharePoint site that is open to all staff and students.</li> <li>• The Senate and Senate Committees Newsletter, which is published on the Senate SharePoint site, and which is emailed directly to Senate members and to key stakeholders.</li> <li>• A briefing pack for Senate elections which is shared with Heads of School and College, and with staff supporting college committees.</li> </ul>
<p><b>R3.</b> We recommend that the induction programme is completely reviewed and updated to give new members a deeper understanding of their role and responsibilities, provide nuanced support for different types of members on Senate (particularly students), and to offers existing members the opportunity to keep up to date with expectations.</p>	<p>This recommendation be adopted and will continue to be reviewed as part of Academic and Quality Standards' support of Senate and efforts for continuous improvement.</p>	<p>COMPLETE, albeit subject to continuous improvement.</p> <p>New Senate members each receive a welcome email which communicates key expectations and provides links to key information sources that will help them to engage in their role.</p> <p>An induction recording has been developed, and is accessible to new members via the Senate Members Portal. This will be subject to annual review by the Senate Clerk.</p> <p>The Senate Member Resources page, on the Senate Members Portal, provides access to the Senate Member Handbook, the induction recording, and other resources.</p>

Recommendations extracted from Advance HE Report	Proposed actions in response	Final report on actions
		<p>The in-person Senate member induction was held in a revised format in September 2023 and September 2024; and the format will continue to be reviewed. At the in-person induction event, members received an induction to Senate from key staff involved in academic governance.</p> <p>In 2023, break-out sessions tailored to each membership group were held. These sessions were targeted at specific membership groups and intended to help members understand their role and the expectations of them. Breakout sessions were not held in 2024 due to limited room availability.</p> <p>Student members participated in the September 2024 induction, and the EUSA Vice President Education presented on the Student Voice at Senate.</p> <p>Senate members will be invited to provide feedback on the Induction, and feedback received will be used to enhance future induction events.</p>
<p><b>R4.</b> We recommend that changes are made to the agenda and papers of Senate to ensure that the student experience is more central to discussions. For example, Students could have opportunities to input into the agenda planning, papers may particularly highlight points which require the student voice to be heard.</p>	<p>This recommendation be adopted.</p> <p>The Deputy Secretary Students will lead this work alongside the Students' Association and with support from Academic and Quality Standards.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>The Senate Business Committee was implemented in 2025, and will provide a route for student representatives to input into the Senate agenda setting process and to scrutinise Senate papers. The EUSA Vice President Education will act as Vice-Convener of the Committee.</p>
<p><b>R5.</b> The student induction to Senate needs to be revised and updated.</p>	<p>This recommendation be adopted and will continue to be reviewed as part of Academic and Quality Standards' support of Senate and efforts toward continuous improvement.</p>	<p>COMPLETE, albeit subject to continuous improvement.</p> <p>See also update provided in response to R3. A second student-focussed induction will be held in November 2025 for student members appointed to Senate out with the usual cycle (e.g., postgraduate students) and for any student members unable to attend the Induction in September.</p>

Recommendations extracted from Advance HE Report	Proposed actions in response	Final report on actions
<p><b>S3.</b> We suggest that pre-meetings are arranged to support student engagement in the meetings and enable a more substantive student voice.</p>	<p>This suggestion will be included in the work relating to Recommendation 4, led by the Deputy Secretary Students alongside the Students' Association and with support from Academic and Quality Standards.</p>	<p>COMPLETE.</p> <p>The EUSA VP Education has taken a lead role in working with student representatives on Senate to prepare for meetings. This involves discussion and correspondence with relevant colleagues, as requested. We are already seeing a greater student voice in Senate meetings as a result. Separately, Senate pre-meeting networking opportunities have been arranged prior to Senate meetings in 2024-25.</p>
<p><b>R6.</b> We recommend that the (renamed) Senate Exception Committee takes on the task of agenda setting and timing for Senate business. This role, if successful, could evolve over time.</p>	<p>There is mixed feedback and lack of clear consensus on this recommendation. Therefore, it is proposed that this recommendation be considered by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group for further consideration and for a proposals to be developed and presented to a future meeting of Senate.</p>	<p>COMPLETE.</p> <p>At its meeting of 11 December 2024, Senate approved the formation of the Senate Business Committee.</p> <p>The Senate Business Committee was implemented for the May 2025 Senate meeting, and will operate on a trial basis to 31 July 2026. The continuation of the Committee, as a standing committee of Senate, will be contingent on the outcome of a review to take place in early 2026.</p>
<p><b>R7.</b> We recommend that the Principal is visibly supported in Senate meetings by the Provost, the University Secretary and the VP Students.</p>	<p>This recommendation be adopted.</p> <p>There is clear support among members for greater visibility of and support during the running of Senate meetings from members of the Senior Leadership Team.</p>	<p>COMPLETE.</p> <p>The Senate Convener is now joined by the Provost and Academic Registrar at the top table. The Vice-Principal and University Secretary, the Vice-Principal Students, and other key colleagues are seated nearby.</p>
<p><b>R8.</b> We recommend introducing a more carefully and realistically planned and time managed agenda.</p> <p>The agenda should also make it clear if an item is for noting or discussion and suitable but specific time should be allowed for discussion.</p>	<p>This recommendation is closely tied to R6. It is proposed that this recommendation be considered by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group. It is anticipated that the work of this Group will include a process for agenda setting which include principles covering the time required for items, and the actions</p>	<p>COMPLETE, albeit subject to continuous improvement.</p> <p>The implementation of the Senate Business Committee is intended to provide an effective and transparent agenda setting process for meetings of the University Senate.</p> <p>For items requiring discussion, the Senate agenda includes indicative timings for discussion.</p>

Recommendations extracted from Advance HE Report	Proposed actions in response	Final report on actions
	requested of Senate.	<p>A post-meeting survey was implemented in 2024-25, and through which members can provide feedback on whether agenda items have been sufficiently well considered.</p> <p>An out-of-meeting process has been developed, and is being refined, to consider corrections to the minutes.</p>
<b>R9.</b> We recommend that meetings should always finish on time.	This recommendation is closely tied to R6 and R8 and it is proposed that this recommendation be considered further by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.	<p>COMPLETE.</p> <p>The Senate Convener has committed to closing Senate meetings on time.</p>
<b>R10.</b> We recommend that the format of Senate is decided at the same time that the dates are set. Further we recommend that one meeting a year should be fully in person with hybrid only offered for exceptional reasons.	This recommendation be adopted, with oversight provided by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.	<p>COMPLETE.</p> <p>Following feedback from the Senate membership, all Senate meetings will be hybrid as standard.</p>
<b>R11.</b> We recommend that all Senators should get a briefing note on proper use of the Chat Function, and it should be an important section in induction. This should include information on expected standards of behaviour and the proper use of the CHAT function (see, for example, guidance at Glasgow University or UCL). Misuse of the chat should not be tolerated.	<p>This recommendation be adopted, with oversight provided by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>It is proposed that a Senate Members Behaviour Charter be developed. This which would cover expected behaviours in relation to matters relating to Senate.</p>	<p>COMPLETE, a separate Group will be constituted by the University EDI Lead to ensure diverse representation.</p> <p>The Chat Function on Microsoft Teams will be disabled during Senate meetings.</p> <p>Discussion at the Group's meeting of 25 February 2025 indicated that there remained a need for a Senate Members Behaviour Charter to be developed. The University EDI Lead expressed an interest in leading on the development of the charter.</p> <p>At the meeting of 1 April 2025, the University EDI Lead presented a proposal to convene a small, diverse group of Senators to develop a draft "Behaviours Agreement." The altered term was intended to prevent confusion with the University's existing Behaviours Charter.</p>



Recommendations extracted from Advance HE Report	Proposed actions in response	Final report on actions
<p><b>S4.</b> We suggest that a proposal for 4 Senates a year is discussed.</p> <p><b>S5.</b> We suggest holding one meeting each year in person in a suitably enabled IT space.</p> <p><b>S6.</b> We suggest that the open session is permanently removed from the agenda. However, the benefits of such a session should not be lost and should be replaced by alternatives, for example a twice yearly 'all staff update' possibly recorded or in person to update on external issues and the impact of senate business.</p>	<p>Recommendations relating to the format of Senate meetings will be prioritised, and any suggestions will be considered in relation to the work undertaken by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group, where appropriate.</p>	<p>COMPLETE.</p> <p>At its meeting of 18 June 2024, Senate approved the following proposals which were implemented in 2024-25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to increase the annual meeting time for Senate to 12 hours;</li> <li>• to adopt a meeting format of four, three hour long, meetings;</li> <li>• to hold meetings within the standard university semester;</li> <li>• to commence meetings at 1.10pm, in line with the standard University timetable;</li> <li>• to hold meetings between 1:10pm and 4pm; and</li> <li>• to hold meetings in a hybrid format as standard.</li> </ul> <p>The open session has been removed from the agenda.</p> <p>At its meeting of 25 February 2025, the Task and Finish Group discussed the benefits of holding open sessions on an ad hoc basis. The minute will be provided to the Senate Business Committee to inform routine business.</p>
<p><b>R12.</b> Senate would benefit from a special session on enhancing and updating knowledge of EDI.</p>	<p>There is support for this recommendation. This recommendation will be referred to the University EDI Committee via the University EDI Lead for a proposal to be developed.</p>	<p>To be progressed by the University EDI Lead.</p> <p>An initial update was provided to the Group's meeting of 1 April 2025. The University EDI Lead invited the Group to propose additional content for this session, as well as recommendations on delivery timing and methods to maximise colleague engagement.</p>
<p><b>R13.</b> An EDI impact assessment/assurance rating should be used in all Senate papers.</p>	<p>There is support for this recommendation. This recommendation will be referred to the University EDI Committee via the University EDI Lead for a proposal to be developed.</p>	<p>To be progressed by the University EDI Lead.</p> <p>An initial update was provided to the Group's meeting of 1 April 2025. The University EDI Lead set out initial analysis and proposals to progress the recommendation.</p>



Recommendations extracted from Advance HE Report	Proposed actions in response	Final report on actions
<b>R14.</b> We suggest that the University considers how the developmental membership of Senate could be promoted as part of the induction and development programme. Specifically, the Staff BAME network could promote Senate as part of its mentoring programme.	There is support for this recommendation. This recommendation will be referred to the University EDI Committee via the University EDI Lead for a proposal to be developed.	To be progressed by the University EDI Lead.  An initial update was provided to the Group's meeting of 1 April 2025. The University EDI Lead set out initial analysis and proposals to progress the recommendation.
<b>R15.</b> Consider adding some nominated members to Senate to widen diversity.	There is support for this recommendation. This recommendation will be referred to the University EDI Committee via the University EDI Lead for a proposal to be developed.	To be progressed by the University EDI Lead.  An initial update was provided to the Group's meeting of 1 April 2025. The University EDI Lead set out proposals to progress the recommendation. The Group was invited to consider whether there was support for the creation of nominated roles, and if such roles should aim to cover a number of protected characteristics. It was noted that any changes to the composition of Senate would need to be reviewed and approved.
<b>R16.</b> We recommend that the VP Research and Enterprise undertakes a short review of how Research and especially PGRs could become more mainstreamed into Senate business.	There is support for this recommendation. This recommendation will be referred to the VP Research and Enterprise for a review and proposal to be developed. This recommendation will be taken forward in connection with R1.	COMPLETE, albeit subject to Senate consideration.  The Task and Finish Group received an update at its meetings of 14 January, and considered options at its meeting of 25 February 2025. The Group received and endorsed revised options at its meeting of 1 April 2025.  Senate discussed paper S24/256N in May 2025, with final recommendations to follow within AY 2025/26.
<b>S7.</b> We suggest that the university make resourcing of Academic and Quality Standards support for Senate governance a key priority.	These suggestions will be referred to Academic and Quality Standards for consideration.	COMPLETE.  The role of Committees and Governance Manager has been established, and provides dedicated support for Senate as Senate Clerk.
<b>S8.</b> We also suggest a minor tidying up point of clarifying in the largely very clear public documentation on the University's governance on whether both UG and PG	These suggestions will be referred to Academic and Quality Standards for consideration.	CLOSED, new review approach required (see R17 below).  Recommended revisions to the terms of reference for each Senate standing committee have been drafted, and will

Recommendations extracted from Advance HE Report	Proposed actions in response	Final report on actions
students are within the remit of the QAC and APRC.		be submitted to any successor review process.
<p><b>R17.</b> We recommend that the VP Students reviews the Terms of Reference, coverage and scope of the three Senate Committees with a view to identifying any overlap and considering if they together cover all university academic priorities.</p>	<p>This recommendation be adopted and the VP Students in discussion with the Provost undertake this review with support from Academic and Quality Standards and oversight provided by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>Any proposals relating to the Terms of Reference, coverage and scope of Standing Committees will be presented to Senate for approval.</p>	<p>CLOSED, new review approach required. See paper S 25/26 1K.</p> <p>At its meeting of 6 November 2024, the Group met with the conveners of the Senate standing committees to provide input into the review being undertaken by the Vice Principal Students.</p> <p>At its meeting of 14 January 2025, the Group agreed that a sub-group should discuss the terminology used within the remits and terms of reference of the Senate standing committees. The Group further agreed that a sub-group create and distribute a survey to ascertain Senate members' perceptions of the effectiveness of the standing committees. Associated outputs were considered by the Group on 25 February 2025, to inform work on R17.</p> <p>The Group received and considered updated terms of reference at its meeting of 1 April 2025, with revisions made and circulated to the Group's membership following the meeting</p> <p>At the Group's meeting of 1 May 2025, members discussed progress against the review of the Senate standing committees' terms of reference and associated levels of delegated authority (recommendations 17 and 18, and suggestions 8, 9, and 10).</p> <p>Members of the Group agreed that a holistic review would be required to properly address the recommendations, suggestions, and concerns of the Senate membership; and that such a review should also include the development of terms of reference for Senate. Members noted that such a review would exceed the external review recommendations and the remit of the Task and Finish Group.</p>

Recommendations extracted from Advance HE Report	Proposed actions in response	Final report on actions
		The Group discussed a recommendation for such a holistic review at its final meeting on 27 May 2025, with the recommendation paper S 25/26 1K and final report developed outside the meeting.
<b>R18.</b> We recommend that Senate establish a task and finish group (ideally with neutral facilitation) to explore the feasibility and establish the criteria for Senate Committee decisions that need further discussion in full Senate before a final decision is made.	This recommendation be adopted and considered by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.	<p>CLOSED, new review approach required (see R17 above).</p> <p>Senate External Review Task and Finish Group established.</p> <p>The Group gave consideration to R18 at meetings held on 14 January and 25 February 2025. Discussions indicated a need for delegated authority to continue to be granted to the Senate standing committees for some decisions, however it was considered that items of fundamental concern and strategic importance should be reserved to Senate for approval.</p>
<b>S9.</b> We suggest that the chair of each of the 3 Committee Chairs clarifies the relevant scheme of delegation for their committee.	These suggestions and feedback will be taken forward in connection to R.17. The VP Students, in discussion with the Provost, undertake a review with support from Academic and Quality Standards and oversight provided by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.	<p>CLOSED, new review approach required (see R17 above).</p> <p>The terms of reference for each Senate standing committee have been reviewed as per the AdvanceHE recommendation and the proposed action in response (see column to the left), but have not been updated.</p>
<b>S10.</b> We suggest that the Senate gives thought to using a framework such as RACI as a framework for improving understanding and clarity about responsibilities, accountabilities consultation and communication relationships in Senate.	These suggestions and feedback will be taken forward in connection to R.17. The VP Students, in discussion with the Provost, undertake a review with support from Academic and Quality Standards and oversight provided by the proposed Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.	<p>CLOSED, new review approach required (see R17 above).</p> <p>Consideration has been given to the creation of a new Policy Review Log.</p>

**Senate****1 October 2025****Senate External Review Task and Finish Group – Recommendations****Description of paper**

1. The paper recommends to Senate a work plan to progress the recommendations from the External Review of Senate and the findings from the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group relating to Senate and its standing committees.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to approve the work plan detailed in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.2 which has been developed in response to the Proposed Plan for a Holistic Review of Senate and its Standing Committees paper produced by the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group in July 2025 (presented in full as Appendix 1).

**Background and context**

3. At the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group's meetings of 1 and 27 May 2025, members discussed progress against the review of the Senate standing committees' terms of reference and associated levels of delegated authority (recommendations 17 and 18, and suggestions 8, 9, and 10). Members of the Group agreed that a holistic review is required to fully address the recommendations, suggestions, and concerns of the Senate membership; and that such a review should also include the development of terms of reference for Senate. Members noted that such a review would exceed the external review recommendations and the remit of the Task and Finish Group, and recommended that a further review process be constituted to address these issues specifically. Members of the Group worked collaboratively to develop a Proposed Plan for a Holistic Review of Senate and its Standing Committees paper, which was finalised in July 2025.

**Discussion**

4. The Proposed Plan for a Holistic Review of Senate and its Standing Committees paper produced by the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group in July 2025 is presented as Appendix 1. It has been carefully considered by Registry Services in consultation with Court Services and alongside paper [S 24/25 6K](#), to shape a work plan that is achievable and deliverable within the required timescale and resources.

**Work plan**

- 5.1 Work in 2025/26 will focus on the main issues identified in the Holistic Review paper (see Appendix 1, Main Conclusions, paragraph 1): (1) Senate terms of reference; and (2) delegation of authority by Senate to the Standing

Committees, and the distinction between “business as usual” operational authority, and “policymaking” authority. Further work can be considered for future years.

5.2 In response to the proposal in the Holistic Review paper to establish a fixed-term working group to address strategic objectives (see Appendix 1, Next Steps):

### ***Work plan approach***

A representative group of academic elected Senate members be formed which matches the number and composition of this category within the Task and Finish Group membership<sup>1</sup>. It would be for Senate to nominate its representatives on the group, as the membership for Senate has changed since the establishment of the Task and Finish Group.

This representative group would be added to the list of sources which will inform the review (see Appendix 1, Recommendation, paragraph two and bullet points).

Retain those objectives that align with the main issues in paragraph 5.1 above as part of “Feedback and concerns gathered throughout the work of the Task and Finish Group” informing the review.

### **Rationale**

The proposal in the Holistic Review paper to establish a working group with broadly the same composition as the Task and Finish Group through which all work is channelled risks reaching the same outcome. There is reference made to adding governance expertise, however, ongoing governance expertise was provided to the Task and Finish Group.

The workplan approach establishes a key stakeholder group which continues to be a voice for the academic elected membership of Senate, ensuring prominence and recognising the strength of feeling and concerns expressed from this membership of Senate.

The workplan approach supports and ensures wide consultation. Additionally, it reduces workload impact in relation to the demands on Task and Finish Group members.

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<sup>1</sup> Eight (8) elected staff members, with representation from one member whose holds a dedicated research position such as a junior research associate, early career fellow or equivalent. An equal balance of representation across Colleges will be sought.

The workplan approach focuses Academic Quality and Standards resource on supporting the review, carrying out tasks such as external benchmarking and wide consultation, including all of Senate, in order to formulate proposals for consideration and approval.

Finally, the workplan approach retains aligned objectives, as others listed in the Holistic Review paper:

- Pre-empt the work to develop the Senate terms of reference
- Are out of scope (e.g. actions in relation to non-Senate committees)
- Fall into the remit of Departments or individual job descriptions (e.g. operational procedures)

6 **Senate terms of reference** – a statement of primary responsibilities will be developed as follows:

- Through a collaborative body of work between Court Services, Academic Quality and Standards and Legal Services;
- Informed by external benchmarking of Scottish ancient universities as they share a similar legal framework, and internal governance and legal expertise;
- Would be for Court to support, aligned to work to address the Court External Review recommendation relating to clarifying the different responsibilities of Court and Senate more clearly; and
- Court would approve the final Senate statement of primary responsibilities.

### **Resource implications**

7 The resource implications for both Registry Services and Court Services have been carefully considered alongside other work for 2025/26 in order to develop a work plan that is achievable and deliverable within the required timescale and resources.

### **Risk management**

8 There is a risk to effective academic governance of the University if the issue of lack of clarity on the remit of Senate and delegated authority are not progressed.

### **Equality & diversity**

9 There are no equality and diversity implications associated with providing this paper. Equality impact assessments will be completed where required for any further proposals to be developed in response to the AdvanceHE review of Senate and its committees.

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

10 Plans for consultation are outlined in the paper. Actions taken in response to recommendations from the External Review of Senate will be evaluated.

**Authors and Contributors**

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August 2025

Appendix 1 – members of the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group  
July 2025

**Freedom of Information Open**

**Presenter**

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## Appendix 1 - Proposed Plan for a holistic review of Senate and its Standing Committees

### Background

There were six recommendations and suggestions from the AdvanceHE External Effectiveness Review of Senate Report (July 2023) relating to the Senate standing committee terms of reference:

- 1) *R.17. We recommend that the **VP Students** reviews the Terms of Reference, coverage and scope of the three Senate Committees with a view to identifying any overlap and considering if they together cover all university academic priorities.*
- 2) *R.18. We recommend that **Senate** establish a task and finish group (ideally with neutral facilitation) to explore the feasibility and establish the criteria for Senate Committee decisions that need further discussion in full Senate before a final decision is made.*
- 3) *S.9. We suggest that the **chair of each of the 3 Committee Chairs** [sic] clarifies the relevant scheme of delegation for their committee.*
- 4) *S.10. We suggest that the **Senate** gives thought to using a framework such as RACI as a framework for improving understanding and clarity about responsibilities, accountabilities consultation and communication relationships in Senate.*
- 5) *R16. We recommend that the **VP Research and Enterprise** undertakes a short review of how Research and especially PGRs could become more mainstreamed into Senate business.*
- 6) *S8: We also suggest a minor tidying up point of clarifying in the largely very clear public documentation on the University's governance on whether both UG and PG students are within the remit of the QAC and APRC.*

### Main Conclusions

The recommendations and suggestions from the external review do not alone address all feedback and concerns that have arisen through the work of the Task and Finish Group and they have not been progressed holistically to date. The main issue discussed and where agreement could not be reached was on authority delegated by Senate to the Standing Committees, and the distinction between “business as usual” operational authority, and “policymaking” authority. The lack of a Senate terms of reference has also been identified as a barrier to progressing the recommendations and suggestions from the external review. Currently Senate has a role (in reference to high-level relevant legislation) and responsibilities (covering Senate business and delegated authority) which focus on academic matters.



**The work needed to address both the external review recommendations and further feedback and concerns exceeds the external review recommendations and thus the remit of the Task and Finish Group.**

## **Recommendation**

**A holistic review including the development of a terms of reference for Senate is required to properly and fully address the recommendations and suggestions from the external review and the further feedback and concerns gathered through the work of the Task and Finish Group relating to the Senate standing committees.**

It is recommended that the review would take place over academic year 2025/26, aiming for changes to be implemented in 2026/27. It will be informed by:

- The external review recommendations and suggestions;
- Feedback and concerns gathered throughout the work of the Task and Finish Group;
- Internal and external expertise in academic governance, including scholarly research, where relevant;
- External benchmarking of other relevant universities' practices;
- Legal and external regulatory requirements; and
- Consultation across the University and Students' Association, to include Senate, the standing committees, Court Services.

## **2025/26**

The current standing committee terms of reference remain in place. However, the standing committee conveners and Academic Quality and Standards are committed to ensuring that Senate is either kept informed of, consulted with and/or asked to approve standing committee business which relates to strategic areas of Senate's role as appropriate. Additionally, as requested, relevant standing committee papers to Senate will include information on *consultation* undertaken and the decision-making process followed. Standing committee papers which are presented to Senate for noting/information will include a rationale for this action. Finally, Senate will also continue to receive papers on: upcoming business; standing committee membership and priorities; and the annual report.

## **Issues identified by the Task and Finish Group to inform the review**

### **Establishing a common terminology**

It was observed in the meetings that different members sometimes had different understandings of key governance terms, and that this was precluding progress towards agreement on core issues [T&F 27/5/25 p2]. To facilitate this, we offer the following definitions as a starting point, to be tested and refined by a future review

group as it takes its work forwards. For example, it may be understood that there are activities within Senate's remit that are not captured by the below.

*Policy* – The University's Policy for the Governance and Publication of University Policies defines a *policy* as follows: "A high level statement of intent, setting out, in writing, how the University expects its staff, students and others to act in relation to a particular matter/area of its operations. The policy regulates and standardises how we act and can be relied upon by those to whom it applies."

The further definition of "University level policy" includes the following: "It is mandatory in nature and has implications for users and the University if it is not adhered to"; "it will have been consulted on and formally approved"; and "University policies fulfilling this definition can have different titles, e.g. code, policy, protocol, regulations. However titled, they will have been formally approved."

*Strategy* – A *strategy* is a pathway towards agreed outcomes. Typically, these outcomes sit at a high-level and a consensus has been established that achieving them is at least desirable, if not essential. A *strategy* document should specify the intended outcomes, the actions that constitute the strategy's implementation and the criteria for judging the extent to which the intended outcomes have been achieved.

*Relevant to Senate* – A *strategy* or *policy* is *relevant* to Senate if it directly relates to learning, teaching and/or research and affects practice in one or more of these areas across the institution.

*Development* – *Development* is the process of creating or modifying *policy* in order that it is sufficiently well-formulated to achieve the *strategy* that it serves. By its nature, development work may only reasonably be conducted by a small (but, advisedly, a representative) group. However, it is essential that this development is conducted through *consultation* and collaboration with all groups who would be affected by the resulting *policy*.

*Consultation* – *Consultation* is the structured process by which those who will be affected by, or who have legitimate interests in, a *policy* or *strategic* decision are given timely information and an opportunity to comment before the decision is finalised, with their views being demonstrably considered in the final outcome.

*Approval* – *Approval* describes the process of formal agreement that the *development* process has been conducted and completed correctly and with adequate consideration of and *consultation* with the groups who would be affected by the resulting *policy* or *strategy*.

*Implementation* – *Implementation* describes the process of promoting, training or embedding a *policy or strategy*, such that it results in those impacted by the *policy or strategy* acting in accordance with the *policy or strategy*.

*Oversight* – *Oversight* has occurred when a higher body is able to fully understand the rationale for decisions taken on its behalf during *policy development* and evaluation of its *implementation* with reference to the agreed *strategic* outcomes.

*Governance* – In the context of Senate, *governance* comprises: (i) the setting of *strategy* that is *relevant* to Senate; (ii) *oversight* of any resulting *policy development*; (iii) formal *approval* of any *policy* that is developed; and (iv) *oversight* of that *policy's* *implementation*.

In the following, we have italicised these terms when we feel that they should be understood as defined above.

### *Agreement of core principles*

There was much discussion across several T&F group meetings (notably the meeting of 14 January 2025) on core principles that could be applied in determining the division of labour between Senate and its standing committees. Recurrent themes are summarised below. It would be desirable for a future review group to agree the relative importance of these principles, and whether there are any gaps, when taking its work forward. For example, additional principles might be suggested by relevant governance codes, etc.

*Unique competency* – A body of useful scholarly research on academic governance in the context of modern managerialised universities is summarised by J Rowlands [\*Academic Governance in the Contemporary University\*](#) (Springer, 2017) [referred to at T&F 14/1/25 p2]. Chapter 12 is recommended reading, containing practical suggestions for strengthening academic governance. A key suggestion is that “One way of responding to concerns about the ability of university academic boards to add value because of the tendency for important matters to be effectively predetermined is for academic boards to identify a primary role that is uniquely theirs, something for which they are well-qualified but is not replicated elsewhere” (Rowlands, p226). In T&F group meetings this was occasionally referred to as the *unique competency* principle.

*Fit to meeting size and composition* – A key consideration in which work should be undertaken by which group is the level and type of discussion that its size and composition allows. Relating to committees, Rowlands notes “[An] appropriately structured and comprised set of committees with clearly delineated decision-making and reporting responsibilities can do much to increase the effectiveness of an academic board [i.e. Senate]. Matters that require careful consideration in great

detail, including academic policy, should be considered here and only recommended to the academic board when the relevant committee deems them to be ready for approval.” (pp231-2) In terms of the working definitions provided above, this suggests that standing committees would tend to focus on *development* and those aspects of *implementation* relevant to their remits, while Senate is better placed, due to the very wide range of perspectives that its large size uniquely supplies, to engage in *oversight* and *approval*. T&F group members noted a general desire for *strategic* issues to be reserved to Senate [T&F 14/1/25 p2]

*Avoidance of duplication* – T&F group members expressed a desire to avoid duplication of effort between Senate and its standing committees, for example, by rehearsing arguments that had already been considered in detail [T&F 25/2/25 p2]. Clear *oversight* could achieve this.

*Presumption of approval* – It was suggested that when Senate can judge that due diligence had taken place in *policy development*, subsequent *approval* of the policy should be uncontentious [T&F 25/2/25 p2]. Again, *oversight* is key in achieving this.

*Least surprise* – Experience indicated that passage of a paper through Senate was most problematic when most members were asked to approve a proposal (or note prior approval by a committee) when seeing it for the very first time, and therefore did not understand the underlying rationale or feel that they had the ability to contribute to the development process [T&F 14/1/25 p3]. This was encapsulated as a principle of least surprise [T&F 25/2/25 p3] which the T&F group itself attempted to implement in its own work, for example, by seeking feedback on draft proposals from Senate members before presenting them for formal approval.

### *Delegation of authority*

The main question that was returned to repeatedly during T&F group discussions was the level of authority delegated to the standing committees, this reflecting concerns expressed in a survey of the wider membership [T&F 25/2/25 p3]. Although there was a broad consensus that delegation of authority should be clear both to members of Senate and of its standing committees, the question of how this should be achieved was left unresolved. This remains a major task for the holistic review.

Elected members on the T&F group stated a strong preference that Senate committees should have delegated authority on a set of clearly and explicitly stated roles/activities (i.e., allow-listed delegated authority to act without Senate *approval*, and making recommendation for Senate *approval* in all other cases – see further discussion on this point at the end of the next section) [T&F 1/4/25 p4]. Greatest clarity is likely to be achieved by establishing a common Terms of Reference for all committees, with only a small number of committee-specific amendments that

specify a set of clearly and explicitly stated roles/activities that constitutes its unique delegated authority.

Necessarily, that set will have to be adapted over time (e.g., when external operational reports cease, or when new activities become ongoing operational procedures) and so an established process should be developed. As an example, where a new *policy* is *developed* it should state clearly any business-as-usual activities that constitute its *implementation*. Senate could, at that time, be requested to *approve* any activities that will either 1) be added indefinitely to the remit of the committee, 2) be added for a fixed time period and reviewed; 3) be added for a fixed time period and ceased; or 4) require continuous consideration and *approval* from Senate. This would require a change to the Terms of Reference for that standing committee, which could be done “on the spot”, if approved, or be retained for the annual confirmation of standing committee terms of reference.

Concern has been expressed about the possibility of overburdening Senate with new approvals that currently sit within standing committee remits, thereby impacting the University’s ability to make decisions in a timely manner [T&F 25/2/25 p3]. There are various ways to mitigate these concerns, for example, piloting proposals before committing to them (rather than seeking to achieve perfection on paper [T&F 1/4/25 p4]) or simulating the implications of a change in approach by working through papers that previously came only to standing committees to determine which ones would then proceed to Senate, whether these would be seen as sufficiently *strategic* to warrant this, or if delays caused by waiting for the next meeting of Senate for approval would have had adverse effects on *implementation*.

#### Division of governance work between Senate and its standing committees

Two reasons why the delegation of authority is a complex and contentious issue are as follows. The first is the absence of a written remit for Senate: it is an inescapable logical conclusion that a Senate Standing Committee cannot have authority delegated to it if that authority does not rest with Senate in the first place. The second is the current “blurring” of *implementation* activities (in the sense defined above, therefore including business as usual, day-to-day, and legally required monitoring and reporting) with *strategic policy development* activities. Revised Terms of Reference for the Standing Committees should clearly specify how governance work is divided between Senate and its committees.

As noted above, elected staff members believe that Standing Committees should be clearly and unambiguously empowered to *implement* operational tasks within their defined scope without requiring reference back to Senate other than to report on *implementation* [T&F 1/4/25 p4]. Receiving reports, submitting audits and reports to external bodies, assessing and monitoring the effectiveness of *policies* and the operation of the systems within the University should be considered entirely

uncontentious (unless these audits and reports are required to be signed off by Senate/Academic Board/the University's supreme academic body, in which case they must come to Senate). There should be no obstacles placed in any of the Standing Committee Terms of Reference that would prevent those essential tasks from taking place.

Further, those Standing Committees should be empowered to provide clarification, and adjust *policies* previously *approved* by Senate where it is readily demonstrable that the changes are minor (grammatical, specifically covering edge cases not explicitly considered in the original development of the policy, or similar) and do not materially change the original intent of the *policy*.

Where new *strategy* is required, or significant revisions (that will, for example, change the meaning, scope, or academic resource implications) of existing *policy*, the route should be along the lines of:

1. Standing Committee identifies a new *strategic* need or defect in current *policy* and flags to Senate as requiring attention. (The present paper provides an example of this step.)

Identification of new *strategic* needs or consideration of *policy* do not have to come from Standing Committees alone, Senate itself or other committees can also identify these considerations. The remaining steps would remain the same regardless.

2. Senate discusses and requests Standing Committee develop an appropriate combination of *strategy* and *policy* for *approval* on a specified timescale.
3. Standing Committee consults with relevant stakeholders (see next section) and presents proposed *policy* for *approval*, with interim affirmation of the direction of travel at key stages in the case of a complex *development* process.
4. Senate *approves* the final *policy*.

This is consistent with the notion of *oversight* as it is defined above.

Iterations of existing remits for the Standing Committees do not adequately define the boundaries on all those concepts. The word “approval” appears in several places, where a better governance model would follow from the core principles set out above (perhaps through the numbered process suggested above) with “Recommend for approval” being the expected terminology. This would lead to a clearer delineation between whether approval is delegated or not, and what strategy or policy development work has been delegated. We also believe that “allow-listing” or a clear list of permitted and agreed authority – specifically covering the operational aspects in particular – would be hugely beneficial.

### Consultation during policy development

In the T&F discussions, the term *stakeholders* had been used frequently with respect to Standing Committees. Identifying who the stakeholders are together with their requirements and roles is likely to be helpful in taking this work forward.

Another matter for clarification is the role of discussion and *consultation* in Senate. Senate members have expressed a desire to be kept informed of planned work on *strategy* and *policy*, to have opportunities to engage with the *policy development* process, and to see information about *consultation* responses and evidence when exercising *oversight* [T&F 14/1/25 p3]. Here it is important to consider the *unique competency principle*, and determine when discussion at a full meeting of Senate is appropriate, or when discussion or other forms of *consultation* are better conducted elsewhere with the outcome reported to Senate so it can exercise proper *oversight*.

For example:

- When a standing committee identifies a *strategic* issue that is *relevant* to Senate, it provides an opportunity for a discussion in Senate to determine how that issue should be taken forward by a *responsible entity*, such as a Standing Committee or other relevant group, if appropriate. This is not just information-gathering from Senate because Senate has a formal responsibility for setting the *strategic* direction.
- In the course of its work, the *responsible entity* will almost certainly need to *consult* with multiple groups across the university. Senate should be one of those groups because of the diversity of elected staff and student membership. This diversity ensures that feedback comes from all parts of the university, and not just through the university hierarchy. A better quality of *consultation* is likely to take place if such engagement takes place outside of formal meetings of Senate (as was previously done with special sessions on institutional curriculum and research strategies).
- In accordance with the principles of *avoidance of duplication*, *presumption of approval* and *least surprise*, it is important to *consult* with Senate before Senate is recommended to *approve* a *policy*. In addition, it will be imperative for documentation recommending *approval* to include details on the *consultation* performed and the rationale for either integrating or refuting details surfaced during *consultation*. It is inefficient for Senate to withhold approval due to insufficient understanding of its rationale or limited confidence that due diligence has been done. The T&F group used online tools to conduct this type of *consultation* ahead of recommending *approval* to Senate.

### Oversight of related committees and working groups

The T&F group considered the coverage of its academic priorities by the standing committees, and noted that there were no apparent linkages between Senate and

strategic research committees, and that consideration of the student experience had limited visibility [T&F 6/11/24 p2]. Separate proposals for building links between Senate and Research Strategy Group were presented to Senate in May 2025. Moreover, at the same meeting. Senate supported a recommendation to disband Knowledge Strategy Committee, albeit with plans for *oversight* over libraries and collections remaining to be fully developed.

More generally, it was noted that the University has many groups involved in *implementing* institutional *policy* associated with the student experience specifically, and academic work more generally, but which do not have a clear relationship or reporting line to Senate or its standing committees [T&F 6/11 p3]. This confuses *governance*, and furthermore makes it difficult for new members of Senate, particularly student members, to understand what Senate's role in relation to the academic work of the institution is.

A mapping exercise of some of these groups was conducted as part of the T&F group's work, and should be reviewed and extended to ensure all *implementation* groups that are *relevant* to Senate have been identified, and that Senate is able to exercise proper *oversight* over them (for example, through the Standing Committees, even if those groups formally report elsewhere). It has been suggested that ideally, all chains of reporting should end with Senate or Court [T&F 14/1/25 p3]

This holistic review would be an opportunity to integrate such considerations with the desire to strengthen *oversight* of research, student experience, libraries and collections and other matters *relevant* to Senate.

## **Next steps**

We ask Senate to note the various issues that have arisen from the AdvanceHE External Effectiveness Review of Senate and the work of the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group, as described above.

We ask Senate to approve the establishment of a fixed-term working group to address the following strategic objectives:

- Develop a common terminology that describes the different types of activity that are conducted by Senate and bodies that report to it
- Establish a set of core principles that define a framework for developing, operating and evaluating remits for Senate and its Standing Committees
- Construct Terms of Reference for the Standing Committees that specify their delegated authority unambiguously



- Formulate operating procedures that determine how that delegated authority is exercised in practice, demonstrating that they are both robust and practical
- Formulate *consultation* frameworks that allow committees to demonstrate due diligence to Senate
- Ensure that all academic priorities, including work conducted by institutional committees and working groups, receive adequate *oversight* by Senate and its Standing Committees.

with the following outcomes:

- Approval by the appropriate body of the Senate remit
- Approval by Senate of the principles of delegated authority, operating procedures, *consultation* frameworks, basic terms of reference for all committees, and committee-specific ToRs, as well as other documents that may be produced.

The working group will have the following characteristics:

- An independent chair
- Similar membership categories to the Task and Finish group but with additional academic and *governance* expertise where appropriate. For continuity it would be useful to have members in all categories who were members of the Task and Finish Group, if possible.
- A proposal for the working group's purpose, membership, terms of reference and lifespan will be brought to the December Senate meeting for approval.
- In terms of approach, it is important to note that the elucidation and application of principles depend on each other to some extent - an understanding of the current committee landscape is required to ensure that the principles are appropriate to apply.
- A useful exercise will be understanding the roles of the existing and potential standing committees, as well as other committees involved in governance and strategy that fall within Senate's responsibilities. By understanding these roles, principles can be expressed that capture them. As described in the earlier material, some of the roles that standing committees play fall outside Senate's purview. Additionally, some academic governance decisions do not come to Senate at all, and this hampers Senate in carrying out its responsibilities.

**Senate****1 October 2025****Portfolio Review and the Size and Shape of the University's Curriculum****Description of Paper**

1. This paper seeks discussion of and information concerning University leadership's current stated ambition to reform the size and shape of our curriculum, asking senior University leaders to articulate their vision in this respect.
2. In more detail, the paper seeks discussion of and further information concerning Portfolio Review, as a key instrument of efforts to reform curriculum size and shape. In this respect, the paper returns to the subject of an earlier paper to Senate (March, 2025 S24/254B ) seeking to update and develop Senate's understanding of Portfolio Review as it continues in the new academic year.
3. This paper contributes to the University's Strategy 2030 goals (ii) ('The undergraduate curriculum will support breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it'), (xii) ('Multidisciplinary postgraduate education pathways will support flexible whole-life learning') and (vi) ('We will be a destination of choice, based on our clear "Edinburgh Offer"').

**Background and context**

4. University leadership has been clear that we are entering a period in which the overall size and shape of our curriculum will be reformed. Portfolio Review has emerged as a key mechanism whereby this will be achieved. This paper is motivated by the desire for Senate to surface and discuss the academic implications of current initiatives to reform the size and shape of our curriculum (such as and including Portfolio Review), in order to establish greater clarity on the overall vision guiding these initiatives, and to ensure that risks, costs and benefits of proposed actions, in particular course and programme closures, have been thoroughly assessed.

**Action requested**

5. Senate is asked to note the contents of this paper, to discuss the issues raised, and to vote to approve the motions listed below.

**Discussion**

6. This paper is motivated by the desire for Senate to understand, and to support Schools in understanding the answers to the following questions:
  - a) What overall size and shape of programme and course offerings does University leadership want for the UoE, and why?

- b) What is the basis for confidence that the proposed vision of our overall size and shape is academically and financially (a) achievable and (b) sustainable?
- c) What analysis has been undertaken of the academic and financial costs and benefits of course and programme closures, including the risks to future recruitment?
- d) Why is the current course of action the best way to get us to our desired end-goal?

### Portfolio Review

- 7. Since autumn 2024 a process of 'Portfolio Review' has been taking place across the University, involving scrutiny of data on enrolments on individual UG and PGT courses and, in 2024-25, on PGT programmes. It is expected that Portfolio Review will begin consideration of UG programmes in the current academic year.
- 8. This process uses a 'traffic-light system' in which programmes and courses with enrolments below a certain level are flagged 'red' indicating they should be considered for closure, "amber", indicating that attempts should be made to increase enrolments, or "green" indicating that they can continue in their present form. Within CAHSS for example, it is understood that discussions currently focus on whether the threshold for programme numbers should be 20 or 30, and whether or not groups of cognate programmes with a high number of shared courses should be considered on the basis of combined enrolment.
- 9. Portfolio Review to date has led to the closure or suggested closure of many UG and PGT courses and some UG and PGT programmes. As this process extends further to UG programmes in the coming year, across the University, it seems possible that Portfolio Review could lead to the closure of all or almost all joint Honours UG degrees. It also seems possible that Portfolio Review, if implemented simply using a blunt enrolment metric, could lead to the closure of smaller subject areas entirely. Whilst available documents outlining the framework for Portfolio Review recognise the limitations and risks of its existing methodology, to date this has not resulted in significant change or mitigation of the framework. Furthermore, the Portfolio Review process, which has substantive and long-lasting implications for academic strategy, has not so far been presented to Senate.

### Joint Honours degree programmes:

- 10. Using enrolment figures as the key metric to determine whether or not a programme can remain open means that joint Honours degrees are particularly vulnerable to closure. Joint degrees generally require students to choose courses from amongst those offered simultaneously to students on single-Honours degrees. They enable and support interdisciplinarity and academic dialogue across a wide range of subjects, promoting the kind of flexibility and cross-disciplinary thinking that is acknowledged by the University as a key aspiration for our graduates.

11. At the academic level, joint degrees reflect the breadth and academic excellence of our institution and represent distinctive opportunities for our students. Closing such programmes risks damaging our efforts to offer a diverse and rich curriculum and depriving students of the opportunity to learn about less familiar and specialist areas of scholarship. Many joint degrees serve distinctive and important market niches, as well as enhancing recruitment and offering students greater choice. Joint and specialist programmes demonstrate our strength and dynamism as a centre of learning, and contribute to our international reputation and appeal to students across disciplines.

Small-intake programmes and implications for specific subject areas:

12. Some disciplines and subject areas are characterised more than others by small-intake and joint Honours programmes. A blunt enrolment threshold as the sole metric of evaluation might mean the closure of all or a substantial number of programmes in those disciplines and subject areas.
13. Some small-intake, specialist programmes have particular value beyond their financial benefit to the University, whether to industry, in particular specialist areas, to specific communities, or to students, who value the opportunities it represents. Assessment of the viability of programmes should include consideration of these other values.

Cost savings?

14. A major stated rationale for closing smaller-intake programmes is that the university needs to make rapid cuts to expenditure, with the implication that closing small-intake programmes will save money. No accompanying work has been shared with Schools to scrutinise the costs associated with running specific programmes, nor the likely consequence for overall recruitment of their closure.
15. Many programmes in the university recruit small numbers of students but share all or most of their courses with other programmes. This is particularly true of part-time and joint programmes. Joint programmes typically have no additional teaching costs and minimal additional administration costs (primarily the cost of maintaining a distinct DPT). For this reason, closing them is unlikely to lead to net financial savings.
16. In some disciplines, total recruitment is at a sustainable level, while being made up of students on multiple smaller and in some cases joint programmes each of which, taken individually, might appear unviable by metrics taken out of context. If all such programmes were to be closed, this could seriously undermine our ability to continue teaching in a number of disciplines. It may also reduce overall recruitment as many joint programmes offer combinations of courses that are not available on single-honours degrees.
17. Finally, it is unclear what the proposed time-scale is for programme closures, and whether or not this process can contribute to the University's target savings of £140 million over the next 18 months (or the local budget targets that have been set for Schools and Colleges over this year and next year). Is it envisaged that programmes could be closed after offers have been made via UCAS? If not,

how could programme closures contribute to the UoE's target saving within the stated time-scale?

Risk to income:

18. It does not appear that the risks to income of closing smaller programmes including joint degrees, with their distinctive recruitment potential, have been modelled. Therefore, there is concern that not only will programme closures not be an effective cost-saving measure, but it may also be a harmful strategy in financial terms, since it is not clear that it will offer substantial savings and would appear to risk a decline in income.
19. In addition, the scope of potential programme closures appears very large. Initial analysis suggests that around half of students in CAHSS for example, are enrolled on programmes with fewer than 30 students. What evidence do we have, and what analysis has been undertaken to provide confidence that we could still recruit the same number and calibre of students if we closed the degree programmes which currently attract them?
20. These financial risks should be considered in addition to the academic harms to closing small and joint programmes identified above.

Questions for discussion and motions for approval::

21. To contribute to Senate's better understanding and to support a discussion at Senate of these issues, University and College leadership are asked to please provide information at the October meeting in response to the questions listed below. (The authors have made suggestions for who may be well-placed to answer specific questions, but we are happy to defer to the leadership team as to who this is in practice.)

Q1: Will leadership (e.g. the Provost or other suitable office-holder) please outline for Senate their vision of the overall size and shape of the University's programme and course offerings, and why this new shape and size is desirable, for discussion at this meeting?

Q2: Whilst we understand that Portfolio Review is imagined as a 'business as usual' regular housekeeping exercise, nevertheless in the present context of large-scale savings required within the next two years, will the Provost or other appropriate office-holder please explain whether Portfolio Review is envisaged as making a contribution to cost savings, and if so, what kind of indicative cost savings are sought through this mechanism?

Q3: Will the leadership (either Heads of College or an appropriate office-holder able to provide an overview) please outline how PR is operating within the three Colleges, and highlight any significant differences and similarities?

22. In addition, to enable Senate's oversight of the University's academic mission and to support Schools in the process of Portfolio Review, Senate is asked to vote on the following motions:

Senate requests that University and/or College leadership provide the following documents, for review and approval by Senate, and for the information of Schools, prior to Schools being requested to formalise programme closures via Portfolio Review Academic Year 25/26:

1. A modelling of the 25/26 Portfolio Review Framework, inclusive or any new UG thresholds, which includes
  - a. Anticipated loss of incomes as a result of implied programme closures.
  - b. Estimated savings in Professional Service and Academic Staff costs associated with Course and Programme closures.
  - c. Assessment of the potential academic harm arising from the closure of the proposed programmes, including protecting opportunities for specialist study (even if in small numbers), consideration of current and future industry needs for particular specialist programmes, and the overall disciplinary context.
2. Any cost/income metrics proposed to inform School or College level decisions about programme sustainability, as might be used to support maintenance or closure of courses and programmes.
3. Should the UG 25/26 Portfolio Review UG framework not include measures to assess Joint Programme enrolment on the basis of clustered cognate programmes, a specific risk analysis of widespread closure of Joint Programmes, including:
  - a. Anticipated loss of incomes as a result of implied programme closures.
  - b. Estimated savings in Professional Service and Academic Staff, informed by
  - c. An assessment of applicant behaviour (i.e. likely rates of retention through recruitment to single-honours degree).
  - d. Assessment of the potential academic harm arising from the closure of the proposed programmes, including protecting opportunities for specialist study (even if in small numbers), consideration of current and future industry needs for particular specialist programmes, and the overall disciplinary context.

### **Resource Implications**

23. A more considered approach to our portfolio of programmes that considers the real net costs of running them is likely to lead to better decisions, including the maintenance of income streams for the university which could otherwise be lost.

### **Risk Management**

24. This paper seeks to mitigate the risks of harms including academic harm and financial harm, in terms of potential loss of reputation and income arising from the present approach to Portfolio Review.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals**

25. This paper contributes to Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 10 which describes the University's commitment to ensuring a quality education, widening participation and reducing inequalities. The Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals require interdisciplinary collaboration: closure of joint honours programmes without proper mitigation or plans to address interdisciplinarity within the curriculum therefore do not appear to respond adequately to this and this paper asks that this is considered

### **Equality and Diversity**

26. Reducing the offering of smaller, specialist and Joint Honours programmes disproportionately impacts students who may have less choice in University destination (e.g. those with caring responsibilities) as the offering at UoE may be the only one within geographic reach for them. In addition, some smaller and specialist disciplines including study of languages may be disproportionately impacted by the proposed closures, which may impact efforts to diversify and the curriculum. Proper consideration of these impacts must be taken into account.

### **Consultation**

27. This paper is based on discussion amongst elected Senate members, including academics from all Colleges and Professional Services staff, and with colleagues outside Senate. It was shared with one Head of College and comments invited. It has been revised in response to input from the Senate Business Committee.

#### **Authors**

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Rachel Muers (Divinity)  
Ben Goddard (Mathematics)

#### **Presenter**

Tamara Trodd (ECA)

**Proposer:** Tamara Trodd

**Seconder:** Ben Goddard

### **Freedom of information**

This paper is Open.

**Senate**  
**1 October 2025**

**Transparency, Accountability and Senate Oversight in the Context of Financial Restructuring**

**Description of Paper**

1. This paper aims to improve confidence and strengthen engagement between Senate, University Court, and University Executive amid the ongoing economic restructuring. It promotes robust communication and timely sharing of detailed information among governing bodies, enabling Senate to fulfil its statutory duties under applicable legislation.
2. The proposed actions support Senate's core responsibility to oversee academic performance, safeguard educational quality during forthcoming budget reductions, and empower Senate to scrutinise measures and advise Court on academic risks.

**Action requested/recommendation**

3. ***Senate is asked to approve the following points as statements of Senate's collective view and requisition to the University Executive:***
4. **A.1.** Senate formally asks for detailed information pertaining to the restructuring of the University planned by the Executive by the next Senate meeting. To allow for proper scrutiny this information should be provided, if possible, in an itemised format by School and include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - 1) **Ongoing and planned academic and structural changes** covering course closures, degree programme modifications, staff reductions, recruitment freezes, and estate downsizing, with rationales, costs and impact assessments.
  - 2) **Financial planning and risk management** including state of reserves, revenue, capital projects, and cost-benefit analyses of proposed actions.
  - 3) **Stakeholder engagement and reputational impact** detailing consultations with staff and students, alongside assessments of potential reputational risks.
  - 4) **An analysis of the factors that motivate** the changes and how the planned changes preserve the University's mission and values
5. **A.2.** Senate formally asks the Executive to maintain clear accountability in the restructuring of the institution, beyond budget setting. Senate recognises the critical importance of Heads of School and local leadership teams in implementing changes, given their detailed understanding of local needs. However, the Executive should remain responsible for strategic coherence and consequences and provide clear evidence to Senate that local feedback and



cross-consideration of risks have been thoroughly assessed before any proposed restructuring or budget setting.

6. **A.3.** Senate formally affirms its statutory duty to scrutinise the restructuring plans under Scottish law and the need for detailed data to do so.

### **Background and Context**

7. On 25 February, the Principal announced £140 million in budget reductions over 18 months. A voluntary severance scheme was implemented but a substantial shortfall remains. The Executive has indicated further measures including programme closures, operational expenditure cuts, centralisation of services, and staffing reductions. However, detailed restructuring plans have not been shared with Senate. Senate members and the wider University community have raised significant concerns regarding the potential impact on academic standards and institutional governance, as reflected in a recent vote of no confidence in the Executive and calls for enhanced transparency and scrutiny. This paper requests information and analysis to help restore the confidence of the University community.

### **Discussion**

8. Senate has the statutory duty to “be responsible for the overall planning, coordination, development and supervision of the academic work of the University” and to “superintend teaching” and “promote research” under Scottish legislation. The scale and pace of the planned budget reductions (£140 million over 18 months) are unprecedented and carry inherent risks to the quality and stability of teaching and research. While the Executive has repeatedly assured the University that extensive analyses and risk assessments have been conducted, no plans have been shared with Senate. Access to detailed information is essential for Senate to fulfil its statutory role by effectively scrutinising the academic, financial, and reputational risks involved and ensuring alignment with the University’s long-term academic priorities.
9. Senate acknowledges and values the essential role of Heads of Schools and local leadership teams in making informed decisions that reflect the specific needs of their areas. Nonetheless, Senate expresses concern that Executive-imposed budget reductions, without sufficient consultation, strategic planning, or mechanisms to gather and communicate local feedback, place undue pressure on local governance. This also fosters the wrong perception that local units alone bear responsibility for difficult decisions, while the Executive’s central role in both the financial challenges and subsequent measures remains insufficiently acknowledged.
10. This approach also increases the risk of a “crisis governance”, with urgent decision-making, limited transparency, and inadequate engagement with academic staff and students, thus threatening to erode trust, damage the University’s reputation, and compromise academic standards.

**Resource Implications**

11. The information requested by Senate concerns detailed plans and risk assessments that the Executive has previously confirmed are already in place. Providing this data should not require new analyses or impose a significant additional burden beyond collating and presenting it clearly. This transparency is crucial to restore confidence in the University's governance.

**Risk Management**

12. Without access to detailed information, Senate cannot adequately assess the academic, reputational, and operational risks of restructuring or provide informed advice. This lack of transparency will undermine shared governance and weaken confidence in decision-making.
13. Moreover, the information requested relates to institutional-level plans and risk assessments, not personal data or details about identifiable individuals. There are therefore no valid confidentiality grounds to withhold such material from Senate. General assertions of confidentiality cannot justify denying Senate access to information required to fulfil its legal duties.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals**

14. This paper seeks to strengthen transparent and accountable governance, enabling informed academic oversight and rebuilding trust across the institution. Access to the requested information will support decisions that safeguard the University's core mission while enhancing its long-term financial and academic resilience.

**Equality and Diversity**

15. The requested information is essential for Senate to assess equality and diversity impacts of restructuring, ensuring that vulnerable groups are not disproportionately affected. Transparent governance and robust oversight will help safeguard the University's commitment to inclusion and mitigate potential adverse effects.

**Communication, implementation and evaluation of any action agreed**

16. Senate formally asks that its view, if agreed, will be publicised with the Senate minutes and communicated to all staff via the Senate Support Team.
17. Should point A.1 be approved and the Executive fail to address it, Senate formally asks all staff to be informed of Senate's decisions, requests, and any Executive responses or lack thereof. Sent via the Senate Support Team within two working days of the decision (if possible), this communication should include, for transparency, the full wording of the requests and a statement on the Executive's non-compliance.

**Consultation**

18. The paper is based on wide consultation among elected members of Senate and information provided by respondents to the invitation to co-sign the elected members' open letter.

**Authors**

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**Presenter**

Enrique Sanchez-Molano

**Proposer:** Enrique Sanchez Molano  
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**Seconders:** Giulio Santori (CSE),  
Michael Barany (CAHSS)

**Freedom of Information:** Open

**Senate**

**1 October 2025**

**Communications from the University Court**

**Description of paper**

1. To update Senate on certain matters considered by the University Court at its meeting held on 23 June 2025.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to note the report.

**Background and context**

3. The University Court routinely reports to Senate on business which is of interest to Senate.

**Discussion**

4. Please see Appendix 1 for a report of business conducted at the 23 June meeting.

**Resource implications**

5. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

**Risk management**

6. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

**Equality and diversity**

7. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

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

8. Regular reports on the Court's work of interest to Senate will continue to be submitted.

**Author**

Daniel Wedgwood  
Governance & Court Services  
September 2025

**Freedom of Information**

Open Paper

**Appendix 1:****23 June 2025****1 Principal's Report**

The Principal's report was noted. Key points in the report included the following:

- confirmation that the University would host a new national supercomputer;
- publication of the results of the national Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, in which the University's outcomes had improved substantially in a number of areas;
- the process to recruit a Chief Financial Officer; and
- publication of the report of Professor Pamela Gillies' investigation into financial oversight and decision making at the University of Dundee.

**2 Senate report**

Court received reports of Senate Business conducted at the Senate meetings held on 5 February, 26 March, 24 April and 20 May 2025. Court also received reports of e-Senate business conducted between 23 April and 7 May 2025. Court noted that Senate had passed a vote of no confidence in the University Executive, in relation to the current cost-saving plans, and that this had been communicated to the Executive. Court was informed that the aim of the cost-saving plans was to support the University's academic mission, by making the University more financially resilient.

**3 Finance and Planning**

Court received a full update on the University's financial position and discussed and approved the budget for 2025-26 and 2026-27, noting planned and on-going work to ensure financial sustainability.

**4 Data-Driven Innovation (DDI) Initiative Progress Report**

Court received an update report on this multi-year initiative, centred on the large-scale government-funded Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal, and noted its connections to other innovation activity and regional collaboration. The many successes of the initiative were noted, with the focus now on accelerating delivery of an ambitious regional agenda in collaboration with partners.

**5 Court membership**

Court approved a number of appointments to Court committees ahead of the next academic year.

The current membership of Court and its committees can be found on the University website: <https://governance-strategic-planning.ed.ac.uk/governance/university-committees/court-committees>

**6 Knowledge Strategy Committee Future Governance**

In line with the recommendation of Senate, Court approved the disbandment of Knowledge Strategy Committee and noted work to develop alternative governance arrangements in this area.

**7 Resolutions**

Court approved Resolutions to found professorial chairs and to confirm undergraduate and postgraduate degree regulations for the coming academic year.

**8 Other Items**

Regular reports were received from the Students' Association, the Sports Union, the Development and Alumni Office, Senate and Court's committees. Annual reports were received on Prevent duty compliance and requirements of the Education Act 1994 in relation to the Students' Association. Court also approved amendments to the Delegated Authority Schedule and the Development Trust's Deed of Trust and approved regulations for the future election of a Senior Lay Member. Court also approved the implementation on 1 October 2025 of Ordinance No. 217 (General Council Membership and Registration).

**Senate**

**1 October 2025**

**Report from Central Academic Promotions Committee**

**Description of paper**

1. Report of the recommendations of the Central Academic Promotions Committee.

**Action requested / Recommendation**

2. For information.

**Resource implications**

3. Increased salaries will impact on each individual College's staff budget.

**Risk Management**

4. N/A

**Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals**

5. N/A

**Equality and Diversity**

6. Equality and Diversity is central to the considerations of the Central Academic Promotions Committee.

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

7. N/A

**Further information**

**Author**

Louise Kidd  
HR Partner Reward  
University HR  
28 August 2025

**Freedom of information:** Open

**REPORT FROM THE CENTRAL ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE**

The following award of Personal Chair has been made since the last report to Senate:

Title	Initial	Surname	College	School/Deanery	Personal Chair Title	Date of Effect
Dr	A	Akram	CMVM	Centre for Inflammation Research, Institute of Regeneration and Repair	Personal Chair of Thoracic Oncology and Imaging	1 August 2025
Dr	A	English	CAHSS	Moray House School of Education & Sport	Personal Chair of Philosophy of Education	1 August 2025

Louise Kidd  
University HR  
28 August 2025



## SENATE

1 October 2025

### Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate and its Standing Committees – Report on the post-meeting surveys (2024-25)

#### Description of paper

1. This paper provides members with analysis of responses received as part of the Senate post-meeting survey which was issued throughout the 2024/25 academic year, and updates members of actions taken in response.

#### Action requested / Recommendation

2. Senate is invited to note the findings of the Senate internal effectiveness review for 2024/25, and the associated responses.

#### Background and context

3. 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.
4. At its meeting of 20 May 2025, Senate approved the plans for the 2024/25 Senate Annual Internal Effectiveness Review; whereby a report would be drafted using data collected from surveys of Senate members conducted following each ordinary Senate meeting. Individual reports on each meetings survey results are accessible to Senate members on the [Senate Members Portal](#). Several changes to practice have occurred over the year in response to feedback.
5. The Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees (paper S 25/26 1X) is provided alongside this paper, and reports on the activities of the Senate Standing Committees in the 2024/25 academic year.

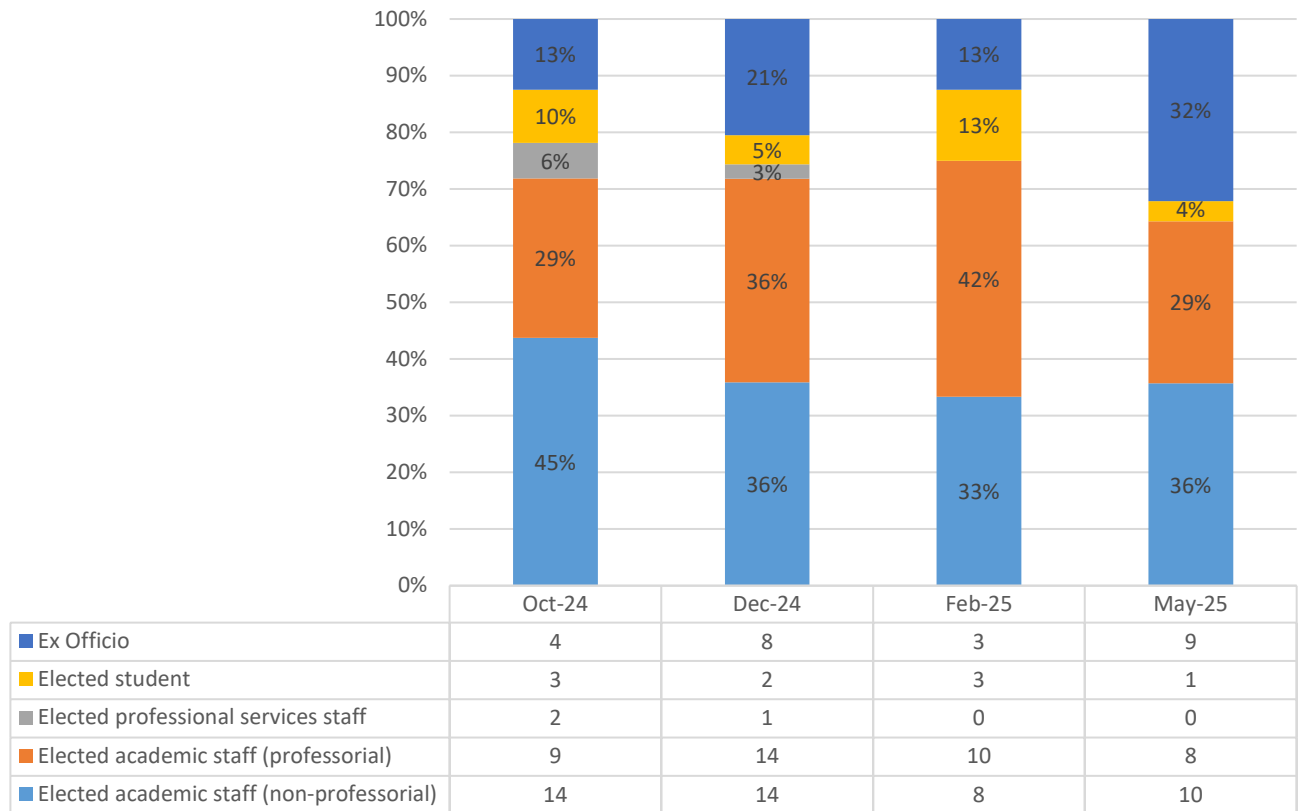
#### Discussion

6. The structure of this report mirrors the questions asked as part of the four post-meeting surveys.

#### Breakdown of respondents by membership category and mode of attendance

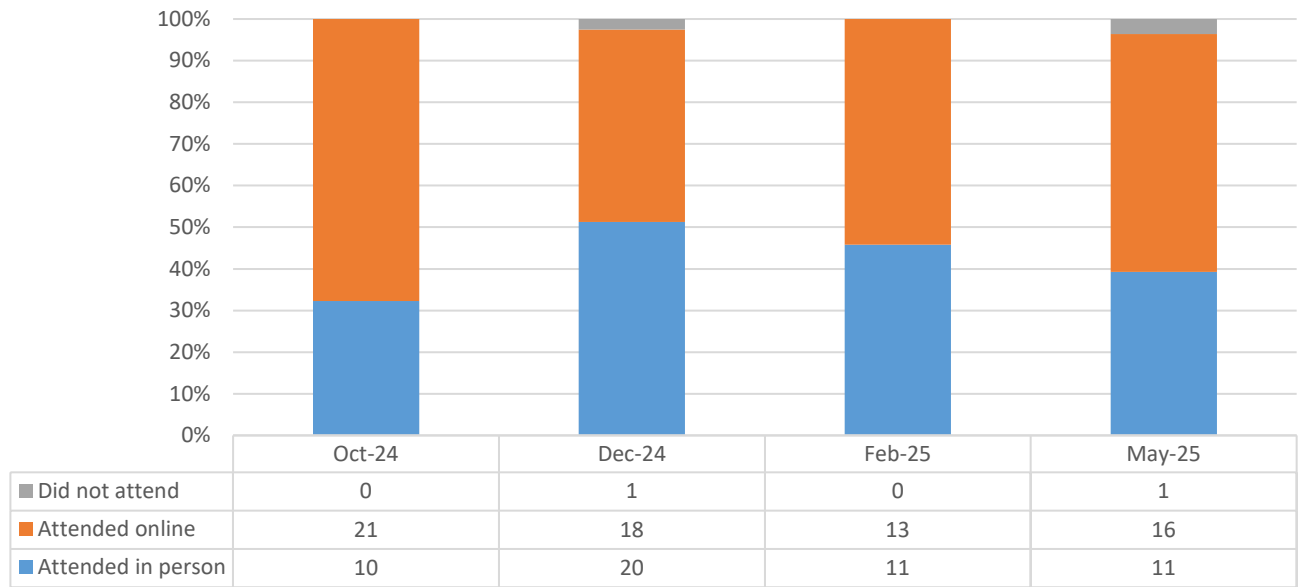
7. Over the 2024/25 academic year, responses to the post-meeting survey were received from members in membership categories as detailed below. As at 31 July 2025, the proportion of Senate members in each category was as follows: academic staff (non-professorial) 37%, academic staff (professorial) 22%, ex officio 29% (includes professional services), and student members 12%.

Responses by Senate membership category



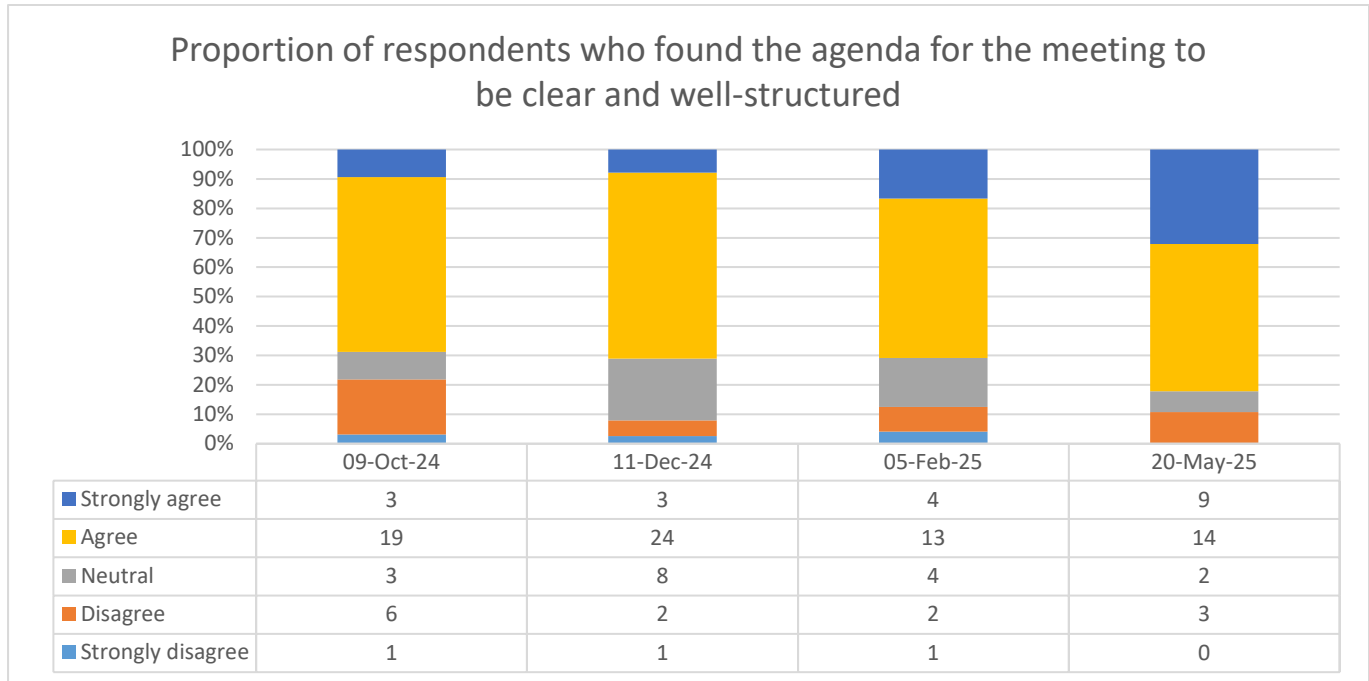
8. A mix of responses were received from members attending the meeting in person and by Microsoft Teams. Over the course of the 2024-25 academic year an average of **59** members attended in-person and **98** members attended online. Further information on member attendance is provided within appendix one.

Proportion of respondents who attended in-person and online

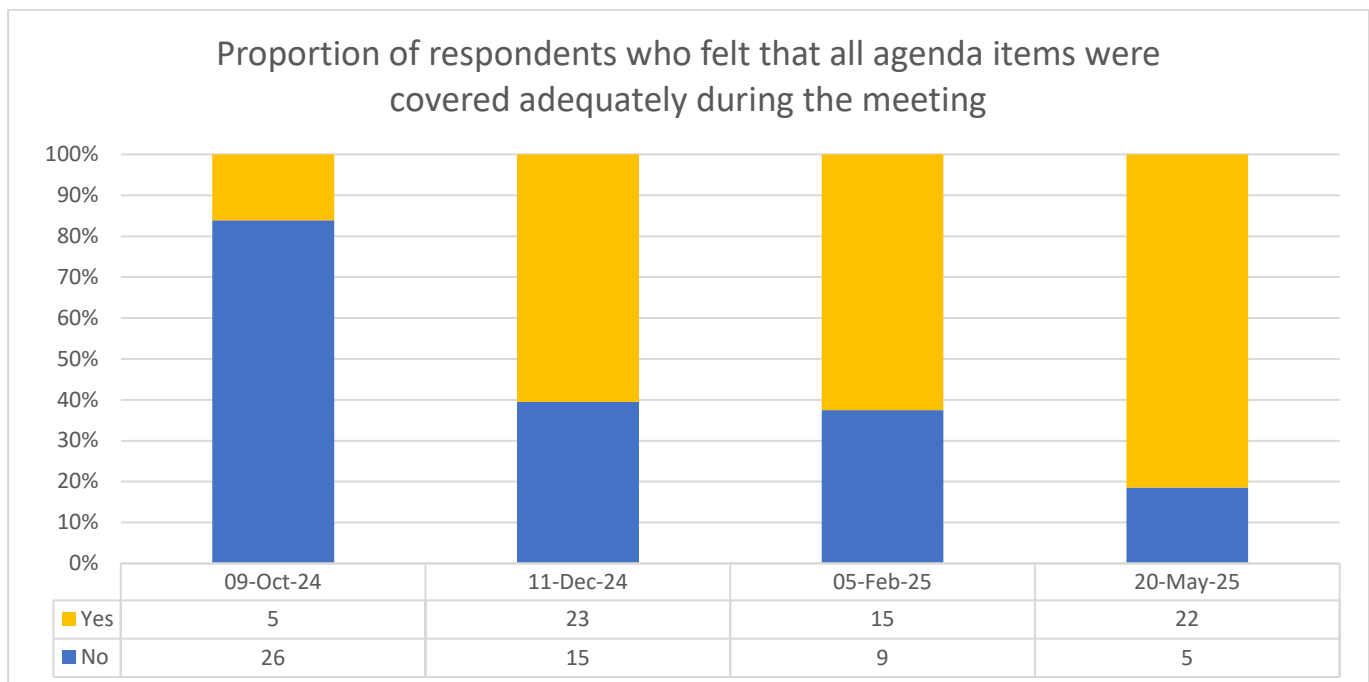


## Agendas

9. The proportion of respondents who found the agenda for the meeting to be clear and well-structured remained around 70% throughout the academic year, increasing to 82% for the May 2025 meeting.



10. The proportion of respondents who felt that all agenda items were covered adequately during ordinary Senate meetings has improved throughout the year. The meeting of 9 October 2024 appears to be a notable outlier, and the associated [post-meeting survey report](#) contains an analysis of free text comments (link to Senate Members Portal).



11. In response to Senate members' feedback consideration was, or will be, given to the following to improve the Senate agenda and the conduct of Senate business:

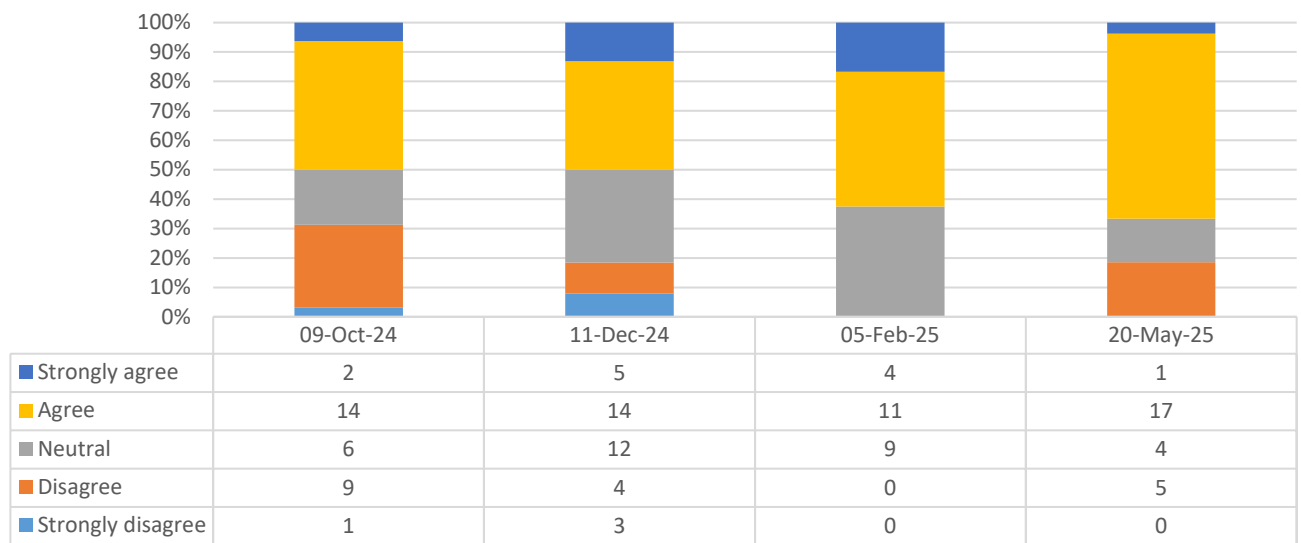
- The ordering of items to prioritise those likely to be of significant interest.
- Providing written updates, rather than verbal updates, wherever possible.
- Provision of written information on member-proposed amendments, to be facilitated through the introduction of a template amendment form.
- Clarifying the action requested of Senate, i.e., 'to approve' or 'to discuss'.
- The use of "times by the clock" to the agenda.
- The separate presentation of election papers for Senate and its committees'.
- Additional information on how to vote via Woodclap, the provision of earlier and additional links to the voting site, and providing additional clarity on what Senate was being asked to vote on.

12. The Senate Business Committee was formed during the 2024/25 academic year and the May 2025 Senate meeting was the first meeting for which the Senate Business Committee had considered the agenda and papers. Agenda related feedback from post-meeting surveys will be provided to the Senate Business Committee for consideration and action as appropriate.

#### Members experience during Senate meetings

13. Over the course of the 2024/25 academic year, a significant proportion of survey respondents have fed back that they do not consider members to have an equal opportunity to contribute to discussions. In each of the [post-meeting survey reports](#), responses have indicated that the behaviour of certain Senate members contributes to adversarial atmospheres during meetings, and that this discourages other members from participating. Such behaviour was explicitly recognised by the Student President at the May 2025 Senate meeting, and was referenced within the last externally facilitated review of Senate effectiveness. As an issue identified in the last externally facilitated review of Senate effectiveness, the University Lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will lead on an action to develop a Senate 'Behaviours Agreement' during the 2025/26 academic year.

Proportion of respondents who, during the meeting, felt that all members had an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion.



14. Members also commented that:

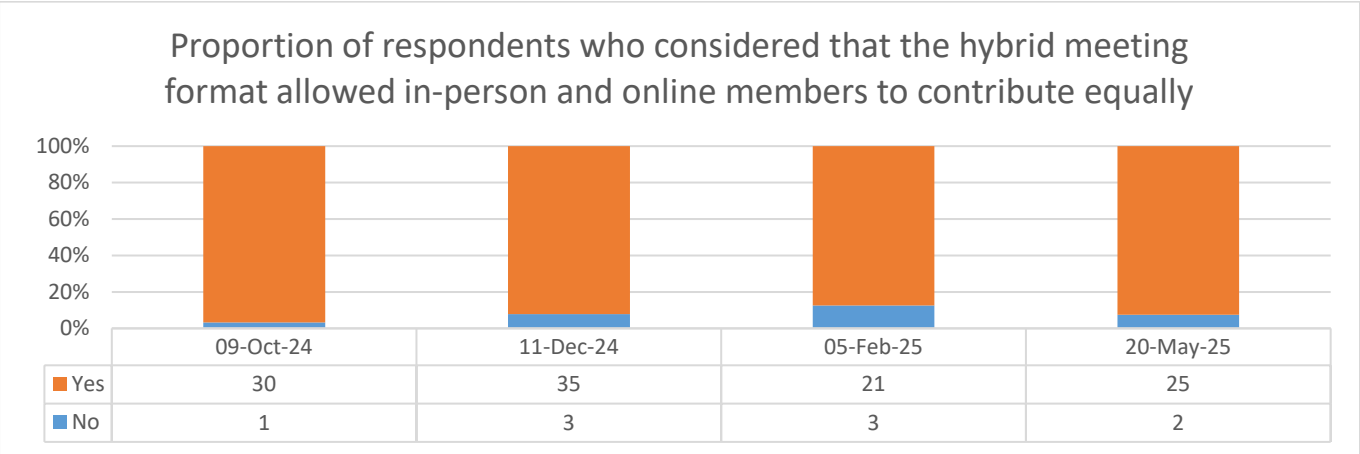
- The timings given to agenda items sometimes prevented members' contributions.
- Extended discussion on relatively minor topics had left less time for discussion of more important topics. Discussions on procedural matters and amendments were given as examples.
- For the October and December meetings in particular, it was commented that a small number of Senate members made a disproportionate contribution to discussion.

15. In response to members' feedback, all Senate members are asked to be collegial and constructive during meetings; and to be mindful of the length and frequency of their contributions.

16. Senate members are asked to note Senate Standing Order 19, which states that *"A Member shall not, except by permission of the President, speak more than once to any Motion or Amendment in one debate upon one subject, except to order, in explanation, or in reply as the mover of the resolution under discussion."*

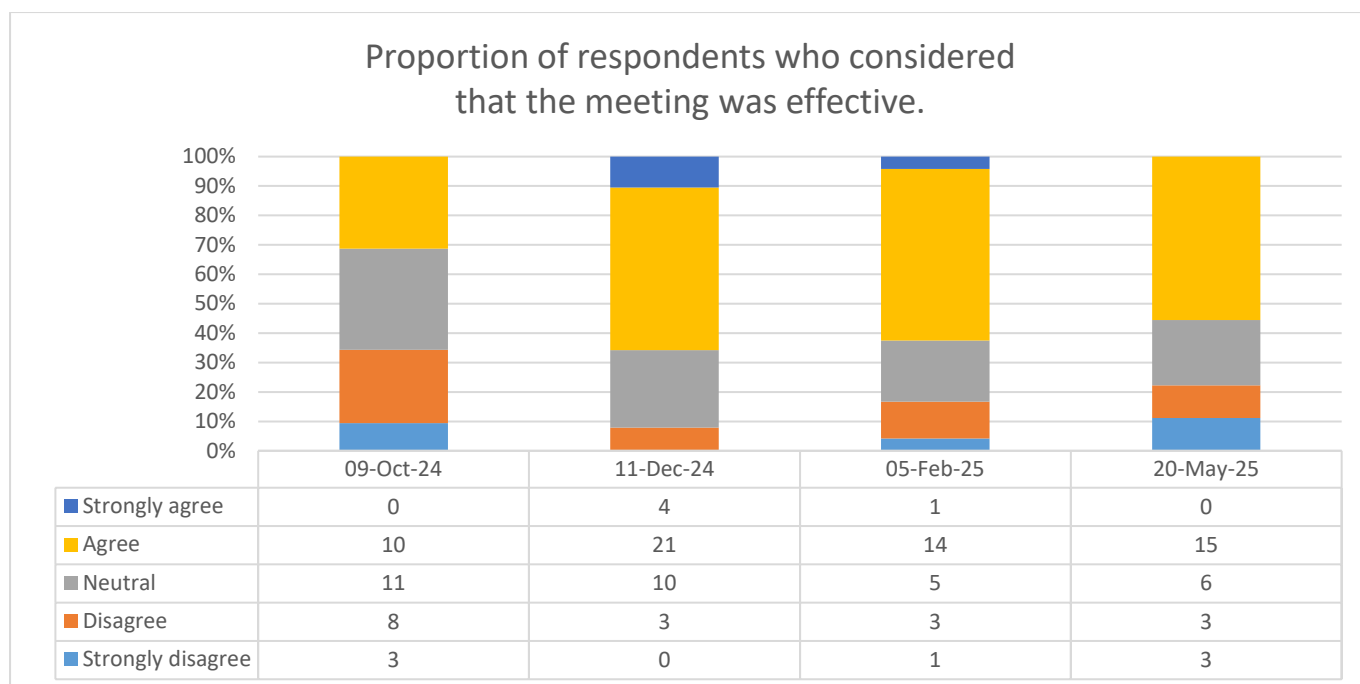
Hybrid meeting arrangements

17. Throughout the year, the vast majority of respondents considered that the hybrid meeting format allowed in-person and online members to contribute equally. While some members would prefer meetings to be held online or in-person only, there was an appreciation that the hybrid meeting format provided members with the opportunity to engage with Senate when they might otherwise have needed to submit apologies. Further information on in-person and online attendance is provided within appendix one.



Meeting effectiveness

18. Apart from the October 2024 meeting, the majority of respondents considered ordinary Senate meetings during the 2024/25 academic year to have been effective. For the meeting of 9 October 2024, and as noted above, the majority of respondents did not consider all agenda items to have been covered adequately during the meeting. For further information, the [post-meeting survey report](#) contains an analysis of free text comments (link to Senate Members Portal).



## Resource implications

19. Changes arising out of the review of post-meeting surveys have thus far had minimal resource implications, with many changes taking the form of adjustments to existing practice. Should any additional actions be proposed, either in terms of this annual review or in response to future Senate feedback, the associated resource implications will need to be outlined and agreed.

## Risk Management

20. The annual effectiveness review process assists the University in ensuring that its academic governance arrangements are effective. Senate member contributions through post-meeting surveys or similar provides timely feedback to identify and address issues.

## Equality & Diversity

21. 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. Any updates to policies and practices arising from this review will be equality impact assessed where required.

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

22. Two reports (the annual report from the standing committees to Senate and a summary report of the findings and action taken as a result of the Senate post-meeting survey) were presented to the October 2025 Senate meeting. As open papers, these have been published on the University's website and will be referred to in the Senate Committees' Newsletter. Copies of the reports were provided to members of the University Court for information.



23. It is intended that the practice of issuing post-meeting surveys will continue in 2025/26, with Senate members' feedback used to identify further enhancements and, where appropriate, evaluate existing changes.

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**Freedom of Information - Open**

August 2025

**Appendix One: meeting attendance data**

	<b>9 October 2024</b>	<b>11 December 2024</b>	<b>5 February 2025</b>	<b>26 March 2025</b>	<b>24 April 2025</b>	<b>20 May 2025</b>
Location	Auditorium A (Shirley Hall), Chancellor's Building, Little France	Larch Lecture Theatre, Nucleus, Kings Buildings	Main Lecture Theatre, Swann Building, Kings Buildings	Reid Concert Hall, Reid School of Music, Central Area	Lecture Theatre B, 40 George Square, Central Area	Larch Lecture Theatre, Nucleus, Kings Buildings
Meeting type	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Special	Special	Ordinary
Quorum obtained?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Attendees: % of overall membership	61%	64%	65%	59%	59%	68%
Attendees: Headcount	153	163	163	146	149	167
Attendees: In-person	51	69	62	57	46	67
Attendees: Online	102	94	101	89	103	100

**Senate****1 October 2025****Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees****Description of paper**

1. The annual report of the Senate Standing Committees 2024-25: Education Committee (SEC); Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC); and Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to note the annual report.

Please note that this paper is not intended for discussion during the meeting. Where substantive discussion of a topic is required, this should be supported by a Senate paper providing the necessary information to enable appropriate consideration by Senate.

**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 2024-25.

**Discussion**

4. 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**

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

**Risk Management**

6. Provision of the following annual reports ensures compliance with Senate Standing Order 22(b), and supports Senate's oversight of standing committee activity.

**Equality and Diversity**

7. This paper does not propose any actions. Any Equality and Diversity issues related to Standing Committee business are considered by the relevant Committee.

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

8. Two reports (the annual report from the standing committees to Senate and a summary report of the findings and action taken as a result of the Senate post-meeting survey) were presented to the October 2025 Senate meeting. As open papers, these have been published on the University's website and will be referred to in the Senate Committee's Newsletter. The annual report will be shared with University Court for information.

### **Authors**

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Academic Quality and Standards  
August 2025

**Freedom of Information Open**

## Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees 2024-25

### 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 2024-25.

### 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/Task Groups/Committees 2024-25

Name of Committee	No. of meetings
Senate Education Committee	4
Academic Policy and Regulations Committee	5
Senate Quality Assurance Committee	5 + one electronic

Name of Sub/Task Group/Committee	Task Group of:
PGR Concessions Sub-Group	APRC
Student Appeal Committee	APRC
Student Fitness to Practice Appeal Committee	APRC
Student Discipline Committee	APRC
Annual Monitoring Sub-Group	SQAC
Student Support Services Annual Review Sub-Committee	SQAC
Student Data Monitoring Task Group	SQAC
Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group	SEC
HEAR Recommendation Panel	SEC
External Quality Review Oversight Group	SEC, SQAC

### 4. Senate Standing Committees' Progress in 2024-25

#### 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:** The Committee received a verbal update on the business case for, and implementation of, the PGT curriculum framework. Members were further updated on changes to governance structures within the Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP), including changes to the membership of the CTP Board.

**November:** The University's CTP Lead updated the Committee on developments relating to changes in the membership of the CTP Board, which were intended to enhance focus on governance and strategy; and the Committee was informed that a CTP Implementation Group had been established to provide oversight of the management and coordination of the different elements of CTP. Separately, members were informed that the results of market sensitivity testing had been used to prepare an updated version of the Edinburgh Student Vision to be considered by Senate.

**February:** The University's CTP Lead provided a verbal report on PGT-related activity. Members were informed of progress made on the identification of the key enabling requirements (regulatory, process and system) for the PGT Curriculum Framework.

Members noted that an initial analysis of the alignment of current provision to the new PGT programme archetypes had been completed by Colleges via Portfolio Review. Analysis enabled CTP colleagues to refine their assessment of the number of current programmes that would be required to make changes to align with the PGT Curriculum Framework.

It was further reported that the CTP team were preparing for the introduction of six flexible model programme structures (archetypes) during the 2024-26 transitional phase; and that work was underway within Schools to understand the end-to-end requirements to design, organise, and run provision built around each of the archetypes.

The ambition to provide students with greater levels of self-selection within their programme was highlighted, and members further noted that Colleges were leading work regarding the market value of promoting specific degree pathways.

**May:** The Committee noted budgetary updates regarding CTP, as well as proposals to embed elements of CTP within the Learning and Teaching Workstream.

#### 2. Student Experience – Actions Taken in Response to Student Survey Results

**September:** Members received a report on the findings from the 2024 National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and a summary of how the University intended to respond. The Committee noted that improving student experience was a core priority of the University and that there would be a continued focus on significant areas of work that aim to establish enhanced, long-term fundamental changes to student experience across the University, especially focused on assessment and feedback, student voice and course organisation.

## Priorities

**November:** The Committee discussed the University's capability to gather useful data via surveys and benchmarks such as the Graduate Outcomes survey and pre-graduation surveys.

**February:** The Committee approved new institutional questions for use in PTES and PRES surveys to facilitate additional comparison of data generated through the NSS, PTES, PRES, and the Student Life Survey (SLS).

**May:** The Committee received an update on planned activity to improve how student voices are listened to and acted upon across the University. Members noted that a Student Voice Framework would be developed to provide clarity and consistency across core student voice practices, from data collection to student communications.

### 3. Assessment and Feedback

**September:** The Committee received an update from the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group, which had recently held discussions on exams and the resit diet.

Members were notified of the work undertaken to revise the University's Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities, notably the proposals to introduce minor enhancements to the operationalisation of feedback turnaround times and rubrics.

The Committee received a summary report of the FLORA (Digital Exams) project, which was tasked to produce a set of recommendations for the future of digital exams. Phase one of the FLORA project involved a platform review to help reduce the overlap between varying digital exam platforms and to consequently improve student experience. Members noted that enhancements in staff training and support for digital exam practice were ongoing, and that clarification around what constitutes digital exams were in progress to guide future developments.

**November:** The Committee noted that work to revise the Assessment and Feedback Priorities and Principles had been taken forward in consultation with College Deans. Members were informed that the revised version was subsequently approved via Convener's Action and circulated to College colleagues for wider dissemination.

The Committee considered the approach to reassessment on courses at the University, and options which could potentially reduce the dependency on the August diet for reassessment. Members noted the intention to provide Colleges with time and space to explore this with their Schools prior to any further discussion by the Committee.

**May:** The Committee received an update on proposals for the substantive review of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities, scheduled for 2025/26.

The Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group reviewed the first draft of proposed internal moderation guidance for the University. Members noted that further discussions were due to be held with colleagues in Colleges and Schools around definitions and standards setting.

### 4. Learning and Teaching Strategy

**September:** The Committee was provided with a verbal update on the progress of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, and were advised that drop-in sessions for Heads of School had been well attended and had generated valuable feedback.

## Priorities

**November:** Members were informed that the Learning and Teaching Strategy had been widely consulted upon, and that consultation responses had enabled it to be further refined and enhanced.

**February:** The Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) presented members with a final version of the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030, which reflected previous feedback from Senate and SEC. Following discussion, the Committee approved the 2030 Strategy.

**March:** Members attended and contributed to a Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Workshop session held for members of Senate and its standing committees

**May:** The Committee were informed that the Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) continued to meet with stakeholders across the University who will be key in the Strategy's implementation.

## Other matters considered during the year

**September:** The Committee noted the Student Support Model Implementation Project's positive impact on staff and students.

Members were informed that Learn Ultra had been upgraded, and that the upgrade marked a significant milestone in enhancing the University's digital learning environment. It was reported that external consultants had reviewed the upgrade, and that recommendations had been made for future IT projects.

**November:** Education Committee considered proposals for the University's NSS 2025 optional questions. Members approved the use of additional question banks 9 (welfare resources and facilities) and 15 (employability and skills) for 2025. It was commented that this decision would help to underline the University's commitment to enhancing the student experience through informed, data-driven strategies.

The new Skills for Success Framework was presented to the Committee. Members noted that employability and career mobility were core focuses of the new framework, which articulated the skills necessary for students to navigate evolving global challenges and the rising influence of AI. The Committee endorsed the direction of travel of the Skills for Success Framework.

Education Committee noted the areas for enhancement of the student experience identified by the Senate Quality Assurance Committee from annual quality reporting and internal periodic reviews.

The Committee approved the addition of two new student courses to Learn.

**February:** Committee members received an update on progress achieved following the implementation of the Widening Participation (WP) Strategy 2030. Members noted a range of updates relating to SIMD20 and ACORN targets, progression statistics, and work being undertaken to reduce the attainment gap. Members further received an overview of the five priority areas relating to the implementation of the Strategy across the student lifecycle.

Members received an update on the annual Accessibility Reviews conducted via the Learn Service, and noted highlights around School improvements, challenges, and changes in practice identified from the 2024 review.

Approved the recommendation that the SPS Certificate should be an approved School-level activity under section 6.1 of the HEAR.



## Other matters considered during the year

**May:** The Committee received an update on plans to revise the Student Guidance on the use of Generative AI and were updated on associated consultation with stakeholders.

Members provided feedback on the proposed Postgraduate Research Strategy, which was still in a draft stage. Members noted that the Strategy was being formulated to cover all aspects of PGR, including programme development and PGR student experience.

An updated Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) format was presented to the Committee. The SPA sought to better clarify the relationship between the University of Edinburgh and the Students' Association; highlight key partnership activity across the University; and improve alignment with best practice. The Committee approved the new format for the agreement for 2025/26.

## **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**

**November:** The Committee received an update on work undertaken on the CTP Postgraduate Taught Framework. Members commented on the issues under consideration in advance of wider consultation. Issues discussed included: degree-specific regulations; study period; stackable degree structure; regulations on postgraduate progression and award; award of credit on aggregate; PGT course pass mark; and degree programme specifications.

**May:** The College Deans of Education presented a proposed regulatory framework for the award of Masters with Pathway Specialism. While the Committee generally supported the direction of travel, concerns were raised about practical issues such as increased administrative workload and system implications. The Committee agreed to approve the proposed framework, with an acknowledgment that APRC cannot action systems changes or determine overall strategic direction regarding pathway-based programmes.

#### **2. Postgraduate research students**

**September:** The Committee discussed the duration of doctoral programmes across the University. Members discussed the importance of aligning regulations with practice to ensure fairness, addressing disparities caused by varying programme durations. Committee members called for standardised models to better support students during extensions or interruptions, and emphasised the need to include the PhD student voice in this work.

**March:** The Committee approved amendments to the Postgraduate Degree Regulations, which included an amendment designed to address the issue regarding entitlement to authorised interruption of studies raised at the September meeting.

#### **3. Scheduled review of policies**

**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 finally approved by University Court in June 2025 via the Resolution process, following consultation with Senate and General Council.

##### **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 2025.

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

### **College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference (November)**

The Committee approved minor changes to the Terms of Reference which did not represent significant changes in practice or policy.

### **Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy and Procedure (November)**

The Committee approved minor changes to the policy and procedure, clarifying that the policy applies only to credit-bearing courses, and adding clarification regarding admissions requirements, duration, and exceptions for visiting and non-graduating students.

Additionally, changes to abbreviations, web links, formatting, and document structure were made to improve clarity and reflect current practices.

### **Authorised Interruption of Study Policy (January)**

The Committee approved amendments to the policy, to come into effect from 2025/26. The main changes included: defining the policy more clearly as supportive rather than exceptional; distinguishing the procedures for taught and research students, due to their different needs; refining the definition of AIS; clarifying the support options for students whose studies have been interrupted; and adding detailed information about the return to study process.

### **Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy (January)**

The Committee approved the deletion of the Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy and the incorporation of the relevant material from the policy into the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes.

### **Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure (May)**

The Committee approved amendments to the policy, including changes to interview outcomes, a more comprehensive list of exclusion categories, and a revised readmission section clarifying when excluded or voluntarily withdrawn students can reapply to study at the University. The changes, which were based on consultation feedback, make the procedure more user-friendly and bring it into line with changes to related policies including the Support for Study Policy.

## **4. Students with support needs beyond the scope of the Exceptional Circumstances policy**

**November:** The Academic Registrar presented an update on work undertaken following the 'Watch That Gap' project. Members of the Committee discussed the challenges of identifying students with caring responsibilities and how this data is collected and shared with staff to help meet those students' teaching and assessment needs.

**March:** The Committee received updates on the Lecture Recording Service review and the Captioning Service Project. These services, which make lectures and other teaching activities more accessible, are often of particular value to students with disabilities or caring responsibilities. Members of the Committee discussed options for improving the availability and quality of lecture recordings.

## **Other matters considered during the year**

**University use of email as a method of contacting students (September, not due for periodic review)** The Committee approved minor amendments to this policy in order to reflect current practices and terminology.

## **Other matters considered during the year**

**Academic Year dates 2026/27 and provisional Academic Year dates 2027/28 (November)** The Committee approved the academic year dates for 2026/27 and the provisional academic year dates for 2027/28.

### **Annual Concessions Report 2023/24 (November)**

The Committee noted an annual report of the approved concession requests for exemptions from University policy or regulations which were approved by the Committee during the 2023/24 session. Proposed next steps included monitoring any impact on concessions resulting from changes to the regulations, and considering potential changes that might have positive impact specifically on the postgraduate research student cohort.

### **Exams delivery and extra time changes (March)**

The Committee approved proposals to move to a two-session exam day from 2025/26 onwards, and to return to percentage-based extra time, rather than the blanket hour extension introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, in exams for students with schedules of adjustments. Members commented on the volume of exams as an issue that requires broader Senate attention.

### **Updated Support for Study Policy (May, not due for periodic review)**

The Committee reviewed the revised Support for Study policy and suggested a number of further amendments. Subject to those amendments being made, and on the understanding that a further review of the policy will be undertaken in 2026/27, the Committee approved the updated Support for Study policy.

### **Minor amendments to the Student Appeal Regulations and Expected Behaviour Policy (May, not due for periodic review)**

The Committee approved amendments to the regulations which reflect changes in related policies and experience of individual appeal cases, including a change to the late appeal final deadline from two years to one year. The Committee also approved updates to the Expected Behaviour Policy which were due to structural changes in Registry Services.

### **Updates to the Policy Review Schedule (May)**

The Committee agreed to approve changes to the Policy Review Schedule, delaying some reviews scheduled for 2024/25 to next academic year, and transferring responsibility for the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy to SQAC.

### **Student Discipline Committee membership (September and May)**

The Committee approved the membership of the Student Discipline Committee, including the new Convener and Vice-Convener for 2025/26.

### **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 2024/25, proposals reviewed included:

- **Programmes with non-standard semester dates (CMVM) (March).** The Committee approved non-standard semester dates for a number of programmes in CMVM. It was noted that CMVM were aiming to align their online programme dates more closely with the University's standard semester dates.
- **Non-standard end dates for the Online MBA (May).** The Committee approved non-standard semester dates for the Online MBA.

#### 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. Responding to 2023 Quality Enhancement & Standards Review (QESR)

The recommendations of the [QESR](#) require institutional focus and progress in several areas. In response, there has been a range of activities throughout 2024/25 to drive progress throughout the University against the 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.

**September:** The Committee reviewed the report on Annual Monitoring responses submitted by each School/Deanery. The responses addressed key areas aligning with the QESR recommendations, including student outcomes (i.e., awarding gaps), assessment and feedback and training for Tutors and Demonstrators. Actions for further progress were directed to various areas of responsibility within the University for response back to SQAC.

**February:** The Committee discussed and approved the Annual Monitoring templates for the 2024/25 reporting cycle. Key priorities aligned with the QESR recommendations, including assessment and feedback, student outcomes and PGR training were all retained in the templates for further focus through the quality process.

**April & May:** The Committee received papers addressing Degree Awards data and updates from the Student Data monitoring Task Group on their work. See the updates detailed for priority 4 below.

#### 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. The Committee has oversight of the activities to update the QA framework, guidance and policies in response to the TQEF, as well as ensuring that continuing QA activities are maintained.

**December:** Following the introduction of the TQEF, a new institutional annual quality reporting process to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has been implemented from 2024/25 and is known as the Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP). The SEAP was co-signed by the Principal and Vice President Education and before it was submitted to the SFC on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024. It was also shared with SQAC for information at the December 2024 meeting.

In a verbal update, the Committee were informed that the schedule for the new institutional quality review process, the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review \(TQER\)](#), has been confirmed by the SFC and that the University will be reviewed in 2027/28.

The Committee discussed the College Annual Quality Reports and key themes highlighted by the College Deans of Quality. College Reports are informed by the School Quality Reports submitted earlier in the year, and highlight common challenges at College level for the attention of College QA Committees as well as SQAC. Key themes highlighted in the reports included assessment & feedback, student and staff experience, use of Generative AI and resources.

**February:** The Committee discussed and approved minor changes to the University standard remit for IPRs to reflect a slight shift in emphasis and terminology required by the TQEF, particularly in relation to the change from 'student voice' to 'student partnership'.

The Committee considered the report of the Student Support Service Annual Review (SSSAR) for 2023/24, highlighting areas of good practice and key themes arising from the service reports. As the requirement to review is an element of the QA framework, but the framework does not mandate a specific approach to the review, there was discussion of the best way to approach Service Review Activity.

The Committee considered the annual reports of Academic Appeals and Student Conduct. There was particular discussion of how misuse of Generative AI is captured in the academic misconduct section of the Student Conduct Report; the Committee requested that, going forward, misuse of Generative AI is reported as its own issue to better understand the number of cases which are escalated to the Office of Student Conduct within the University.

**April:** The annual report of the University's Complaints Handling Team was considered by the Committee. It was recognised that the complaints handling procedure must map to the clearly defined sector model. This model, with key performance indicators (KPIs) set by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), has been in place for two academic years. It is expected that the third year's report will be able to identify any trends.

### **3. *Evaluation and monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the new student support model (SSM)***

**September:** The Committee reviewed the themes arising from student support responses provided by Schools in their annual quality reports. The reports indicated that the Student Advisor role was highly valued within Schools and these colleagues had made a significant impact in the success of the Student Support model. In relation to the Cohort Lead role, the reports highlighted demand for enhanced central guidance on how to deploy the role and design events to best engage with students.

The Committee referred this School-level insight, along with examples of particular good practice, to the Student Support Continuous Improvement Group (SSCIG).

**December:** A new framework to evaluate the student support model was presented to the Committee. It was outlined that the framework relied on various data sources and was expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact of the model. Discussion emphasised the importance of benchmarking, of the ability to locate and triangulate data as evidence for the evaluation, and the need for metrics to be clearly defined and understood.

**February:** The Committee discussed and approved the Annual Monitoring templates for the 2024/25 reporting cycle. The student support sections were refined to best capture the areas of focus for the Student Support evaluation as the implementation phase had passed and emphasis had turned to monitoring and evaluation.

### **4. Student Data Monitoring (Awarding Gap)**

A Student Data Monitoring task group has been set up under SQAC with a remit to explore methodological options and make recommendations to SQAC for a more systematic approach to monitoring student data at University level. The group comprises members of SQAC and colleagues with specific expertise drawn from across the University.

**September:** In its discussion of student outcomes detailed in the School Annual Quality Reports, the Committee considered responses from Schools to the question of Student Outcomes and directed actions towards the Student Data Monitoring Task Group for follow up.

**December:** In a verbal update, the Committee was informed of the first two meetings of the Group and the workstreams under development; one focussed on data collection and systems and the other focussed on sector activity and approaches to closing gaps.

**April:** The Committee considered a paper submitted on behalf of the Student Data Monitoring Task Group which outlined sector analysis work undertaken by the group. The paper detailed a range of interventions which had been piloted or adopted in the sector. The Committee discussed interventions which could be recommended as pilot activities within the University.

**May:** The Committee considered the annual report on the degrees awarded to students who completed their studies in 2023/24 academic year, including outcomes at institutional and School level, and across key student groups. The Committee discussed the prevalence of awarding gaps that have persisted over a number of years and areas where more information would be useful to better understand outcomes.

An update from the data-focused workstream was presented to the Committee. In the work to narrow and eliminate awarding gaps, the group have considered both the data required to achieve this and the intersectionality between student groups most affected by gaps.

#### **5. *Enhance Senate understanding of arrangements and effectiveness for quality assurance regarding internal systems and change processes***

**December:** The Committee were presented with the Learn Ultra Evaluation report and were asked to review the summary and consider how the recommendations for future change projects could be most usefully embedded. Discussion of this item addressed the importance of engagement and consultation throughout large change projects and the value of evaluation work informing the approach to other University projects. Training and local support were identified as areas that were crucial in large change projects.

#### **Other matters considered during the year**

##### **Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2024/25 (September)**

The Committee were informed of the wider work of the EUSA Sabbatical Officer team and their shared priorities for 2024/25, including pay and reward for student reps and enhancing the existing University services in place to make them more student-centred and accessible at the point of use.

**Short Online Courses (December)** The Committee discussed the report presented by the Short Courses team. A new host platform for non-credit bearing courses aimed to makes courses more accessible and aimed to enhance the reach and impact of the short courses. The Committee discussed the overall strategy of the offering, and conversion rates from these courses to further studies.

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

The Committee considered the key themes highlighted in the report, which included: the overall high number of commendations, low number of issues, and appropriate action taken at local level when required. The Committee discussed feedback consistently received from External Examiners (EEs), which raised issues with the timeliness and amount of information given to them in order to perform their role well.

### **Student Voice Update (April)**

An update was provided on student voice activities, indicating a need for consistent communication and feedback mechanisms within Schools. It was reported that a framework was being developed in partnership with EUSA to guide student voice activities, initially focusing on taught students. The framework would aim to encourage innovation and provide a toolkit with evidence-based interventions.

### **Thematic Review: Support for LGBTQ+ students (April)**

Thematic Review is the process by which the quality of the student experience is reviewed in relation to a particular theme or aspect of student support, rather than an individual service or academic area. The Committee noted their support for the thematic review and approved the proposal. It was agreed that the item would return to the Committee in September 2025 to provide further detail on resource, scope and particular areas of focus.

### **Principal's Teaching Award Scheme: 2025 Report (May)**

This item was provided to the Committee for information on the Principal's Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS). It detailed funding, completed projects and outcomes relating to projects in 2024/25. During discussion, it was highlighted to members that there can be strategic calls for certain projects and information sessions are offered by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to help with writing proposals.

### **Annual Monitoring and Internal Periodic Review Themes 2023-24: University Level Actions (May)**

This update on University level actions in response to themes identified in 2023/24 was presented to the Committee for information. It included updates of activities in relation to the themes and was approved to be shared with School Directors of Quality as they complete the annual monitoring reports for 2024/25.

### **Internal Periodic Reviews (IPR) – Reports and Responses (standing item of business)**

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 2024-25**

### **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. The Accreditation Committee meets annually with SRUC to reconfirm the arrangements and the two programmes which SRUC delivers as University of Edinburgh awards. The Accreditations Committee confirmed their satisfaction with the QA arrangements and delivery of the programmes by SRUC.



**Annex – new regulations/policies/codes, and reviews of and amendments to existing regulations/policies/codes, approved by Senate and its Committees during 2024-25**

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>

<b>Senate Committee</b>	<b>Name of document</b>	<b>Type of change (New / Revision / Deletion / Technical Update / Reviewed and no changes made)</b>
SEC	Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030	New
SEC	Assessment and Feedback Priorities and Principles	Revision
APRC	Authorised Interruption of Study Policy	Revision
APRC	Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure	Revision
APRC	Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2025/26	Revision
APRC	Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2025/26	Revision
APRC	Taught Assessment Regulations 2025/26	Revision
APRC	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2025/26	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	Support for Study Policy	Revision
APRC	Expected Behaviour Policy	Technical Update
APRC	Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy and Procedure	Revision
APRC	College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad	Revision
APRC	Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy	Deletion
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
<b>September</b>						
Student Support Model Project Closure and Handover	X	X	X	X		X
Student Surveys 2024 Results and Responses			X	X		
Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2024/25	X	X	X	X		X
Senate Education Committee Business 2024/25	X	X	X	X	X	X
Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24						X
Learn Ultra Evaluation Report	X	X	X		X	X
FLORA (Digital Exams): Recommended Next Steps	X	X	X	X	X	X
Learning Analytics Policy Review 2024-2025	X		X		X	X
Membership and Terms of Reference 2024/25	X	X	X	X	X	X
Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030 and Implementation Plan	X	X	X		X	
National Student Survey (NSS) 2025 Optional Questions	X	X			X	
Skills for Success Framework	X	X			X	X
Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC): Enhancement Themes and Priorities 2024-25	X		X	X		X
Approach to Reassessment	X		X		X	
Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) - Business School PGT Social Committee Representative	X					
Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities – Updated Version	X		X			
Online Courses for Learn – Consent and Gender and Sexuality	X		X	X		X
External Quality Review Oversight Group Update	X	X	X	X		X
Curriculum Transformation Programme Update	X	X		X	X	
<b>February</b>						
Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030	X	X	X		X	
Committee Priorities 2025/26	X	X	X	X	X	X
Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2025 Institutional Questions	X	X				
Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2025 Institutional Questions	X	X				
Widening Participation Strategy Progress Update	X			X	X	X
Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR): Social and Political Science Certificate	X					

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
Committee Priorities: Mid-Year Reflection	X	X	X	X	X	X
Learning Materials Accessibility Review	X	X				X
<b>May</b>						
Revision of the University-level Student Guidance on the use of Generative AI	X	X	X	X	X	X
Postgraduate Research Strategy 2030	X		X	X		X
Committee Priorities 2025/26	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Partnership Agreement	X	X	X			
Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy (microphones amendment)			X		X	X
Review of Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities	X		X			
Student Voice Update	X		X			
Membership and Terms of Reference 2025/26	X	X	X	X	X	X
Senate and Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review						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
<b>September</b>						
Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for 2024/24	X		X			
Doctoral programme length and submission periods	X	X				
Proposed amendments to the policy on the University use of email as a method of contacting students		X	X			
Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24						X
<b>November</b>						
Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Curriculum Framework and Programme Archetypes	X	X				X
Academic Year Dates 2026/27 and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2027/2028	X	X				
College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: amendments to Terms of Reference	X	X				
Updates to the Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy and Procedure	X	X				
Update on response to Watch that Gap report		X			X	
APRC Concessions Annual Report 2023/24	X	X				
<b>January</b>						
Updates to the Authorised Interruption of Study Policy	X	X				
Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy	X	X				
Committee Priorities – Mid-Year Reflection						X
<b>February e-business</b>						
Exam Delivery – Two Session Days in May 2025 Exam Diet	X	X			X	
<b>March</b>						
Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2025/26	X	X				
Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2025/26	X	X				
Exam Delivery – Two Session Day Proposal	X				X	
Special Arrangement Exams Extra Time	X				X	X
Taught Assessment Regulations – Initial discussion of proposed amendments	X	X				
Update on Regulations Work Associated with Curriculum Transformation Project (PGT)	X	X	X		X	X
Update on Lecture Recording and Captioning					X	X

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
Implementation of Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020	X	X	X			X
<b>May</b>						
Taught Assessment Regulations 2025/26	X	X				
Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations 2025/26	X	X				
Updated Support for Study Policy	X	X	X			
Regulatory Framework for Award of Masters with Pathway Specialism	X	X			X	
Updates to the Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure	X	X				
Proposed Minor Amendments to Student Appeal Regulations	X	X	X		X	
Proposed Minor Amendments to Expected Behaviour Policy	X	X	X			
Updates to the Policy Review Schedule	X	X				
Approval for non-standard programme end dates for the Online MBA		X			X	
Student Discipline Committee				X		
Membership and Terms of Reference 2025/26	X	X	X	X	X	X
Senate and Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review						X
<b>June e-business</b>						
Standard credit load for students on Subject-Specific Exchanges with ETH Zürich	X	X	X		X	
Sensor and Imaging Systems MSc resit clause	X	X			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
<b>September</b>								
Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2023-2024	X	X			X	X		
School Annual Quality Reports 2023-24: Sub Group Report	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Internal Periodic Review Themes 2023-24			X	X				
Student Support – 2023-24 Feedback Outcomes	X	X		X		X	X	
Student Support – Evaluation and Monitoring Framework Plan	X	X		X		X	X	
Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2023-24							X	
Membership and Terms of Reference 2023-24	X						X	
Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	X		X	X				
<b>December</b>								
College Annual Quality Reports 2023-24	X	X	X	X		X		
Annual Report 2023-24: Academic Appeals	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Annual Report 2023-24: Student Conduct	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Short Online Courses: Annual Report 2023-24	X		X	X		X		
Learn Ultra Evaluation			X			X		
Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP)	X		X	X				
Committee Priorities 2024-25	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	X		X	X				
<b>February</b>								
Annual Review of Student Support Services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Annual Monitoring: Reporting Templates 2024-25	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Internal Periodic Review: University Standard Remit	X				X			
Mid-year update on progress against SQAC priorities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP)	X		X	X				
<b>April</b>								
Annual Report 2023-24: Complaint Handling	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Student Voice Update	X	X				X		
Student Voice: Closing the Feedback Loop	X	X	X	X	X			
Student Data Monitoring Task Group: Sector Analysis Update	X		X		X	X	X	
Taught External Examiner Reports: UG and PGT Thematic Analysis 2023-24	X		X	X				
External Examiner Exceptional Appointments	X				X			

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8
Committee Priorities 2024-25	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	X		X	X				
<b>May</b>								
Degree Awards Outcomes 2023-24	X		X	X	X		X	
Student Data Monitoring Task Group: Data Analysis Update	X		X		X	X	X	
Proposal for Thematic Review 2025/26: Support for LGBTQ+ Students		X				X		
Scotland's Rural College Accreditation Committee Annual Report 2023-24	X			X				X
Annual Monitoring and Internal Periodic Review Themes 2023-24: University Level Actions	X		X	X		X		
Principal's Teaching Award Scheme: Annual Report						X		
Committee Priorities 2024-25	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Membership and Terms of Reference 2024-25	X	X		X			X	
Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review							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****01 October 2025****Senate Standing Committee Membership 2025/26****Description of paper:**

1. Senate standing committee Membership for 2025/26.

**Action requested / recommendation:**

2. Senate is asked to note the membership of the standing committees for 2025/26.

**Background and context:**

3. Under the Senate Standing Orders (22a), Senate may appoint committees to which it delegates powers and approves the membership of these committees annually.
4. 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).
5. Senate Standing Committees formally report to Senate annually in addition to providing updates on upcoming 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.
6. The current terms of reference for each standing committee are available on the [relevant committee page](#).

**Discussion*****Approval of standing committee memberships 2025/26***

7. Senate formally approved the Senate Standing Committee membership for 2025/26 at its 20 May 2025 meeting. Senate were informed that changes to membership may take place over the summer, any changes in membership since the 20 May meeting are highlighted in yellow.

**Resource implications**

8. There are workload implications for staff and students who become members of standing committees and for Academic Quality and Standards who provide support for the standing committees.



## **Risk management**

9. Appropriate membership of the standing committees supports effective academic governance and assists the University in managing risk associated with its academic activities.

## **Equality & diversity**

10. The composition of the Senate standing 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 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**

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

## **Author**

Academic Quality and Standards  
October 2025

**Freedom of Information:** Open

**The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Education Committee**

<b>Role on SEC</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Member of Senate</b>
Vice-Principal Students	Vice-Principal Students	Professor Colm Harmon (Convener)	Ex Officio	Ex Officio
Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Professor Tina Harrison	Ex Officio	Ex Officio
2 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for Learning and Teaching <b>(nominated by their College)</b>	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)	Professor Mary Brennan		Ex Officio
	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)	Dr Lisa Kendall		No
	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching)	Alexandra Laidlaw		No
	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching)	Professor Gill Aitken		Ex Officio
	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)	Lorna Halliday		No
	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)	Professor Linda Kirstein		Ex Officio
1 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for postgraduate research <b>(nominated by their College)</b>	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)	Professor Laura Bradley		Ex Officio
	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)	Professor Ruth Andrew		Academic
	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)	Professor Jamie Pearce		Ex Officio
1 x Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice-President Education	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Katya Amott	Ex Officio	Ex Officio

Role on SEC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Heather Innes	Ex Officio	No
1 x postgraduate research student representative	Postgraduate Research Student Representative	TBC – election to be held		No
1 x Head of School from each College chosen by the Heads of College	Head of School, CSE	Professor Jason Love		Ex Officio
	Head of School, CAHSS	Professor Willem Hollman		Ex Officio
	Head of School, CMVM	Professor Lisa Boden		Ex Officio
3 x elected member of Senate	Representative of Senate	Dr Sam Coombes	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026	Academic
	Representative of Senate	Professor Patrick Walsh	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026	Academic
	Representative of Senate	Professor Antonis Giannopoulos	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026	Academic
Head of Academic Quality and Standards or nominee	Head of Academic Quality and Standards	Nichola Kett	Ex Officio	No
Director of Institute for Academic Development, or nominee	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's nominee)	Professor Velda McCune	Ex Officio	Academic
Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions, or nominee	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions	Dr Shane Collins	Ex Officio	No
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	Ex Officio

<b>Role on SEC</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Member of Senate</b>
Director for Careers & Employability, or nominee	Director for Careers and Employability	Shelagh Green	Ex Officio	No
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener <b>for their expertise</b>	Co-opted member (Head of Academic Planning – Registry Services)	Marianne Brown	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2027	No
	Co-opted member (Digital Education)	Professor Sian Bayne	1 August 2023 - 31 July 2026	Ex Officio
	Co-opted member (Student Experience)	Lucy Evans	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2028	No
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Patrick Jack		No

# The University of Edinburgh

## Senate Academic Policy and Regulation Committee

Role on APRC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
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 <b>(nominated by their College)</b>	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation (CAHSS)	Dr Emily Taylor		Ex Officio
	Dean of Students (CAHSS)	Professor Jeremy Crang		Ex Officio
	Head of Taught Student Administration and Support (CAHSS)	Catriona Morley		No
	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)	Professor Linda Kirstein		Ex Officio
	Vacant (CSE)	TBC		TBC
	Deputy Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)	Katy McPhail		No
	Dean of Education (CMVM)	Professor Gill Aitken		Ex Officio
	Dean of Students and Alumni (CMVM)	TBC		Ex Officio
	Academic Administration Manager (CMVM)	Isabel Lavers		No
1 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for postgraduate research <b>(nominated by their College)</b>	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)	Kirsty Woomble		No
	Postgraduate Research Manager (CSE)	Amanda Fegan		No
	Vacant (CMVM)	Professor Ruth Andrew		TBC

<b>Role on APRC</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Member of Senate</b>
1 x Edinburgh University Students' Association sabbatical officer	Vice-President, Education	Katya Amott	Ex Officio	Ex Officio
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		No
1 x member of staff from Registry Services	Academic Registrar, Registry Services	Lisa Dawson	Ex Officio	No
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		No
1 x member of staff from Academic Quality and Standards	Head of Academic Policy and Regulation	Dr Adam Bunni		No
1 x member of staff from Information Services' Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division	Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media	Karen Howie		No
3 x elected Senate members	Representative of Senate	Professor Dave Laurensen	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026	Academic
	Representative of Senate	Dr Matt Bell	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2026	Academic
	Representative of Senate	Dr Valentina Ferlito	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2026	Academic

Role on APRC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener <b>for their expertise</b>	Co-opted member (Deputy Secretary, Students)	Lucy Evans	1 September 2023 – 31 August 2026	No
	Co-opted member (Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association)	Heather Innes	1 March 2023 – 28 February 2026	No
	Co-opted member (Disability and Learning Support Service)	Victoria Buchanan	1 January 2025 – 31 December 2028	No
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Cristina Matthews		No

The Committee will select a Convener and Vice-Convener from its members at the final meeting of the academic year on 22 May 2025.

**The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

<b>Role on SQAC</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Member of Senate</b>
Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)		Ex Officio
An 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	No
College Deans of Quality (or equivalent)	College Dean of Quality (CMVM)	Professor Matthew Bailey		No
	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture (CSE)	Professor James Hopgood		Academic
	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 <b>(nominated by their College)</b>	School representative of CMVM (Director of Quality)	TBC		No
	School representative of CSE (Head of Student Services)	Faten Adam		No
	School representative of CAHSS (Director of Quality)	Dr Anne Desler		No
3 x elected member of Senate	Representative of Senate	Dr Michael Barany	1 August 2023 - 31 July 2026	Academic
	Representative of Senate	Vacant	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2026	Academic
	Representative of Senate	Dr Sari Pennings	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026	Academic
1 x Edinburgh University Students' Association sabbatical officer	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Katya Amott	Ex Officio	Ex Officio



<b>Role on SQAC</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Member of Senate</b>
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Heather Innes		No
1 x member of staff from the Institute for Academic Development	Co-Director, Institute of Academic Development	Professor Catherine Bovill		Ex Officio
1 x member of staff from the Doctoral College	Representative of Doctoral College	Professor Laura Bradley		Ex Officio
1 x member of staff from Academic Quality and Standards	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services	Brian Connolly		No
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	No
	Vacant			
	Vacant			
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Sinéad Docherty		No

**Senate****1 October 2025****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 September and December 2025.

**2 Action requested / recommendation**

Senate is invited to note the upcoming business of the Senate standing committees.

Please note that this paper is not intended for discussion during the meeting as it provides an update for information.

**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 September and December 2025.

**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 Senate committee.

**6 Risk management**

This activity supports the university's obligations under the 2023 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, Diversity 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.

### **Author**

Adam Bunni, Academic Policy Manager  
Brian Connolly, Academic Policy Manager  
Sinead Docherty, Academic Policy Officer  
Patrick Jack, Academic Policy Officer  
Cristina Matthews, Academic Policy Officer  
Nichola Kett, Head of Quality and Standards  
Olivia Hayes, Committees and Governance Manager

Professor Colm Harmon, Convener of Senate Education Committee  
Professor Tina Harrison, Convener of Senate Quality Assurance Committee  
Dr Emily Taylor, Convener of Academic Policy and Regulation Committee

## **10 Freedom of Information: Open**

August 2025

**Appendix 1: Senate Standing Committees: upcoming business September and December 2025.****Senate Education Committee (SEC)**

<b>Upcoming business:</b>	<b>Brief description and context:</b>
1. Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP)	This is a standing item on SEC agendas and a Committee priority for 2025/26. SEC will continue to discuss CTP's priorities and direction of travel, in alignment with the wider Learning and Teaching workstream.
2. Assessment and Feedback Groups	Assessment and Feedback is a SEC priority for 2025/26. Reports from the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group and the External Quality Review Oversight Group remain a standing item on the committee, whereby updates are routinely provided to SEC. An early priority for 2025/26 is the review of the University's Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities.
3. 2025 Student Survey Results Update	The findings of the 2025 National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) will be reported to the Committee. SEC will discuss the next steps in terms of the University's response to the findings.
4. Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report	The Committee will discuss the 2024 release of the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) Annual Report, noting headline data and key insights.
5. Learning Analytics Policy Review	SEC will receive an update at its September meeting on the review of the University's learning analytics principles, policies and governance arrangements, and will discuss how learning and student analytics policy could be combined with the University's wider approach to data ethics governance and artificial intelligence.
6. Open Educational Resources Policy Review	SEC will receive an update at its November meeting on the review of the University's Open Educational Resources policy, noting prominent issues which have arisen since the previous review of the policy in 2021 - namely, generative AI copyright implications and open textbooks.
7. Barcelona Declaration on Open Resource Information	The Committee will note the approval that has been issued for the University to become a signatory to the Barcelona Declaration on Open Resource Information, aligning with the University's wider aims around Open Research.
8. Sector Survey Institutional Questions	SEC will consider proposed changes to the way the sector surveys' optional institutional questions will be agreed.

<b>Upcoming business:</b>	<b>Brief description and context:</b>
9. Generative AI – PGR Student Guidance	The Committee will note the guidelines for PGR students around using generative AI within postgraduate research study.
10. Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme	SEC will discuss an update on the successes of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme, particularly in relation to its Online Distance Learning (ODL) dimension.

### Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)

<b>Upcoming business:</b>	<b>Brief description and context:</b>
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. This follows consideration of School level annual reports in the September meeting of the Committee.
2. Student Support Model: Monitoring and Evaluation	The Committee will consider the report from the project board and discuss good practice within the model and any areas for development. The Committee will consider the evaluation framework for the support model going forward.
3. Student Data Monitoring Task & Finish Group update	The Committee will receive a report on the activities of its Data Monitoring sub-group. The sub-group has been tasked with developing a systematic approach to monitoring student data at university level, which will focus specifically on the awarding gap.
4. Annual Reports 2024/25: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Appeals</li> <li>• Student Conduct</li> <li>• Complaint Handling</li> </ul>	The Committee will consider the annual reports from these service areas and discuss themes and areas for action. This is a standing item of business annually for the Committee.
5. Short Courses Annual Report	The Committee will receive an update from the Short Course Strategy Group outlining the activities that developed in 2024/25.
6. External Examiners: Exceptional Appointments 2024/25	The Committee will consider the report on College approvals of Exceptional Examiner appointments made in 2024/25. This is a standard annual report received by the Committee.
7. 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)

<b>Upcoming business:</b>	<b>Brief description and context:</b>
1. Periodic review of policies	<p>The Committee will consider proposals for essential changes and enhancements to policies due for periodic review in 2025/26, as part of its routine business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Including Publications in Postgraduate Research Theses: Guidance</li><li>• Lay Summary in Theses - Guidance</li><li>• PhD by Research oral examinations by video link (Videolinked PhD oral)</li><li>• Thesis Format Guidance</li></ul>
2. Annual concessions report	<p>The Committee will receive at its November meeting the annual report and analysis of concessions to regulations approved for individual students and cohorts of students for 2024/25.</p>
3. Academic Year dates	<p>The Committee is expecting to receive two sets of Academic Year dates for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• confirmation of the current provisional dates for 2027/28</li><li>• proposed provisional dates for 2028/29</li></ul>
4. Curriculum Development	<p>The Committee is expecting to comment on regulatory and policy matters related to curriculum development work taking place within the Learning and Teaching Workstream.</p>

**Senate****1 October 2025****Communications from Research Strategy Group****Description of paper**

1. This paper provides a summary of issues discussed at the meeting of RSG on 1<sup>st</sup> July. The Group's responsibility for research policy and strategy are directly relevant to the achievement of the following outcomes set out in Strategy 2030, which are further developed in the University's Research and Innovation Strategy 2030:<sup>1</sup>

- i. We will see our research having a greater impact as a result of partnership, international reach and investment in emergent disciplines.
- ii. We will be a global leader in artificial intelligence and the use of data with integrity.
- iii. We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.
- iv. Edinburgh will become the Data Capital of Europe. We will deliver inclusive growth, provide data skills to at least 100,000 individuals, and create new companies and solutions for global challenges

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to note the report.

**Background and context**

3. RSG monitors delivery of the University's Research and Innovation Strategy and its Research Cultures Action Plan<sup>2</sup>. In 2024-25 RSG held meetings on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 30<sup>th</sup> September and 3<sup>rd</sup> December in 2024 and 20<sup>th</sup> March, 8<sup>th</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> July in 2025. In 2025-26, RSG meetings will take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 25<sup>th</sup> November, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 28<sup>th</sup> April and 25<sup>th</sup> June. The first meeting of RSG in the 2025-26 academic year will take place after the deadline for papers for the October meeting of Senate

**Discussion**

4. Please see Appendix 1 for a report of business conducted at the meeting of RSG on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025, which the last meeting in 2024-25.

**Resource implications**

5. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

**Risk management**

6. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

**Equality and diversity**

7. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

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

8. The [Research Strategy Group](https://www.ed.ac.uk/research-innovation) committee site provides access to the agenda of meetings and open papers. The minutes of each meeting are uploaded after they have been formally approved.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/research-innovation>

<sup>2</sup> <https://support-for-researchers.ed.ac.uk/research-cultures>



9. Senate members may be interested in reading the [weekly ERO digests of news relevant to R&D](#) in the social, political and economic landscape in Scotland, the UK and further afield. The digests are written primarily for members of the University's RSG. Their popularity means that they are now available to all University staff.

**Author**

10. Dr Susan Cooper, Research Policy Analyst and secretary to RSG  
Research, Policy and Performance Directorate, Edinburgh Research Office.

August 2025

**Freedom of Information**

11. Open Paper

**Appendix 1:****Key points from the meeting of Research Strategy Group on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025****1. RSG Convenor's briefing**

The key points in the oral briefing from the VP Research and Enterprise who is the Convener were:

- The Global Talent Scheme launched by the UK Government on 23<sup>rd</sup> June.
- A recent online round table with the UK Science minister on REF2029.
- One of ten Local Innovation Partnerships will be sited in Scotland.

**2. Senate -RSG update**

RSG noted that Senate welcomed the proposals to enhance Senate oversight of and engagement with research matters. The RSG secretary was asked to draft a plan to the agreed recommendations. Views of RSG members would be sought before the plan was presented to Senate.

**3. University Size and Shape – Research and Innovation Workstream**

The R&I Workstream Governance Programme Board, which would report to RSG, had had one meeting by 1<sup>st</sup> July. Via its subgroups, the Programme Board would take forward responsibility for the delivery of the three strands of the R&I workstream. The importance of the R&I Workstream maintaining close relations with the Staff Workstream was noted.

**4. Key UK Government Policy Developments and the University**

*Spending Review for Financial Years 2026-27 to 2028-29; published 10<sup>th</sup> June*

In terms of funding for research, development and innovation, the Spending Review had been deemed as good as it could be given the economic situation. The RDI budget for the Department for Science, Innovation and Innovation (DSIT) would rise by 9% over the Spending Review period. DSIT was expected to publish how it would allocate its RDI budget in the autumn. The University directly benefited in several ways on top of the well-publicised restoration of funding for the supercomputer. There is an [ERO analysis of the Spending Review](#) and the direct and potential benefit for University RDI.

*Industrial Strategy 2030 (published 23<sup>rd</sup> June)*

Several of the major RDI announcements in the Spending Review were re-confirmed in the Industrial Strategy. The Industrial Strategy included plans for five of the eight UK Government Growth Driving Sectors of the UK economy<sup>3</sup>. Two of the other three plans were published after the Industrial Strategy. The missions and challenge areas in the University's R&I strategy align with the eight Growth Driving Sectors that should mean there will be potential RDI opportunities for the University.

**5. College Research Culture reviews**

The Deans of each College, whose responsibilities included the delivery of their College's Research Culture goals, provided progress reports. One point of note from each report is given below:

CAHSS report: stressed the importance of 'tacit knowledge' that was defined as undocumented practical knowledge about how the university works that is gained through experience. One of

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<sup>3</sup> The sector plans for Advanced Manufacturing, Creative Industries; Clean Energy; Digital and Technology; and Professional Services were published on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. The Life Sciences, Financial Services and Professional Services sectors plans were published July and August. The Defence sector plan will be published later in the year

the College's plans is to consider how tacit knowledge that was helpful and promotes best practice could be shared in a more systematic way.

CSE report: The College Research team will investigate how to boost engagement in the CSE monthly research culture activities which were co-created with IAD, the College team and key staff in the Schools. The activities have a different focus each month, reflecting the diverse nature of research culture. Feedback from those who attended the sessions showed they had benefitted from taking part.

CMVM report the College had set up a Research Cultures Collaboration which aims to foster active participation in shaping research culture, in order to gain a diversity of perspectives. The RCC included staff from academic, technical, and professional services families. CMVM report noted that very often staff felt that undertaking activity to enhance a positive research culture had to be on top of a full workload and was frequently unrecognised.

One of the meetings of RSG in 2025-26 would devote more time to a strategic discussion about research culture.

#### 6. Strengthening Research Ethics and Integrity at UoE

From 2024-25 onward, RSG would receive an internal research integrity report. The report would bring to RSG's attention any issues identified during the process of preparing the standard report that is required as a condition of compliance with the Concordat on Research Integrity. The internal report would include a yearly workplan to address the issues. Activities for 2025-26 include a plan to hold a review of the research ethics and integrity training resources developed by individual Schools and Colleges. There would also be an investigation of how to ensure reviewers in Schools other than Informatics feel better equipped to assess research projects that involve generative AI.

#### 7. Research Security

RSG received a thorough report on measures being taken to ensure that the University not only complies with the regularly changing legislation/ regulation relating to research security but also ensures that the University's researchers are able to continue to collaborate with those in other countries.

#### 8. Other Items

RSG approved the terms of reference for the Research and Innovation Workstream Governance group and the Research Support Operational Executive. The RSG received the following reports for information: updates on Research Grants and Applications and Industrial and Translational awards; reports from Library Research Support and the Edinburgh Research Office; and notes of most recent meetings of RSG's sub groups.