The University of Edinburgh

**Senate Education Committee**
**Thursday 25th September 2025 2-5pm**
**Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and via Microsoft Teams**

**A G E N D A**

* Standing item + Committee priority

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **Welcome and Apologies** | |
| **2.** | **Minutes of the previous meeting**<br>To approve<br>• 1st May 2025 | SEC 25/26 1A |
| **3.** | **Matters Arising**<br>• Convener's communications | |
| **4.** | **SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS** | |
| 4.1 | **Student Surveys Update**<br>National Student Survey 2025; PRES & PTES Surveys 2025: Results and Responses<br>For noting and discussion<br>Paper closed due to being commercial in confidence. | SEC 25/26 1B<br>CLOSED |
| 4.2 | **Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report – Understanding and Supporting our Graduates' Career Destinations**<br>For discussion<br>Paper closed due to inclusion of unrounded data. | SEC 25/26 1C<br>CLOSED |
| 4.3 | **Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2025/26**<br>For discussion | SEC 25/26 1D |
| 4.4 | **Sector Surveys' Institutional Questions**<br>For approval | SEC 25/26 1E |
| 4.5 | **Learning Analytics Policy Review**<br>For approval | SEC 25/26 1F |
| **5.** | **ITEMS FOR UPDATE** | |
| 5.1 | **SWAY Review Recommendations**<br>For discussion | Verbal update |
| 5.2 | **Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme Phase 2 (2023-2030)**<br>For discussion | SEC 25/26 1G |

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|---|---|---|
| 5.3 | **Learning and Teaching Workstream Update *** <br>For noting | Verbal update |
| 5.4 | **Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation** <br>For noting | Verbal update |
| 5.5 | **Assessment and Feedback Groups*+** <br>For noting | Verbal update |
| **6.** | **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION / NOTING** | |
| 6.1 | **Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information** <br>For noting | SEC 25/26 1H |
| 6.2 | **Generative AI Guidelines for Postgraduate Research Students** <br>For noting | SEC 25/26 1I |
| 6.3 | **Membership and Terms of Reference 2025/26** <br>For noting | SEC 25/26 1J |
| | | |
| **7.** | **Any Other Business** | |
| **8.** | **Date of next meeting** <br>Thursday 27th November 2025, 2-5pm <br>Hybrid meeting: Torridon Room, Charles Stewart House & Microsoft Teams | |

**The University of Edinburgh**
**Senate Education Committee**

**Thursday 1st May 2025, 2-5pm**
**Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House**
**and via Microsoft Teams**

## 1. Attendance

| **Present:** | **Position:** |
|---|---|
| Professor Colm Harmon | Vice Principal, Students (Convener) |
| Professor Tina Harrison | Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) (Vice-Convener) |
| Professor Gill Aitken | Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching) |
| Professor Ruth Andrew | Senate Representative |
| Professor Sian Bayne | Assistant Principal Education Futures |
| Professor Laura Bradley | Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research) |
| Professor Mary Brennan | Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching) |
| Marianne Brown | Head of Academic Planning, Registry Services |
| Dr Shane Collins | Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions |
| Lucy Evans | Deputy Secretary, Students |
| Shelagh Green | Director for Careers and Employability |
| Professor Patrick Hadoke | Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research) |
| Lorna Halliday | Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching) |
| Dr Melissa Highton | Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Division of Information Services; Assistant Principal (Online and Open Learning) |
| Professor James Hopgood | Senate Representative |
| Dr Lisa Kendall | Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching) |
| Nichola Kett | Head of Academic Quality and Standards |
| Professor Linda Kirstein | Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching) |
| Alex Laidlaw | Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching) |
| Professor Jason Love | Head of School, CSE |
| Callum Paterson | EUSA Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator |
| Professor Jamie Pearce | Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research) |
| Professor Jo Shaw | Head of School, CAHSS |
| Dr Tamara Trodd | Senate Representative |
| Dylan Walch | Vice President (Education), Students' Association |
| Patrick Jack | Committee Secretary, Academic Quality and Standards |
| **Apologies:** | |
| Professor Velda McCune | Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development |
| Professor Mike Shipston | Head of Deanery, CMVM |
| **In attendance:** | |
| Olivia Eadie | Co-Director, Institute for Academic Development |
| Lauren Harrison | Senior Project Officer (Students) |
| Professor Antony Maciocia | University Lead for Postgraduate Research, Doctoral College |
| Dr Elizabeth Williams | Associate Director, Library Academic Support |

## 2. Minutes of meeting held on 27th February 2025

With regard to the verbal update on the Curriculum Transformation Programme, the request to minute the preference of members to receive updates via written papers, as opposed to verbal updates, for substantive items was noted.

The Committee otherwise approved the minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2025.

**Action:** The Committee Secretary to update the previous minutes accordingly to reflect the Committee's preference of written papers over verbal updates for substantive items.

## 3. Matters Arising

- **Learning and Teaching Strategy Update**

The Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) notified members that workshops for members of Senate and standing committees of Senate to engage with the implementation plan for the Learning and Teaching Strategy were organised across three dates. Due to low sign-up rates, only one workshop was held. However, the session that was held garnered valuable feedback from attendees. Moving forward, the Deputy Vice Principal is holding meetings with stakeholders across the University who will be key in the Strategy's implementation. The Deputy Vice Principal accepted invitations to attend CSE's Education Committee and CMVM's Educational Forum in order to discuss this further.

- **Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report**

The Convener noted that this item normally comes to this meeting for discussion. However, extra work is being undertaken on this year's report due to the impact of the marking and assessment boycott (MAB) on relevant data. Members were informed that this paper will consequently be submitted to the first meeting of SEC next academic year.

- **Curriculum Transformation Programme**

The Convener updated members that the revised budget proposal for the Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP) was formally rejected by the University Initiatives Portfolio Board (UIPB) in favour of exploring ways in which elements of CTP can be embedded into the Learning and Teaching workstream, as part of the wider work around changing the University's size, shape and ways of working. While CTP will close, it was highlighted that the ambition to complete its work with regard to PGT provision remains clear and elements of CTP's wider vision will be continued via relevant workstreams. Members were reassured that work will continue with regard to pathway-based study and stackable programme design. A paper on pathway specialisms is being taken to the next meeting of Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC), while further discussions with Schools and Colleges will be required around stackable programme design. A more substantive update on CTP will be provided at a future meeting of SEC.

## 4. Substantive Items

### 4.1 Revision of the University-level Student Guidance on the use of Generative AI

The Assistant Principal Education Futures introduced the paper, proposing a set of priorities and direction of travel for the revision of the University's student guidance on the use of generative AI. Members noted that consultation had been undertaken with College Education Committees, EUSA, the Doctoral College and the AI Adoption Task Group, all of whom were broadly supportive of the proposals. It was highlighted that a paper detailing insight into the student use of AI will be presented to Senate in May.

Members subsequently noted the following comments:

- Under section 5 within the paper, careful consideration should be taken around how restricting or disallowing generative AI use where necessary is framed. This should be considered holistically around assessment innovation.
- Under section 6, it was suggested that the wording of "*work produced by AI*" might be confusing to some students. For instance, students may produce their own work but use AI tools to carry out grammatical checks. Students require clarity and consistency in this regard, and it was noted that the work being undertaken in CAHSS around templates demonstrates good practice in terms of consistency of language across courses.
- Section 4D references the use of AI for summarising texts. CSE has suggested broadening this out as not all work across the University is written-based and can involve synthesising information from sources such as data, graphs and images.
- It was noted that discussions have been held within CAHSS around whether Course Organisers will be required to request exemptions from the University guidance, or whether this will continue to be devolved. Further clarity here would be welcome.
- College Academic Misconduct Officers (CAMOs) have indicated their preference for identifying when AI can be used to be devolved to Course Organisers.
- More detailed information for PGR elements within the guidance, such as research publications within theses, would be helpful.
- It is important to safeguard learning as well as assessment in the context of AI. Could safeguarding learning be elevated within section 6 of the guidance?
- In terms of skills, there should be a focus on how best to enable students to identify when and how they can use AI in order to best support their transition into employment post-study.
- Consideration should be taken around the potential staff use of AI tools for marking assessments, noting when its use would be appropriate and ensuring transparency to students. Efforts would be required to guard against creating double standards between staff and students, as well as demonstrating the value added for staff using AI tools.
- Could the guidance be aligned to the Skills for Success Framework? This could help manage expectations around student responsibilities and address concerns with regard to cognitive offloading.
- An explicit statement from the University around the use of translation tools, emphasising the University's expectations around being taught and assessed in the

English language, would be welcome. This would support CAMOs and SAMOs in setting parameters around what can be permitted in this context.

- Many staff who are involved in academic misconduct cases rely on Turnitin, however discussions remain ongoing around the future role of Turnitin at the University. Should staff be increasingly required to detect the use of AI, consideration is required around how to best police this.
- The University's LOUISA project is seeking to reduce the University's dependence on Turnitin via exploring tools within Learn which could replace tools currently provided by Turnitin.
- Microsoft Co-Pilot has been found to return increasingly accurate transcripts. Co-Pilot is beginning to integrate with other Microsoft Office apps and while it is currently free to use, its use may be charged in the future.
- University-level guidance can be published and updated centrally in the Learn template. Schools can also manually insert School-level guidance where required.

The Committee subsequently endorsed the guidance document. In terms of next steps, the Assistant Principal Education Futures agreed to update the guidance document, taking into account feedback from members, prior to taking the guidance to College Education Committees for further discussion. It was agreed that the finalised guidance should be submitted to Senate for approval at its October meeting, however a provisional version of the guidance could be in place for adoption by the commencement of the 2025/26 academic year.

**4.2 Postgraduate Research Strategy 2030**

The University's Lead for Postgraduate Research (PGR) introduced the paper, highlighting that the Strategy is still at a draft stage and will be abstracted into a finalised strategy document in due course. Members noted that the Strategy will be owned by Research Strategy Group (RSG), however the breadth of its content means that much of the detail is within the remit of SEC and Senate. The Strategy is being formulated to cover all aspects of PGR, including programme development and PGR student experience.

The Committee subsequently discussed the draft Strategy, with the following comments being raised:

- Enhancing PGR student experience and wellbeing should be strongly emphasised within the principles of the Strategy, as well as enhancing the support framework for PGR students.
- Under section 2, it was suggested that the wording of "*enhance the PGR experience*" be amended to "*ensure good PGR experience*".
- In terms of the key outputs of PGR degrees, should this be a graduate as opposed to a researcher? Not all PGR graduates subsequently pursue careers in research.
- Could external input such as accrediting bodies or stakeholder advisory boards, which is strong at the taught-level, be strengthened within this Strategy?
- Section 11.5 should more explicitly reference desk and study space.
- Within section 14, it would be helpful if further clarity could be provided around the financial viability of PGR programmes.

- Section 13.14 prescriptively refers to specific structures which may no longer accurately reflect what is in place in some areas of the University. Amending the wording to be more high-level may resolve this.
- The provision of a high-level framework that Colleges can operationalise would be helpful. Could a condensed version of the Strategy be rolled out as soon as possible, prior to the approval of the formal Strategy? This could bolster overall engagement.
- Could the Strategy's implications in terms of teaching be more clearly highlighted? The importance of research students to teaching at the University should be emphasised.

The Convener thanked members for their valuable comments. The University's Lead for PGR informed the Committee that the draft Strategy will be discussed at RSG later in May with a view to approval in the subsequent meeting of RSG during summer 2025. The Strategy will also be taken to Senate for approval in due course.

**4.3 Committee Priorities 2025/26**

The Head of Academic Quality and Standards introduced the paper, noting that the Committee's proposed priorities for academic year 2025/26 had been discussed at the March meeting of SEC, had been consulted on with senior colleagues, and aligns with University-level priorities.

The Committee discussed how SEC's priorities align to decisions made by UIPB and any potential consequent financial impact. It was noted that this does not fall within SEC's terms of reference, nor does SEC exercise budgetary control. However, items that UIPB consider which overlap with the remits of Senate Standing Committees will duly be discussed at these committees. The concern around reducing programme and course numbers was noted, however it was clarified that final decisions taken around closures, as well as portfolio review more widely, are taken by and implemented by Colleges as opposed to Senate Standing Committees. Rather than amending the existing priorities, the Committee agreed to the Convener's suggestion of an update on the Learning and Teaching workstream being provided at 2025/26 meetings of SEC.

Members further discussed the priority relating to supporting the ongoing implementation of the Student Support model, noting that the proposed wording suggests that PGR students will not be included within the model. The Committee subsequently agreed to amend the wording in this section from, "*not included*" to, "*not currently included*". It was noted that further work will be required around enhancing student support for PGR students, as the existing Student Support model may not the optimal model for the PGR cohort.

**4.4 Student Partnership Agreement 2025/26**

The EUSA Vice President (Education) introduced the paper to the Committee, presenting an updated Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) format which seeks to better clarify the relationship between the University of Edinburgh and the Students' Association, highlights key partnership activity across the University, and aligns more to best-practice examples from other higher education institutions across the UK. The Deputy Secretary, Students

highlighted strong support for the proposed SPA, noting that it should be embedded in other relevant strategic developments across the University.

In discussing the proposed SPA, it was noted that "excellent learning experience" on page two of the agreement should be amended to "excellent academic experience", in order to be more inclusive to PGR students. It was suggested that the SMART objectives within the SPA be amended to SMARTIE objectives to better incorporate equity and inclusion.

The Committee endorsed the SPA and approved the agreement for 2025-26. It was noted that, moving forward, SEC will no longer be required to approve the SPA on an annual basis, with future SPAs being agreed and signed by EUSA and University senior leadership.

**4.5 Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy (Microphones Amendment)**

The Committee noted the contents of the paper and the proposal to make minor changes to the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy (AILP) with regard to its statement on use of radio microphones.

In discussing the proposed amendment, members raised the following points:

- The amendment proposes that microphones shall be worn during lectures, however greater clarity should be provided around their use during seminars.
- Some students find that the use of microphones in small teaching rooms can be challenging due to sensitivities to sound.
- The use of microphones can help with the hearing loop, as well as for recording purposes.
- It is important to note that while lapel microphones are best at capturing the speaker's voice, they also capture other voices within teaching spaces.
- Capturing students' voices, for instance when they ask questions, without their consent must be taken into consideration. The distinctions between lecture capture and seminar capture ought to be taken into account.
- It is important that the University's guidance around generative AI is not contradicted by the AILP.
- The AILP and the University's Lecture Recording policy must align with one another.

The Committee did not approve the proposed amendment to the AILP. It was suggested that feedback from the Committee be taken into consideration and that a revised amendment return to the next meeting of SEC in September 2025 for approval.

**4.6 Review of Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities**

The Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) introduced the paper, outlining the initial plans for a substantial review of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities scheduled for 2025/26, and outlining the proposal to develop an Assessment and Feedback Policy. In terms of timelines, it was highlighted to members that the aim is to expedite the review, as well as the development and approval of the potential new policy, with this work being completed by the end of semester one in 2025/26, if possible.

The Committee raised a number of comments in relation to this review, including: avoiding duplication of effort with regard to the Taught Assessment Regulations; the development of assessment dashboards and calendars; aligning with student and staff AI guidance; considerations around the diversity of assessment and assessment load.

It was agreed that, while SEC has a key role in providing input into the review and development of policy, ownership of this should be held more substantively by APRC. In terms of next steps, the paper will be taken to Schools and Colleges for further discussion.

## 5. Items for Update

### 5.1 Student Voice Update

The Committee noted the contents of the paper and its outline of planned activity to improve how student voices are listened to and acted upon across the University. Members noted that a Student Voice Framework will be developed to provide clarity and consistency across core student voice practices, from data collection to communication to students. It was suggested that Student Experience Services may wish to consider amending "*student voice*" to "*student voices*" when developing the Framework.

### 5.2 Assessment and Feedback Groups

The Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) informed the Committee that the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group, at its meeting April 2025, reviewed the first draft of proposed internal moderation guidance for the University. Following discussion, it was proposed that further discussions be held with colleagues in Colleges and Schools around definitions and standards setting. This should be clarified in the guidance but should not have an impact on the current regulations.

## 6. Items for Update

### 6.1 Membership and Terms of Reference 2025/26

Members noted the contents of the paper and provided no further comments.

### 6.2 Senate Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review

The Committee noted the plans for the annual internal review of Senate and its standing committees' effectiveness.

## 7. Any Other Business

Members who are stepping down from SEC at the end of the 2024/25 academic year were thanked for their valuable input. Ambiguity around Head of School membership on SEC, namely how long they are expected to sit on the Committee following nomination by their Head of College, was noted.

**Action:** Academic Quality and Standards to discuss consistent checks on nominated members across Senate Standing Committees.

## 8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 25th September 2025, 2-5pm. This will be a hybrid meeting, taking place in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and via Microsoft Teams.

Members will be notified of the dates of all 2025/26 SEC meetings once they are confirmed.

**Action:** Committee Secretary to confirm 2025/26 meeting dates and issue invites to members.

**Senate Education Committee**

**25 September 2025**

# Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for 2025/26

## Description of paper

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

## Fit with remit

| **Education Committee** | |
|---|---|
| Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners. | **Y** |
| Promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment, embrace new teaching methods and consider cross-cutting themes such as research-led and technology-enhanced learning, digital and information literacy, education for employability, internationalisation and lifelong learning. Consider and promote local developments or initiatives with substantial implications for University learning and teaching strategy, policy, services or operations. | **Y** |
| Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback. | **Y** |
| Give specific consideration to instances in which the experience of one particular cohort of students or learners (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research students, and those involved in non-standard programmes) may diverge from that of others. | **Y** |
| Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity. | **Y** |

## Action requested / recommendation

2. To note 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 list of priorities within Appendix 1.

**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**
This paper is open.

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**Appendix 1**

**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 Education Committee**

**25 September 2025**

# Sector Surveys' Institutional Questions Update

## Description of paper

1. This paper outlines proposed changes to the way the sector surveys' optional institutional questions are agreed. This work supports the University's strategy for enhancing the student experience through streamlined governance of key student feedback mechanisms.

## Fit with remit

| Education Committee | Y/N |
|---|---|
| Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners. | **Y** |
| Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback. | **Y** |

## Action requested / recommendation

2. The committee are asked to **approve** the proposed changes to the way the sector surveys' optional institutional questions are agreed.

## Background and context

3. Sector surveys provide students with the opportunity to give their honest, unbiased and anonymous feedback on their experience at the University of Edinburgh. We run three sector surveys: the National Student Survey (NSS), the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).
4. Sector surveys are key student feedback mechanisms that can be used to improve student experiences within the University and allow data to be benchmarked against other universities.
5. The surveys have a set of core questions that are determined by the external managing bodies of the surveys, and a set of optional questions that institutions can choose. To-date, the optional institutional questions have been approved by Senate Education Committee annually.

## Discussion

6. Across 2024/25, work was undertaken to review and improve governance across student feedback channels managed within Registry Services (Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling). This included sector surveys, institutional surveys and "ad hoc" student surveys. Governance was perceived as disjointed, with insights from student voice not necessarily reaching the right group to be considered and acted upon effectively, largely due to unclear committee and role remits, inefficient processes, and ineffective checks.

7. After consultation and engagement, oversight of decisions and student feedback outcomes by a single group that meets regularly and can monitor results more

closely was recommended to ensure student voice is joined up and effective. The Student Lifecycle Management Group (SLMG) were identified as most effectively able to fulfil central oversight responsibilities so that student feedback could be better operationalised.

8. This change would mean optional institutional questions are approved by SLMG going forward instead of SEC. This is in line with SLMG's purpose to join the dots across student experience. SLMG would be responsible for updating SEC on any changes to the sector surveys' optional institutional questions.

9. SLMG have responsibility for overseeing the distribution of institutional surveys and "ad hoc" student surveys, through the Student Survey Management Group (SSMG). This is a new approach to survey management to ensure visibility across what student feedback is being collected how it is being responded to. This proposal seeks to ensure that sector surveys are considered within this broader context of what feedback is being collected from students.

10. To ensure academic partnership is maintained, College Directors of Quality will be consulted on sector survey questions.

11. SEC's Terms of Reference would not be impacted by the change as the group would continue to "engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback" (2.3).

12. The theme "Student Voice" continues to perform poorly in NSS 2025 outcomes (69.1%), despite an increase of 4.1% from the previous year. In particular, the question "How clear is it that students' feedback on the course is acted on?", which has been the lowest scoring question for the past few years (46-51%), with the 2025 score for this question 11.6 percentage points behind the Russell Group average. This proposal is part of wider work being undertaken to address this through providing a joined-up approach across student voice, to allow better oversights across student voice mechanisms and outcomes.

13. This approach has been informed by consultations with Academic Quality and Standards, former Ethics Committee members and EUSA. The proposal has had input and support from Student Lifecycle Management Group and Deputy Secretary Students.

**Resource implications**

14. The Student Survey Management group will be consulted on major survey changes, with SLMG taking on the additional responsibility of approving sector survey institutional questions or other delivery changes (e.g. timing of surveys). Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling will continue to coordinate the consultation process as previous.

**Risk management**

15. Data from student surveys is used to improve the experience of students at the University. Failure to improve the student experience, and in particular to close

the feedback loop for students and improve the NSS score for acting on feedback, is a reputational risk for the University.

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

16. N/A

**Equality & diversity**

17. Sector surveys are key feedback mechanisms which help ensure that voices of all students are heard. The data from surveys are used to improve the experience of all students. The use of institutional questions can enhance understanding of student satisfaction across key themes, which is key across all students including EDI groups.

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

18. SLMG would be responsible for updating SEC on any changes to the sector surveys' optional institutional questions.

**Author**
*Chantal Reilly*
*Student Insights Manager*
*Academic Planning (Registry Services)*

**Presenter**
*Marianne Brown*
*Head of Academic Planning (Registry Services)*

**04/09/2025**

**Freedom of Information** *(Is the paper 'open' or 'closed')*
*Open*

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**Senate Education Committee**

**25 September 2025**

# Learning Analytics Policy Review

## Description of paper

1. We present an update of the University's learning analytics principles and policy, following the review initiated at the September 2024 meeting.

2. Clear, appropriate and current policy and governance for learning analytics is relevant to many of the Strategy 2030 outcomes, particularly the use of data with integrity (Outcome iii), and development of all our students (Outcome vi).

## Fit with remit

| **Education Committee** | |
|---|---|
| Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners. | **Y** |
| Promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment, embrace new teaching methods and consider cross-cutting themes such as research-led and technology-enhanced learning, digital and information literacy, education for employability, internationalisation and lifelong learning. Consider and promote local developments or initiatives with substantial implications for University learning and teaching strategy, policy, services or operations. | **Y** |
| Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback. | **Y** |
| Give specific consideration to instances in which the experience of one particular cohort of students or learners (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research students, and those involved in non-standard programmes) may diverge from that of others. | **Y** |
| Anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in learning and teaching for all cohorts of students and learners. | **Y** |
| Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity. | **Y** |

## Action requested/Recommendation

3. Senate Education Committee (SEC) is asked to ***approve*** the revised Learning Analytics Principles and Policy document below. Significant changes in the policy are tracked in the document. The former Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC) discussed an earlier version of this paper (but not the draft revised policy) in May 2025. The policy will require further approval from the successor body to KSC.

4. SEC is asked to ***discuss*** (a) how learning and student analytics policy could be combined with the University's wider approach to data ethics governance and artificial intelligence; and (b) whether and how the University might best link the

central student record, learning service and digital library data in a way that facilitates analytics projects.

**Background and context**

*Principles and Policy Documents*

5. The existing policy suite includes a Principles and Purposes document from 2017, which preceded the major update of UK data protection law in 2018, and policy and governance arrangements that were finalised following publication of the EU and UK versions of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. The proposed revision merges these two documents.

6. The principles and policy were intended initially to regularise the University's approach to data risk management, with a further aspiration to promote learning analytics as a way of improving the student experience.

*Learning Analytics Review Group*

7. The policy was accompanied by the establishment of a Learning Analytics Review Group (not to be confused with the policy review group, although there is overlap in membership) to oversee and approve significant learning analytics projects. The Learning Analytics Review Group has reviewed two institutional projects:
    a. A multi-School pilot in 2020 of the OnTask data-driven feedback tool.
    b. A Student Systems pilot in 2023 with commercial partner SolutionPath looking at prompting staff to contact individual students based on a measure calculated from each student's engagement data taken from learning and library services. The most relevant engagement data came from the Learn Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

8. The Learning Analytics Review Group identified several issues for review in its February 2020 meeting, on the back of experience gained on the OnTask pilot. The current review has confirmed that these are largely still relevant today:
    a. The policy that the University may only make individual student support interventions based on learning analytics data processing with student consent was very restrictive.
    b. There was concern over whether the policy aligned fully with the student contract and privacy statement.
    c. The distinction between institutional projects and School projects that use institutional data; and the relationship between approval by the Learning Analytics Review Group and School or College research ethics approval.
    d. A significant lack of awareness of the policy within the University.
    e. The length of the approval process for institutional projects.

*Training for learning analytics and the LAURA project*

9. The University is currently completing an assessment of its support for learning analytics within its learning technology services through the Learning Analytics in UltRA (LAURA) project (2024-2025). This project is also supporting the current policy review, both by producing and providing learning analytics training for colleagues and by resourcing support for the policy review.

10. Data from the LAURA project shows that the most common use of learning analytics data from the Learn VLE, by some distance, is to analyse student engagement with their learning. This is well ahead of other common learning analytics purposes such as supporting assessment, student support, course improvement, or accessibility.

**Discussion**

11. The review group believes that the 2017 principles have largely stood the test of time and notes that they correlate with those in much more recent policies at other institutions.

12. It does not propose significant change to the membership or remit of the Learning Analytics Review Group or its operation.

*Scope of the policy: learning analytics, student analytics and artificial intelligence*

13. The University has historically made a distinction between learning analytics and learner or student analytics, but we believe that where the purpose of each is around improving the student experience then this distinction may not be significant. We have observed that both mainly use point measures of student activity rather than differential measures of how much learning a student has achieved. We believe that the data ethics considerations are the same and are likely also common with the potential use of student or other personal data within generative artificial intelligence models. We **propose** measures that support undertaking student analytics within the revised policy.

14. We note the approach taken by both the Open University and the University of Queensland, who have in the past couple of years each published a (non-research) Data Ethics policy which acts as a framework for policies on using student data for learning or student analytics and for AI. Feedback from KSC in May suggests that the University should pursue this sort of policy integration, through the current Teaching and Learning workstream, and the Information Governance Committee. We **recommend** that the current review is completed promptly before moving forward with this.

15. It may be useful to analyse textual data such as surveys using Generative AI models. Having been encouraged to do so by KSC, the revision addresses this explicitly, including to say that learning analytics data may not be entered into AI models that retain their inputs as new training data.

16. The revision emphasises to project managers the need to maintain the University's good reputation for managing student data ethically. This is in response to feedback from KSC and addresses the risk that students may be or become suspicious of how the University uses their data and that this may even lead them to stop interacting with its online services. Among many other issues, this would be likely to introduce biases into learning analytics data.

*Individual student interventions*

17. Learning Analytics Principle 2 states that the University does not propose a deficit model aimed only at supporting students at risk of failure, and the Policy requires each student's consent to use their data for projects that are looking to provide

individual support. The former needs to be interpreted in such a way that it does not act against contemporary expectations from both staff and students (and indeed Outcome iv of Strategy 2030) that the University should use student data to support their learning, and that this should include identify struggling students to allow the University to at least offer to support them. Obtaining and tracking consent can be restrictive in practice, and if part of a cohort is missing from the baseline data, then this may introduce biases.

18. Addressing the risks that led to the current policy, there should clearly be a limit to the purposes for which the University can use a student's data to single them out. However, it would seem reasonable to allow students to compare their engagement or learning measures to their anonymised peers, or to allow the University to identify students through an appropriate measure as not engaging with their studies so it can reach out to them and offer support.

19. We therefore **propose** to amend section 6.5 of the policy to allow certain projects to use student data so that support staff may identify and approach individual students for beneficial interventions, under the lawful basis of the University's legitimate interests rather than that of consent. Projects that use individual student data for purposes that do not directly benefit that student should still require the student's consent.

20. The review has heard that students are generally more concerned about the tracking of their physical location than their online presence and we are not recommending changing the policy on use of learning analytics data for attendance monitoring. The revision does now note why most learning analytics data is not appropriate for attendance monitoring. We note that some have argued that it may be more reassuring for Tier 4 Visa students whose Courses cross different Schools for the University to have a single, consistent attendance monitoring system.

*Alignment with student contract and privacy statement*

21. The review has examined the University's student privacy statement and the Learning Analytics Principles and Policy and concluded that they generally align well. There are likely to be some minor modifications required to the student privacy statement to clarify that learning or student analytics may lead to prompts for individual student interventions.

*Policy awareness, approval and guidance*

22. There is work to be done in making it more straightforward to run an analytics project through clear process guidance and training for project managers and the review aims to produce new guidance and documentation for this.

23. While we can remove some of the policy and process barriers to encourage more learning analytics projects at all scales, a more significant barrier is getting and linking the data in the first place. University core student datasets are not yet linked in ways that allow colleagues to interrogate them easily. While there are data protection and security advantages in extracting and linking a bespoke set of datasets for each project, this is expensive and time-consuming. The review group would like to **recommend** the University consider standardised connection

of the main student datasets but a project to do so would not be within the review's scope.

24. The revision has tried to clarify the difference between institutional learning analytics activities and the use of institutional data.

25. The proposed further guidance will look at clarifying the approval process (a) for research projects that also need local research ethics approval and (b) regarding timescales for projects that should have sign-off from the two oversight Committees.

**Resource implications**

26. None at present.

**Risk Management**

27. Regular update of this policy suite should mitigate legal and reputational risks arising from it falling out of date.

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

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


Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

**Equality & Diversity**

29. An updated Equality Impact Assessment for the policy suite is attached.

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

30. A communication plan for the revised policy will be prepared following its final approval. Further guidance for project managers will be prepared. The proposal to include learning and student analytics within a wider data ethics framework will be taken forward through the Information Governance Committee.

31. The revised policy will also require approval from the appropriate successor to Knowledge Strategy Committee.

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September 2025

**Freedom of Information:** Open paper.

**If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact academic.quality@ed.ac.uk or Academic Quality and Standards, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL.**

# Learning Analytics Principles and Policy

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

| Purpose of Policy and Procedures |
|---|
| The document sets out the principles and purposes that will guide the University's development of learning analytics activities, and the policy and procedures that will guide the University's development and management of learning analytics activities. |

| Overview |
|---|
| The document defines learning analytics, and sets out the University's principles and purposes for learning analytics. It details policy and procedure on how the University will manage data stewardship issues such as transparency, consent, ethics, privacy and access, retention and disposal of data in line with these principles and purposes. The policy covers how the University handles issues such as data governance, consent and security when developing and operating learning analytics systems. |

| Scope: Mandatory policy |
|---|
| It applies to all staff involved in developing and managing learning analytics activities, and to all students engaging with those activities. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Contact Officer** | Neil McCormick, Educational Technology Policy Officer | Neil.McCormick@ed.ac.uk | |

## Document control

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Dates** | **Approved**: 05.2018 | **Starts:** 06.2018 | **Equality impact assessment:** 16.05.2017 | **Amendments:** [September 2025] | **Next Review:** 2027/2028 |
| **Approving authority** | Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, and [successor to Knowledge Strategy Committee] | | | | |
| **Consultation undertaken** | Schools, Colleges, Students' Association, EUSA, staff and students (focus groups and surveys). Task group set reporting to LTC and KSC<br>Data Protection Officer | | | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Section responsible for policy maintenance & review** | Learning, Teaching and Web Services |
| **Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations** | |
| **Policies superseded by this policy** | This revision combines and revises the 2017 Learning Analytics Principles and Purposes with the 2018 Policy and procedures for developing and managing Learning Analytics activities. |
| **Alternative format** | If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4490. |
| **Keywords** | Learning analytics, data |

# Learning Analytics Principles and Policy

## Overview

Learning analytics has been defined as 'the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for purposes of understanding and optimising learning and the environments in which it occurs' (Society for Learning Analytics Research, 2011). Fundamentally, learning analytics is concerned with combining different types of data regarding student engagement and learning (for instance, data generated by learning management systems, student systems, library systems and other sources related to learning and teaching) **in order to better understand, and improve, the learning experiences of our students.** Learning analytics can be particularly valuable when teaching at scale, or online, makes it more challenging for staff to know how their students are learning. Learning analytics can be particularly valuable when teaching at scale, or online, makes it more challenging for staff to know how their students are learning.

~~While t~~The University~~'s use of learning analytics is in its early stages, we are~~ is in a strong position to develop and utilise learning analytics ~~learn from our own pilot~~ activities at both local and institutional levels, ~~and~~ given its~~our~~ existing expertise in data science and in education and learning sciences.

This document~~e following is~~ presents the University's statement of the Principles and Purposes that will guide ~~the development of~~ our Learning Analytics activities. ~~It will be accompanied~~ This is followed by ~~a more~~ detailed policy and procedure ~~to~~ setting out how we ~~will~~ manage data stewardship issues such as transparency, consent, ethics, privacy and access, retention and disposal of data in line with these Principles and Purposes. ~~It is possible that, once we have more experience of Learning Analytics, we will wish to review and update these Principles and Purposes.~~

## Policy Principles

The policy starts from the position that all uses of data analytics for learning and teaching within the University should be ethical, transparent and focused on the enhancement of the student experience.

1. As an institution we understand that data never provides the whole picture about students' capacities or likelihood of success, and it will therefore not be used to inform significant action at an individual level without human intervention;

2. Our vision is that learning analytics can benefit all students in reaching their full academic potential. While we recognise that some of the insights from learning

analytics may be directed more at some students than others, we do not propose a deficit model targeted only at supporting students at risk of failure;

3. We will be transparent about how we collect and use data, with whom we share it, where consent applies, and where responsibilities for the ethical use of data lie;

4. We recognise that data and algorithms can contain and perpetuate bias, and will actively work to recognise and minimise any potential negative impacts;

5. Good governance will be core to our approach, to ensure learning analytics projects and implementations are conducted according to defined ethical principles and align with organisational strategy, policy and values;

6. The introduction of learning analytics systems will be supported by focused staff and student development activities to build our institutional capacity; and

7. Data generated from learning analytics will not be used to monitor staff performance, unless specifically authorised following additional consultation.

## Purposes of Learning Analytics

Learning analytics approaches can support a range of activities within the institution ~~. While to date they have been explored by universities primarily as means to improve retention, they also have potential benefits for the~~ that enhance~~ment of~~ the student experience~~, currently of more importance to the University of Edinburgh~~:

- **Quality** – Learning analytics can be used as a form of feedback on the efficacy of pedagogical design. Academic teams can use analytics about student activity (individual or cohort) as part of course review and re-design processes as well as potentially using analytics as a form of in-course monitoring and feedback. Individual staff can use learning analytics to reflect on the impact of their teaching.

- **Equity** – Learning analytics approaches can allow us to see more nuanced views of our highly diverse student population, challenge assumptions that we may be making, and allow supportive resource to be directed where it is most needed.

- **Personalised feedback** – Learning analytics can be used to tailor the messages and support that we offer to our students, providing more personalised feedback to support student reflection and academic planning.

- **Coping with scale** – With the challenge of growing cohorts of students, learning analytics can help to strengthen the academic relationship by doing some of the heavy lifting of identifying individuals or groups of individuals that might benefit from particular interventions or information from staff.

- **Student Experience** – In addition to supporting a more personalised experience, learning analytics can improve progression and retention, ensure that our academic offerings align with the needs and goals of students, and support satisfaction and wellbeing. Analytics can also be used to promote critical reflection skills and enable our students to take responsibility for their own learning.

- **Skills** – Interactions with analytics as part of the University learning experience can help our students build 'digital savviness' and prompt more critical reflection on how data about them is being used more generally, what consent might actually mean and how algorithms work across datasets to define and profile individuals. Learning analytics approaches can also be used to promote the development of key employability skills. Supporting staff to develop skills in working with learning analytics applications is also an investment in institutional capacity and leadership.

- **Efficiency** – Learning analytics can be used to evaluate and demonstrate institutional efficiency through a) measuring the impact of initiatives and validating that benefits are being realised and b) demonstrating that publicly-funded resource is being deployed in support of the best outcomes of all students.

# Policy and procedures for developing and managing Learning Analytics activities

## 1 Overview

The following complements the Policy Principles and Purposes of Learning Analytics statements above by setting out how the University handles issues such as data governance, consent and security when developing and operating learning analytics systems.

## 2 Definitions

- 'Learning analytics' involves combining different types of data regarding student engagement and learning in order to better understand, and improve, the learning experiences of students. Its purpose is distinct from the well-established practice of using individual student datasets (for example, data on course outcomes) for quality and planning purposes.

- The use ~~and~~ of student engagement and learning data to enable staff (such as Student Advisors) to identify and offer support to individual students or groups of students can be referred to as 'student analytics'.

- 'Learning analytics pilots' are time-limited learning analytics activities that will, typically, apply to students in some specific areas of the University and be experimental in nature.

- 'Institutional' learning analytics activities are ongoing activities that apply to students in many or all areas of the University.
- 'Data stewards' are the staff responsible for ensuring the security, access, documentation, and quality of the 'golden copy' of data sets that might be used for learning analytics (for example, the service owners of the student record system, virtual learning environment or digital library service).
- 'Institutional datasets' are data held by the University about students in many or all areas of the University.
- 'Project managers' are the members of staff in Schools / Colleges or professional service groups who develop and manage learning analytics pilots or institutional learning analytics activities.
- 'Personal student data' is data on identifiable individual students.
- 'Anonymised student data' is a student dataset which has been aggregated and / or anonymised so that it is not possible to identify individual students. (nNote that data is not considered anonymised if it is possible to convert it back into personal data).
- 'Interventions' are activities involving individual students, whether automated or human-mediated, which result from the processing of learning analytics data. There is a distinction between the analysis that leads to the identification of an individual or group for potential intervention, and the intervention itself.

## 3 Types of learning analytics

- **Personalised individual student support** – where data on identifiable individual students' activities is used to support delivery of targeted and tailored interventions with those individuals.
- **Student reflection** – where data are used to allow students to reflect on their own learning or student experience in relation to anonymised peer data, or to allow staff to prompt them to do so either as groups or individually.
- **Understanding and improving the quality of our students' learning experience** – where data is used to provide feedback to staff on the efficacy of pedagogical design; to enable individual staff to reflect on the impact of their teaching; or to allow student support services to understand the effectiveness of their activities and to plan for future delivery., and to allow students to reflect on anonymised data regarding their peers' learning.
- **Research activities** – where data is used to explore whether there is a relationship between variables, for example between a successful student outcome and particular learning activities.

In general, the requirements for developing and managing learning analytics are more rigorous for learning analytics activities involving personalised individual student support, or otherwise utilising personal student data, than learning analytics activities utilising anonymised student data. For example, staff utilising aggregate learning analytics data for relatively routine quality assurance purposes are unlikely to need to undertake additional steps as a result of this policy.

For research activities that require research ethics approval, this approval shall be sought in addition to approval from the Learning Analytics Review Group detailed in section 7 below.

The following table summarises key requirements for these different categories of learning analytics activities.

## Summary of key requirements for carrying out learning analytics

| | **Purpose** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Requirement** | **Personalised individual student support** | **Student reflection** | **Understanding and improving the quality of our students' learning experience** | **Research activities** |
| Privacy Impact Assessment required? | Yes | Yes – if it involves the processing of personal student data.<br>If not, no. | | |
| Privacy Notice required? | Yes | Yes – if it involves the processing of personal student data.<br>If not, no. | | |
| Opt-in consent required? | Yes | Yes – if it involves the processing of sensitive personal student data.<br>If not, no. | | |
| Arrangements for students to access/correct their data required? | Yes | Yes – if it involves the processing of personal student data.<br>If not, no. | | |
| Arrangements for supporting staff/students to interpret the data required? | Yes | Potentially, depending on how the findings of the analysis will be communicated and used. | | |
| Approval process | Learning Analytics Review Group | Learning Analytics Review Group,<br>if it involves: third parties; personal data from more than one School; or activities likely to create particular challenges or risks. | | |

## 4 Responsibility for learning analytics

- **The Senate Education Committee (SEC) and ~~Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC~~[oversight committee tbc]~~)~~** are responsible for overseeing the University's operation of learning analytics in line with this Policy. SEC will oversee and monitor the pedagogical and supportive uses that the University is making of learning analytics, and ~~KSC~~[oversight committee tbc] will oversee and monitor the University's data stewardship arrangements for its learning analytics activities.

- **A Learning Analytics Review Group** with responsibility for reviewing and approving proposals for learning analytics projects has been established by the committees above. The Review Group is also available to provide advice regarding other categories of learning analytics activities. The group will report annually to the committees above. It comprises:

    - A convenor, who will be a senior academic member of staff with expertise in Learning Analytics, nominated by the ~~Senior Vice~~ Provost~~incipal~~.
    - The Assistant Principal with strategic responsibility for Learning Analytics.
    - A student representative.
    - The Data Protection Officer.
    - Representatives from relevant professional services groups (University Secretary's Group and Information Services Group) that steward the core student and central learning service data.
    - The Chief Information Security Officer.
    - A member of academic staff with expertise in research ethics.

- **Project managers** are responsible for developing proposals for learning analytics activities and for managing the delivery of the activities in line with this Policy.

- **Data Stewards** are responsible for approving the release of 'their' golden copy data sets for learning analytics (where not already available to relevant staff via standard reporting tools), and – as members of the Learning Analytics Review Group~~– – –~~ for approving the use of 'their' data sets for specific categories of learning analytic activities in line with this Policy (see Section 7, below).

## 5 Sources of data for learning analytics

The main categories of student data available to the University for the purposes of learning analytics are:

- Admissions data;
- Course and programme enrolment data;

- Data on student engagement, progression and achievement in assessments, courses and programmes;
- Data on student engagement with Virtual Learning Environments, assessment services and media platforms;
- Data on student use of library systems and services;
- Data on student utilisation of other University services and facilities related to learning and teaching; and
- Card access data;
- Student survey responses.

In many cases, the University will use existing corporate datasets such as the University's student record system, virtual learning environments, survey tools, and library and IT systems. In some circumstances the University (or individual Schools) may collect student data for the purposes of specific learning analytics activities.

# 6 Issues to address when developing and managing learning analytics activities

Project managers and data stewards are responsible for considering the following issues when developing and managing learning analytics activities:

## 6.1 Alignment with the University's Principles and Purposes for learning analytics

Project managers are responsible for ensuring that the objectives of their learning analytics activities align with the University's statement of Principles and Purposes for Learning Analytics. Project managers shall ensure that the University's reputation for ethical, secure and effective data management is upheld, so that students will retain their confidence in using the University's systems and services.

## 6.2 Validity, comprehensiveness and interpretation of data

Project managers are responsible for assessing whether the relevant datasets are sufficiently robust for the intended usage, monitoring the quality and robustness of the data used for learning analytics activities, presenting the data in a way that assists staff and students to interpret it (for example, highlighting any inaccuracies or gaps in the data), and arranging training or briefings where appropriate to assist staff and students to interpret and utilise the data. Data stewards will be able to advise project managers on the validity, comprehensiveness and interpretation of data where required.

Project managers are also responsible for ensuring that the analysis, interpretation and use of the data does not inadvertently reinforce discriminatory attitudes or increase social power differentials.

When project managers or data stewards use or publish anonymised student data collected for or generated by learning analytics, they are responsible for ensuring that it is not possible to identify individuals from metadata or by aggregating multiple data sources.

## 6.3 Data Protection Impact Assessment

If the proposed learning analytics activities will involve processing of personal student data, the project manager must undertake a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) in advance of finalising the plans for the activities. A template for the DPIA is available from the University's Data Protection Officer.

## 6.4 Privacy Notice

The University provides an overview of how it uses students' data for learning analytics i~~I~~n the Policy Principles and Purposes sections above, and in the Student Privacy Notice.~~Data Protection Statement (the new version of which will be published in Spring 2018), the University provides an overview of how it uses students' data for learning analytics. The University is developing a new Privacy Statement for student data which will include information regarding how the University uses personal student data for learning analytics purposes.~~

As long as an individual learning analytics activity is consistent with the statements in the relevant University Privacy Statement(s) (the Student Privacy Statement for matriculated students, or the Short Courses Privacy Policy for non-matriculated learners, or the Privacy Information Notice for Staff), it is not necessary for the project manager to publish a separate Privacy Notice for each individual learning analytics activity. Project managers are however responsible for providing detailed information regarding the algorithms that they are using on request from the relevant students or staff.

## 6.5 Legal basis for processing student data

It is necessary for the University to identify a lawful basis for processing personal student data from the options set out in UK Data Protection legislation.

a. The University's lawful basis for processing personal student data for learning analytics purposes, where these are not special category data, is "**legitimate interests** pursued by the controller (The University of Edinburgh) or a third party."
b. When learning analytics activities involve the processing of special category data, for example, data on race or ethnicity, health or sexual life, or religious or philosophical beliefs, the University's lawful basis will be "**consent** of the data subject"~~:~~.
c. The University will normally only undertake interventions with individual students (for example, in order to target additional student support or sign-post individuals to learning resources) based on learning analytics data processing when it has the prior **consent** of those individual students.
d. The University may give individual students means to compare their own data to anonymous peer data (from current or cumulative historic cohorts). In this case, the

University would process non-special category peer data on the basis of its **legitimate interests**, and process both any special category peer data and the individual student's personal data for comparison on the basis of **consent**.

~~c.~~e. The University may, on the basis of its **legitimate interests**, perform approved, standardised, ongoing engagement analysis across whole cohorts of students to identify those whose engagement with their programme starts or becomes unusually low, changes significantly over a period of time, or varies significantly from their cohort, and for whom an initial contact from an appropriate member of staff, such as a Student Adviser, is likely to be to the student's benefit at that point. The **consent** of the individual student is required to continue such an intervention.

When the legal basis is student consent, the project manager is responsible for obtaining informed opt-in consent from all the students whose data will be processed prior to undertaking the data processing. When student consent is required prior to undertaking interventions on the basis of learning analytics data processing, the project manager must obtain informed opt-in consent from students prior to undertaking any interventions. The project manager must consult the University's Data Protection Officer regarding the design of the consent form and administering the consenting process.

## 6.6 Involvement of third parties

Where a data steward or project manager contracts with a third party for the collection, storage, or processing of learning analytics data, they are responsible for ensuring that the third party is compliant with this Policy. Where commercial providers of learning analytics services are used, algorithmic transparency will require to be assured during procurement. All engagements involving the exchange of University data must be supported by an appropriate contract that details the University's requirements for protecting University data. The third party must provide detailed evidence of the information security controls they have in place.

## 6.7 Data security and access to data

Data stewards and project managers are responsible for ensuring the security of datasets used for learning analytics, in line with relevant University policy and standards. Data stewards and project managers are responsible for restricting access to learning analytics data to those staff that have a legitimate need to access it.

Project managers and data stewards are responsible for providing students on request with access to all their personal student data collected for and generated by learning analytics, and for giving students an opportunity to correct any inaccurate personal data held about themselves. Where project managers become aware of inaccuracies in a 'golden copy' data set, they should inform the relevant data steward.

### 6.8 Retention and disposal of data

Managing departments are responsible for retaining and disposing of personal data that they collect or generate for learning analytics purposes in line with the University's Retention Schedule.

Project managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff who access and use the data during the project comply with retention periods for data collected for or generated by learning analytics. If the University's Retention Schedule does not specify the appropriate retention periods, prior to the start of the learning analytics activities the project manager must agree an appropriate retention period with Information Compliance Services.

If a student asks the project manager to dispose of or anonymise any of the student's personal data that has been collected specifically for or generated by learning analytics, the project manager will do so within **four weeks**. Data sets generated for a different primary purpose (such as those listed in Section 5) may however not be possible to dispose of or anonymise.

### 6.9 Analysis methods and artificial intelligence

Project managers are responsible for ensuring that analysis methods are appropriately secure and transparent. Project managers are responsible for ensuring that personal data are not entered into and retained within analysis services or systems where they can be accessed from outside the project, for example into commercial Generative AI models available to the general public.

## 7 Approval processes for introducing learning analytics activities

Project managers for the following categories of learning analytics activities will be required to seek approval from the Learning Analytics review group:

- Projects that involve processing and utilising personal student data to provide targeted / personalised student support;
- Projects that involve third parties in the collection, storage, or processing of data for learning analytics purposes;
- Projects involving courses or programmes owned by more than one School;
- Projects involving the processing of personal data of students aged 13 or less;
- Any other learning analytics activities that appear likely to create particular challenges or risks.

When this approval is required, the project manager should submit to the Review Group (via Learning, Teaching and Web Services) a proposal setting out the following information:

- The data that will be used, including identifying any data that will be collected for the purposes of the planned learning analytics activities;

- The planned arrangements for addressing the issues set out in Section 6.
- Any potentially adverse impacts of the analytics and the steps that will be taken to remove or minimise them, and any other ethical or legal issues that staff should take account of when utilising the data;
- How the findings of pilot activities will be evaluated and disseminated;
- An Equality Impact Assessment.

For proposals for institutional learning analytics pilot activities, if the Review Group is content then it will seek formal approval from the Senate Education Committee and the ~~Knowledge Strategy Committee~~[Oversight Committee tbc].

In addition to making decisions on these proposals, the Review Group can advise data stewards and project managers on other proposed learning analytics activities.

## 8 Learning analytics data and the obligation to monitor attendance and engagement of students on Tier 4 visas

Each School is responsible for developing an annual School Engagement Monitoring Plan which must define the engagement and attendance contact points that they will use to monitor their Tier 4 sponsored students' attendance and engagement with their programmes of studies. Use of learning analytics is not normally appropriate for this and most learning analytics data do not provide proof of attendance at the University. Schools should ~~not routinely use learning analytics data for Tier 4 student attendance and engagement monitoring purposes, and should~~ instead rely on the defined contact points.

It may however be appropriate to use the learning analytics data in extreme and exceptional purposes, for example to assist in establishing the student's patterns of engagement with their learning in response to a police or immigration services enquiry. If these circumstances, University Legal Services must be consulted before any data is released to external bodies.

## 9 Other relevant policies

In addition to this Policy, other relevant policies and guidelines include:

- The University's Information Security Policies and Guidance: https://infosec.ed.ac.uk/information-protection-policies
- The University's Data Protection Policy: https://data-protection.ed.ac.uk/data-protection-policy
- The University's Protocol for Access to Data in the Corporate Student Record System: www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/use-of-data/policies-and-regulations

## 10 Sources of advice

- The University's Data Protection Officer – for data protection issues.
- The University's Chief Information Security Officer – for information security issues.
- Information Compliance Services – for enquiries regarding retention periods for learning analytics data.
- Data stewards (for example in Information Services Group and Student Systems) – for enquiries regarding the potential use of datasets for learning analytics purposes
- The Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services – for enquiries regarding the Review Group.
- Legal Services – for enquiries regarding the release of personal data to third parties (for example, police or immigration services), and contractual negotiations with third parties.

**Senate Education Committee**

**25 September 2025**

# Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program Phase 2 (2023-2030)

## Description of paper

1. The paper provides the committee with an update on the successes of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, particularly the experience to date of its Online Distance Learning (ODL) Scholars.

2. The paper is in line with the values of Strategy 2030 and the commitment to inclusion in the Learning and Teaching Strategy, in particular relating to diverse, accessible and inclusive education, welcoming community, internationalism, excellence and ambition. *"All of our staff and students will develop here, whether they are from Leith, Lisbon, Lahore or Lilongwe."*

## Fit with remit

| Education Committee | Y/N |
|---|---|
| Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners. | **Y** |
| Give specific consideration to instances in which the experience of one particular cohort of students or learners (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research students, and those involved in non-standard programmes) may diverge from that of others. | **Y** |
| Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity. | **Y** |

## Action requested / recommendation

3. To note and discuss the content of the paper.

## Background and context

4. The University of Edinburgh has been working closely with the Mastercard Foundation since 2016, through an initial gift to the University, which provided 200 scholarships to talented students from Africa at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels until 2023. In Phase 2 of our partnership with the Foundation (2023-2030), the university will offer 850 postgraduate scholarships.

5. Mastercard Foundation Scholars are recruited based on their excellent academic achievement, leadership potential or experience, and those who have faced significant barriers to education (social, financial, personal, practical or health-related). Applications from female Scholars, Scholars from refugee and displaced backgrounds, and Scholars with disabilities are particularly welcomed.

6. In particular, the University of Edinburgh's reputation as a leader in online education was a significant factor for Mastercard Foundation entrusting the university with a 2nd and much larger philanthropic gift in 2023 which focusses the highest proportion (70%) of its investment in online scholarships. Specifically, the funding agreement between the University of Edinburgh and Mastercard Foundation mandates the program to "[Build] on the innovative work of the original Scholars Program at Edinburgh, this next phase ***will leverage lessons learned, adapt best practice and standards in online teaching & learning and remote doctoral training*** to create a cadre of skilled, entrepreneurial, and compassionate future leaders, capable of effecting systems change in response to climate crisis."

7. Looking ahead to future funding opportunities, the University's success in meeting this primary objective will have a significant bearing on potential further funding from the Foundation beyond 2030.

**Discussion**

8. The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at the University is specifically recruiting Scholars who are passionate about making change in response to the climate crisis. Through the Program, we offer talented young people an exciting array of high-quality, sustainability-focused postgraduate learning opportunities (academic programmes, sustainability schools, mentoring, transitions support, etc), equipping Scholars with the knowledge, skills and networks to promote sustainable transitions across the African continent and beyond.

9. To date, 419 Scholars and Fellows have been recruited in Phase 2 of the programme. Scholars have joined us from across Africa and have made a significant impact on the life of the university.

10. The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program however exists not only to support Mastercard Foundation Scholars and Alumni. Reflecting the ambition of the Mastercard Foundation, the Scholars Program at Edinburgh seeks to share its learning and use its influencing power to impact the wider University of Edinburgh community and other key actors to ensure other international students facing barriers to education not only gain admission but also have every chance to succeed in their educational journey.

11. During this 2nd phase of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at the University of Edinburgh (2023-2030) the Program team, alongside Scholars and Alumni, will continue to focus on creating an enabling environment at the University that allows Mastercard Foundation Scholars, and other "global access" students,

the opportunity to access, succeed and be part of the transformative work of addressing structural injustices.

12. The University's leadership in the space of online education secured significant investment in 2016 as part of Phase 1 of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at the University of Edinburgh. Through this partnership, and building on the expertise of the University, the Foundation funded 62 ODL Scholars between 2016 and 2023 to study 7 programmes at the University. Building on the success of these scholars through the Scholars Program, the Foundation significantly increased its investment in online scholarships in Phase 2 of its partnership with the University of Edinburgh. Between 2023 and 2030, 580 online Scholarship and Fellowships will be offered.

13. The current eligible online programmes including (but not limited to):
    - International Development
    - Global Food Security and Nutrition
    - Global Challenges
    - Carbon Management
    - One Health
    - Circular Economy
    - Sustainable Lands and Cities
    - Social Justice and Community Action
    - Digital Education
    - PhD Sustainable African Futures (a pilot joint PhD with the University of Witwatersrand)

14. While Mastercard Foundation ODL Scholars report feeling a strong sense of community and connection amongst the Scholars Program, the same is not always reflected across the wider ODL Student community. Within the context of student community, student feedback has highlighted the disparity in satisfaction between online and on-campus international students. Feedback suggests that online students struggle with building a sense of community and integrating into university life, hindered by challenges such as varying time zones, limited live session opportunities, reduced interaction with peers, and personal commitments.

15. We know from the Scholars Program that the following offerings made a significant positive impact on their student experience and could be considered for all ODL students:
    - connectivity stipend to enable students to access data while studying
    - more local in-person activity where feasible
    - opportunity to apply for graduation fund to attend in person

- online extracurricular opportunities like peer support sessions, enterprise program, mentoring and events
- dedicated and experienced online student support staff
- Contextually relevant online community platforms

16. The necessity of this level of support and investment has contributed to the success of Mastercard Foundation ODL Scholars at the University of Edinburgh. Of the graduated scholars, there is a 92% retention rate and nearly two-thirds have been awarded one of the top two academic grades (Merit or Distinction).

17. In addition to the supports outlined above, the programme has also sought to raise the profile of ODL Scholars across the university, through initiatives such as the Access Culture grant: https://global.ed.ac.uk/mastercard-foundation/impact-stories/a-celebration-of-cultural-diversity-of-online-dist or through CAM campaigns such as during graduation.

18. Learnings gleaned from online provision of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at the University of Edinburgh offer insight into the impacts of such approaches in improving the wider UoE ODL student experience, including but not limited to support for Education Beyond Borders online scholars. As such the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program will convene a short life working group on online student experience to address a series of known ODL student experience issues regarding sense of community. This group will gather learnings from good practice in the Program, and elsewhere across the university, to detail steps that need to be taken to address these known ODL student experience issues.

19. References:


- Educational Design & Engagement: 20 years of strategic investment in online learning
- Online Learning Brochure July 2021
- Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program: Impact Report 2016-2023
- HEPI: Online learning as a response to global shifts in higher education
- Teaching Matters: Teaching approaches for decolonising and diversifying the curriculum


**Resource implications**

20. There are no immediate resource implications.

**Risk management**

*21.* The 2nd phase of the partnership with Mastercard Foundation (2023-2030) is approaching the halfway mark. In the next year early conversations will commence with the Foundation on what a 3rd phase of the partnership might include. Delivering on the key outcomes of this 2nd phase, including "***leverage lessons learned, adapt best practice and standards in online teaching & learning and remote doctoral training" (Phase 2 Agreement, UoE and Mastercard Foundation)*** will position the university in a strong position reputationally to advance these conversations.

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

22. The following SDGs are most relevant for this paper:

*Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all – online learning is an important vehicle for quality education.* We stress the emphasis on the Goal's use of the terms "inclusive" and "quality", and argue that enhancing online student experience should be added to the University's efforts to deepen its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across all areas of the University

*Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all* - online learning opens up opportunities for professional and academic development that can lead to decent work

*Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts* – online learning, by its very mode of delivery, makes a significant contribution towards climate action. Online education significantly decreases the carbon footprint of universities by reducing energy consumption of the HEIs and decreasing the need for student and staff travel

**Equality & diversity**

23. UoE's Strategy 2030 includes the key deliverable of "Improved digital outreach will see us enable global participation in education". Its "Social & Civic Responsibility Delivery Plan 2020 to 2030" details, "We will work in partnership with others to support students from diverse backgrounds with education opportunities. Providing scholarships for students from developing countries; addressing barriers; and ensuring effective student support. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) will continue to reach all countries". The Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 and Mainstreaming Progress Report 2023 states that "EDI principles are at the heart of our developments to enhance [the] student experience"

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

24. Any changes to student experience support will be reported on to Mastercard Foundation as evidence of institutional change at the university. This will be communicated via bi-annual reports, a mid-term evaluation (2025) and final program evaluation (2029)

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*Dr Michael Gallagher*

**Presenter**
*Charlie Bevan and Sharon Boateng*

**Freedom of Information:** *Open*

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**Senate Education Committee**

**25 September 2025**

# Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information

## Description of paper

1. The paper sets out the case for the University of Edinburgh becoming a signatory to the Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information[1]. This proposal has already been approved by Research Information Systems Governance Group (RISGG), Research Ethics and Integrity Review Group (REIRG) and Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC). The Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information is included as Appendix I.

2. This paper pertains to the following outcome set out in Strategy 2030:
   - We will see our research having a greater impact as a result of partnership, international reach and investment in emergent disciplines.

## Fit with remit

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

## Action requested/Recommendation

3. Senate Education Committee is invited to ***note*** that approval has been given for the University to become a signatory to the Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information.

## Background and context

4. The LERU INFO Policy Group received a presentation about the Barcelona Declaration back in April 2024, and the Research Information Systems Team agrees that this sits well with our aims regarding publications metadata and some of the other research information held in our systems.

5. The proposal to become a signatory was approved last year by Research Ethics & Integrity Review Group (28/05/24) and Research Information Systems Governance Group (16/07/24). KSC approved the proposal to become a signatory at their meeting on 29 May 2025. University Executive noted the approval at their meeting on 10 June 2025.

6. Professor Christina Boswell, Vice-Principal Research and Enterprise, has reviewed and approved this paper.

7. The paper was also circulated to members of the Research Strategy Group, for comment.

[1] Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information https://barcelona-declaration.org/

8. Becoming a signatory to this declaration supports our wider aims around Open Research, as well as commitments already made by the University for DORA[2] and COARA[3].

**Discussion**

9. Becoming a signatory to the declaration shows our institutional support for a direction of travel regarding research information.

10. We have confidence that the wording around 'as open as possible and as closed as necessary' means we can protect research information we need to keep confidential, and that we have adequate controls in place for doing this.

**Resource Implications**

11. There are no direct resourcing implications associated with becoming a signatory to the Barcelona Declaration, as it is covered by our business-as-usual work in the Research Information Systems and Scholarly Communications Teams.

12. Any changes to publications metadata will be handled by professional services staff in the Library, within existing budgets and there will be no additional resource implications for academic staff.

13. If the University were to change any systems in the future, then a full assessment of the resource implications of that change would be undertaken as part of that exercise. Information Services Group has expertise in undertaking such assessment, working with Procurement.

**Risk Management**

14. There will be many types of research information which cannot be made open for reasons of information security, confidentiality, commercial sensitivity etc. We will operate by the principle of information being as open as possible but as closed as necessary. The research information systems are well-governed with a risk register reviewed twice annually and risks also monitored in 4risk. There are currently 78 institutional signatories, including the Universities of Loughborough and Bristol in the UK. Numerous members of our LERU peer group are also signatories, including Leiden, Utrecht, Strasbourg, Paris Saclay and Milan.

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

15. Signing this declaration supports the following UN Sustainable Development Goals; 4 (Education) and 9 (Industry, Innovation and Growth).

**Equality & Diversity**

16. We do not believe there are Equality & Diversity implications for staff or students as a direct result of becoming a signatory to the Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information. The wider availability of research information should have a positive effect on ED&I.

[2] San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment https://sfdora.org/

[3] Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment https://coara.eu/

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

17. The Library has prepared a communications plan and will shortly be meeting with Heads of School via College SMT meetings. Further follow-up is planned for September 2025, when we will widen communications to all academic staff. The communications plan will necessarily be under constant review as negotiations progress. Once Senate Education Committee has been informed, the Deputy Director, Library & University Collections will notify the organisers of the University's wish to become a signatory.

***Author***
Dominic Tate
Deputy Director, Library & University Collections
Associate Director,
Library Research Support

**Freedom of Information:** This paper is open.

**Appendices**

Appendix I: Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information

**If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact academic.quality@ed.ac.uk or Academic Quality and Standards, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL.**

# BARCELONA DECLARATION ON OPEN RESEARCH INFORMATION

April 16, 2024 / DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10958522

# INDEX

# PREAMBLE

Vast amounts of information are being used to manage the research enterprise, from information about research actors and their activities to information about inputs and outputs in the research process and signals of the use, esteem, and societal impact of research. This information often plays a vital role in the distribution of resources and the evaluation of researchers and institutions. Research performing and research funding organizations use this information to set strategic priorities. The information is also indispensable for researchers and societal stakeholders to find and assess relevant research outputs.

However, a large share of all research information is locked inside proprietary infrastructures. It is managed by companies that are accountable primarily to their shareholders, not to the research community. As research community, we have become strongly reliant on closed infrastructures. We have ended up assessing researchers and institutions based on non-transparent evidence. We are monitoring and incentivizing open science using closed data. We are also routinely making decisions based on information that is biased against less privileged languages, geographical regions, and research agendas. To advance responsible research assessment and open science and to promote unbiased high-quality decision making, there is an urgent need to make research information openly available through open scholarly infrastructures. Openness of research information must be the new norm.

We, the undersigned, believe that the research information landscape requires fundamental change. We commit to taking a lead in reforming the landscape and transforming our practices. To this end, we commit to (1) making openness of research information the default, (2) working with services and systems that support and enable open research information, (3) supporting the sustainability of infrastructures for open research information, and (4) working together to realize the transition from closed to open research information.

These four commitments are presented below. Further background and context is provided in Annex A. Definitions of key concepts can be found in Annex B.

# COMMITMENTS

As organizations that carry out, fund, and evaluate research, we commit to the following:

## 1

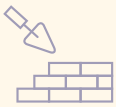
### We will make openness the default for the research information we use and produce

- Openness will be the norm for the research information we use, for instance to assess researchers and institutions, to support strategic decision making, and to find relevant research outputs.
- Openness will be the norm for the research information we produce, for instance information about our activities and outputs, with an exception for information for which openness would be inappropriate ('as open as possible, as closed as necessary').

## 2

### We will work with services and systems that support and enable open research information

- For publishing services and platforms, we will require that research information generated in publication processes (e.g., metadata of research articles and other outputs) be made openly available through open scholarly infrastructures, using standard protocols and identifiers where available.
- For systems and platforms for the internal management of research information (e.g., current research information systems), we will require that all relevant research information can be exported and made open, using standard protocols and identifiers where available.

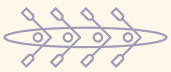


## 3

## We will support the sustainability of infrastructures for open research information

- We take responsibility for supporting infrastructures for open research information, for instance by participating in community building and community governance and by providing fair and equitable contributions to the financial stability and development of these infrastructures.

- We expect the infrastructures that we support to implement good practices for community governance and sustainability (e.g., Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure).



## 4

## We will support collective action to accelerate the transition to openness of research information

- We recognize the importance of sharing experiences and coordinating action to promote a system-wide transition from closed to open research information.

- To facilitate this, we support establishing a Coalition for Open Research Information and strengthening collaboration with other related initiatives and organizations.

# ANNEX A
# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

## Closed research information leads to black-box decision making

Too often, decision making in science is based on closed research information. Information is locked inside proprietary infrastructures run by for-profit providers that impose severe restrictions on the use and reuse of the information. Errors, gaps, and biases in closed research information are difficult to expose and even more difficult to fix. Indicators and analytics derived from this information lack transparency and reproducibility. Decisions about the careers of researchers, about the future of research organizations, and ultimately about the way science serves the whole of humanity, depend on these black-box indicators and analytics. Without open research information, it is difficult, if not impossible, to scrutinize these indicators and analytics and to have an informed debate about their strengths and weaknesses. Basic standards of accountability cannot be met, and academic sovereignty is at risk.

There are many closed research information infrastructures. Well-known examples are the Web of Science and Scopus databases, which play an important role in research assessment and resource allocation in many countries. These databases provide metadata for scientific publications (e.g., title, abstract, journal, authors, author affiliations, funders, etc.), but they impose severe restrictions on the use of this metadata and make the metadata available only to organizations that pay hefty subscription fees. Indicators and analytics based on these databases (e.g., publication and citation statistics, journal impact factors, university rankings, etc.) lack transparency and reproducibility.

## Transparent high-quality decision making requires open research information

At a time when decision making in science is increasingly guided by indicators and analytics, addressing the problems of closed research information must be a top priority. Decisions should be informed by open research information: information that is free to access, without restrictions on how it can be used and reused. To enable linking of information from different sources, open research information should make use of persistent identifiers such as DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers), ORCIDs (Open Researcher and Contributor IDs), and ROR (Research Organization Registry) IDs to reference research outputs, researchers, research organizations, and other entities. Infrastructures for open research information should be governed by relevant stakeholders in the academic community.

Openness of research information ensures that all stakeholders have full access to information that is of relevance to them. This is vital for high-quality decision making in science. It also enables information from different sources to be linked and integrated, so that decision making can take full advantage of all available information and can be based on a diversity of perspectives and an inclusive understanding of the issues at stake. In addition, when researchers or research organizations perform additional data curation, the enriched information resulting from this can again be shared openly, enabling everyone to benefit from it. In a research assessment context, openness of research information guarantees that not only those performing an assessment but also those being assessed have access to all 'evidence' considered in the assessment, offering the transparency and accountability that are crucial to foster responsible assessment practices.

## Support for open research information is rapidly increasing

The importance of openness of research information is widely recognized, for instance by the research assessment reform movement. The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), supported by about 3000 organizations and over 20,000 individuals globally, calls on publishers to "remove all reuse limitations on reference lists in research articles and make them

available under the Creative Commons Public Domain Dedication". The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics advises that researchers who are being evaluated should always be able "to verify data and analysis". The EU Council has adopted conclusions on research assessment and implementation of open science stating "that data and bibliographic databases used for research assessment should, in principle, be openly accessible and that tools and technical systems should enable transparency". The more than 600 organizations that have joined the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) have signed an agreement that emphasizes the need to ensure "independence and transparency of the data, infrastructure and criteria necessary for research assessment and for determining research impacts". A large number of organizations and individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean have signed a declaration highlighting the importance of "initiatives and pronouncements against commercial barriers that limit access and participation in relation to scientific information". The declaration stresses that research assessment should use "databases which reflect both the production disseminated in international repositories as well as that which is included in regional and local databases".

Going beyond research assessment, SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) warns that "complex infrastructure that is critical to conducting the end-to-end business of the university" is increasingly owned by companies that "can invisibly and strategically influence, and perhaps exert control, over key university decisions". In its roadmap for action, SPARC advises research organizations to respond by identifying "a structured set of principles that represent a foundation and a compass for action" and by operating in more coordinated and aligned ways.

In line with this recommendation, the academic community in the Netherlands has developed guiding principles for open research information. These principles aim to "open up research metadata and data analytics", which is essential "to cope with the increasing commercial development across the entire research life cycle without transparency or clarity on whether this supports the interests of the research community".

Openness of research information, and specifically of publication metadata, has also been promoted by the Initiative for Open Citations (I4OC) and the Initiative for Open Abstracts (I4OA) as well as the Metadata 20/20 initiative. Likewise, the FAIR (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability,

and Reusability) principles have played a crucial role in advancing the availability of open metadata for research data. In its Recommendation on Open Science, UNESCO highlights the importance of "open bibliometrics and scientometrics systems for assessing and analysing scientific domains". A growing number of infrastructures for open research information have also adopted the Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure.

Supported by the above developments, research information is increasingly made openly available. A number of open research information infrastructures for instance offer alternatives to closed databases. In addition to infrastructures provided by organizations such as Crossref, DataCite, and ORCID, this also includes 'aggregator' infrastructures such as OpenAlex, OpenCitations, and OpenAIRE, as well as discipline-specific infrastructures such as PubMed and Europe PMC, and local and national infrastructures such as La Referencia, SciELO, and Redalyc.

We are getting close to a tipping point in the transition from closed to open research information. But to reach this tipping point, more concerted action is needed. We therefore call on all organizations that carry out, fund, and evaluate research to support the transition to open research information and to sign the Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information.

# ANNEX B
# DEFINITIONS

## Research information

By *research information* we mean information (sometimes referred to as metadata) relating to the conduct and communication of research. This includes, but is not limited to, (1) bibliographic metadata such as titles, abstracts, references, author data, affiliation data, and data on publication venues, (2) metadata on research software, research data, samples, and instruments, (3) information on funding and grants, and (4) information on organizations and research contributors. Research information is located in systems such as bibliographic databases, software archives, data repositories, and current research information systems.

## Open research information

By *open research information* we mean research information that is free to access and free of restrictions on reuse. Openness of research information is a spectrum, not an absolute. Just like research data should ideally adhere to the FAIR principles for Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability, open research information should ideally also follow these principles. If the highest levels of Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability are realized, research information is both open and FAIR. This for instance requires:

- The use of standardized protocols and persistent identifiers to support high levels of Findability and Interoperability
- Lodging of metadata in widely used repositories and transfer systems to support Findability and Accessibility

- The application of a Creative Commons CC0 waiver or public domain dedication as appropriate to support Interoperability and Reusability
- Transparency of processing and provenance to support Interoperability and Reusability
- The use of infrastructures that provide standard and open interfaces

Research information that cannot be ethically shared, including information that has privacy implications, should not be made open. In some cases, aggregated forms of privacy implicating research information can be made open. However, this should be assessed on a case by case basis in the context of relevant regulations and legal requirements.

## Publishing

By *publishing* we mean the act of making the outputs of research generally available for consumption, use, and critique. This includes, but is not limited to, the formal publication of textual outputs such as journal articles or scholarly books, the posting of reports and other non-peer-reviewed outputs, and the sharing of research data and research software through appropriate repositories. It may also include the release of creative works, including sculpture, visual art, film or video, or other artifacts, where they are intended to represent or communicate the results of a research process.

It is intended that the meaning of *publishing* includes cases where the audience is limited, for instance where access is limited to subscribers, but does not include private and confidential reports or other documents that are not intended for general circulation. Publishing is separate to *archival*, where the intent is long term preservation. Some, but not all, publishing platforms also support archival through the publishing process.

## Scholarly infrastructures

By *scholarly infrastructures* we mean infrastructures through which research information is shared. A precise definition of infrastructures is challenging. A key characteristic of infrastructures is that they are foundational. For instance, they are used by a diversity of actors for differing purposes, other systems depend on them, and they are built to be shared by a community of users. Another characteristic of infrastructures is that they are not visible to end users of services, with dependencies only becoming clear when infrastructures fail.

## Open scholarly infrastructures

By open scholarly infrastructures we mean scholarly infrastructures that provide trustworthy assurances of openness, community accountability, stability, transparency, and reliability. A commitment to adhere to the Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure (POSI), with regular updates on performance and improvements, provides a means by which a scholarly infrastructure can provide assurances to the community that it qualifies for the level of trust accorded to an open scholarly infrastructure.

# BARCELONA DECLARATION ON OPEN RESEARCH INFORMATION

www.barcelona-declaration.org

The Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information was prepared by a group of over 25 research information experts, representing organizations that carry out, fund, and evaluate research, as well as organizations that provide research information infrastructures. The group met in Barcelona in November 2023 in a workshop hosted by SIRIS Foundation. The preparation of the Declaration was coordinated by Bianca Kramer (Sesame Open Science), Cameron Neylon (Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative, Curtin University), and Ludo Waltman (Centre for Science and Technology Studies, Leiden University). Organizations that would like to know more about the Declaration or that wish to sign the Declaration are welcome to reach out to contact@barcelona-declaration.org

**Senate Education Committee**

**25 September 2025**

# Generative AI Guidance for Postgraduate Research Students

## Description of paper

1. This paper presents guidance for postgraduate research students on the use of generative AI.

2. The guidance is based closely on the University's revised guidance for all students. It focuses primarily on the use of generative AI in research assessed by the University, but also flags issues that PGR students will need to consider in relation to ethics, intellectual property, and public dissemination of their research.

3. The development of this guidance aligns with the University's Strategy 2030 goal for the University to be a global leader in artificial intelligence and the use of data with integrity, and to provide ever better education and training for early career researchers.

## Fit with remit

*(Select the relevant committee's remit and indicate how the paper aligns – please delete the remaining tables)*

| **Education Committee** | **Y/N** |
|---|---|
| Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners. | **Y** |
| Promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment, embrace new teaching methods and consider cross-cutting themes such as research-led and technology-enhanced learning, digital and information literacy, education for employability, internationalisation and lifelong learning. Consider and promote local developments or initiatives with substantial implications for University learning and teaching strategy, policy, services or operations. | **Y** |
| Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback. | **Y** |
| Give specific consideration to instances in which the experience of one particular cohort of students or learners (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research students, and those involved in non-standard programmes) may diverge from that of others. | **Y** |
| Anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in learning and teaching for all cohorts of students and learners. | **Y** |
| Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity. | **Y** |

**Action requested / recommendation**

4. The Committee is asked to **note** the guidance, which will shortly be made available online.

**Background and context**

5. The University's revised student guidance on Generative AI has been through an extensive consultation and review process. The PGR guidance follows this revised student guidance closely, but tailors the terminology relating to assessment and academic support to the experience of PGR students. It also incorporates elements of the University's guidance for researchers.

**Discussion**

6. A draft of this guidance was shared with the Doctoral College, College and University PGR student representatives, College PGR Deans, College Deans of Research, and School PGR Directors. Feedback from this consultation has been incorporated into the guidance.

**Resource implications**

7. No additional resource is required at this stage.

8. However, as paper SEC 24/25 4B on the general student guidance highlighted, resource to fund the development of high-quality, context-specific training materials will need to be found or deployed from elsewhere if the University wishes to fully support students and staff through this period of significant change.

**Risk management**

9. As paper SEC 24/25 4B highlighted, the potential risks associated with the use of Generative AI in Higher Education are significant. These risks include erosion of public trust in the academic integrity of the University, negative effects on student and staff wellbeing, and – in the longer term – profound implications for the nature and value of academic knowledge, practice and research.

10. The development of this guidance is one step toward mitigation. However, resourcing of further work on staff guidelines and training are needed to fully address associated risk.

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

11. The PGR guidance follows the University's student guidance in highlighting concerns about the environmental and social impact of generative AI, in particular relating to energy and resource use, labour practices, and intellectual property. By raising awareness of these concerns, it encourages PGR students to consider limiting their use of AI to purposeful rather than casual use.

**Equality & diversity**

12. The guidance highlights the known risks of bias and exclusion associated with Generative AI. Raising awareness of these issues is a key step in training students to use Generative AI ethically and responsibly.

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

13. The guidance will be published online and will be circulated via the Doctoral College. It will be included for noting in the papers for the next meeting of the College Postgraduate Research Committee in CAHSS, CSE, and CMVM.

**Author**
*Professor Siân Bayne*
*Assistant Principal Education Futures*

*Adapted for PGR:*
*Professor Laura Bradley*

**Presenter**
*Professor Laura Bradley*
*Dean of Postgraduate Research, CAHSS*

*September 2025*

**Freedom of Information:** Open

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# University of Edinburgh

# Using generative AI in your studies: guidelines for postgraduate research students

## Summary


- The University trusts you to act with integrity in your use of generative AI for your studies.
- The University does not ban the use of generative AI in your research, though its use is restricted for work assessed by the University.
- Some programmes and disciplines may also restrict its use in other ways. Always check with your supervisors and any programme-level guidelines.
- If you are considering using generative AI for research in conference papers, posters and publications, you should also consult any guidelines provided by the conference organiser or publisher and make any appropriate declarations.
- If you are a funded student, check whether your funder stipulates any additional restrictions.
- The top-level guidelines in this document provide clarity on which ways of using generative AI are strictly prohibited and constitute academic misconduct.
- They also explain why you should be cautious about over-reliance on generative AI for your learning and research.
- These guidelines are general and set out the basics of the University's position – **it is essential that you discuss them with your supervisors and follow any further guidelines provided by your programme and potential publishers of your research**.


## Generative AI at Edinburgh

The University recognises that developing skills in the responsible use of generative AI is important and will likely be significant for your future life and work. It also recognises that there are times when you may want – or be asked – to use it in your current research. We want to ensure that you have the knowledge and skills to thrive in a changing world, and we recognise that generative AI can be used creatively, critically and with integrity.

These guidelines are general to postgraduate research students across the whole University. **It is important that you are aware that each programme or subject area may have its own, more detailed guidelines**, and that publishers and conferences may have specific restrictions or require particular forms of record-keeping. **You should always check any local guidelines on this, and speak to your supervisors if you are unsure.**

The University trusts you as research students to act responsibly in relation to the use of generative AI. It also recognises that you need clarity on when its use breaches the University's rules on academic misconduct. These guidelines provide you with this clarity, and they should be read in conjunction with the University Research Misconduct Policy.

## Unacceptable uses of generative AI for assessment

Passing off someone – or something's – work as your own for an assessment is academic misconduct. This could be failing to cite a source you have used in an assessed submission (e.g. annual review submission or MScR, MPhil, DClin or PhD examination), getting someone else to complete a section of your thesis, dissertation or portfolio for you, claiming authorship of machine-generated content or presenting machine-translated work as your own.

If you submit a piece of work for assessment that is not your own original work you risk being investigated under the University's academic misconduct investigation procedures. This could have serious implications for you and your studies.

The following uses of generative AI are not acceptable and constitute misconduct: if you use generative AI in these ways you risk investigation and penalties.

1. Presenting AI outputs as your own, original work.
2. Use of an AI translator to convert assessed work to English before submission: English is the language of teaching and assessment at Edinburgh – machine translation is treated as false authorship and is not acceptable.
3. Submitting work for assessment which includes elements of AI-generated text without acknowledgment.
4. Submitting work for assessment which includes AI-generated images, audio or video without acknowledgment.
5. Submitting work for assessment which includes AI-generated mathematical formulae or reasoning, or computer code, without acknowledgment.
6. Citing AI-found sources without reading and verifying them.

For more detailed information about the restrictions on using AI-supported online proofing tools, please see the University's Guidance on Proofreading of Student Assessments (pdf).

## Using generative AI to support your research

While we have these clear restrictions on the use of generative AI in your assessed work, the University understands that there are ways in which you may wish to use it to support your research. This might include using it to:

- brainstorm ideas
- get quick definitions of concepts
- overcome writer's block
- check your grammar
- organise or summarise information
- reformat your references

Some research programmes may encourage or even require you to use it in certain ways, while others may ask you not to use it at all. **Again, it is important that you check any programme-level guidelines on this.**

## Reasons to be cautious about your use of generative AI

You should be aware that there are risks and disadvantages associated with over-use of generative AI to support learning and research:

**Cognitive offloading**
There is growing research evidence that over-use of generative AI can negatively affect your learning. You may want to look at studies which raise concern over how 'cognitive offloading', 'metacognitive laziness' and reduction in capacity for critical thinking may be associated with over-reliance on this technology.

If you routinely use generative AI for breaking down and summarising long texts, for example, you will not be developing your own critical skills in the analysis of complex documents. You will not be practising and learning how to bring together complex ideas using the power of your own intelligence. Similarly, if you are using it to regularly assist with mathematical reasoning, coding or translation, you are undermining your own ability to learn, trouble-shoot and become expert at doing this yourself. To make the most of your time at university, embracing the hard work of learning is a better approach than looking for short-cuts.

**Bias, inaccuracy and imitation**
Generative AI models are not 'intelligent' in the way that humans are intelligent. They have been trained on more text than a human could ever read, but have different capabilities and make different mistakes. While their output often appears convincing and reliable, their behaviour is strongly influenced by the data they are trained on, so they can perpetuate harmful biases, fabricate information and make errors. You will be held accountable for these errors and biases if you include them in assessed work.

Generative AI systems can be used to gather information about a particular domain or research topic, similar to the use of a regular search engine. Such use requires caution, as in most cases it will be impossible to trace the source of the information. You will need to check the generated information thoroughly for accuracy, and thoroughly check and consult references, bearing in mind that the AI model may have fabricated sources. If you then write a text yourself, you will need to provide references for the sources on which the information is based.

Higher education should help you develop advanced knowledge which is creative and rigorous, not generic and unreliable. For doctoral researchers, it is important to note that one of the core requirements of a PhD thesis is that it should demonstrate your capability of pursuing original research that makes a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of study. It is best to use your time at university to develop high-level skills that are going to help you both with your research and throughout life – original thought, engaging writing, critical use of evidence, creative risk-taking and innovation.

**Plagiarism**
If you use AI in an attempt to generate new ideas for a self-written paper, there is a good chance that the ideas will be generated based on existing work. If you do not quote and cite the ideas correctly, then this is plagiarism. If the ideas generated by AI turn out to be innovative, then you will need to mention your use of the generative language model in your Declaration of Own Work, even if you have written the paper yourself.

You are advised to keep track of AI's raw output when using a model to generate new ideas or summarise information (rather than if you are using it to check grammar or spelling). You have a duty to keep an audit trail of how you came to something.

**Ethics, copyright and intellectual property**
Think carefully about what data you enter into generative AI models. Do not enter personal data or confidential information (for example, the development of original research ideas) on platforms that are not managed by the University of Edinburgh. If you introduce intellectual property that has not yet been protected (such as a new method, the description of a unique material, or another invention), there is a good chance that you will no longer be able to protect it.

Do not disclose information about which a non-disclosure agreement has been signed, for example, in the context of a thesis or dissertation researched in collaboration with a company. The information entered is often kept by the owner of the AI tool, and it is unclear what happens to this information. Make sure you have the necessary permission or licence to enter copyrighted material into the AI application. If you are unsure about the confidential nature of the information, you can ask the provider of the information.

If you want to use generative AI to process fieldwork results or interview data for your research, you would need to seek prior approval in your ethics review, showing what precautions you would take to strip personal information from the dataset.

## Using the University's own generative AI platform (ELM)

All University of Edinburgh students have free access to ELM (Edinburgh access to Language Models), which offers you a secure gateway to a range of generative AI models.

The University encourages you to use ELM over other tools such as GPT, DeepSeek, Grok etc for the following reasons:

- In ELM your data is secure – it will not be retained by third-party services to train their models or for any other purpose.
- It is free to use for all staff and students, providing the same access for all and saving you money.
- ELM provides access to a range of language models including a locally-hosted instance of Llama. This has an optimized architecture that can achieve faster response times and reduced power consumption. You can also choose other models such as GPT within ELM if necessary for your task.

You can access ELM and find out about training opportunities here.

## Acknowledging your use of AI

If you choose to use generative AI for aspects of your assessed research – such as your doctoral thesis, MScR dissertation, or annual review submission – it is important to be transparent about how you have done so. You should include a brief acknowledgment in the Declaration of Own Work at the start of your thesis or other submission, for example:

> I used OpenAI o4 Mini via ELM to check grammar and spelling throughout my thesis.
> I also used the Create Image function in ChatGPT to generate the image on page 2.I used ELM to generate initial ideas for pathways to impact for my research.

Again – check with your supervisors and any programme-level guidelines if you are unsure what is required, as there may be specific things your supervisor or programme expect you to cover in your acknowledgment.

For research outputs not submitted to the University for assessment, check the conference, workshop, or publisher guidelines to see what form of generative AI declaration and record keeping is required.

## Citing your use of generative AI

If you use content generated by AI within your work, for example an AI-generated image or text from an AI chatbot, you will need to reference it. This means including an in-text citation or footnote in the body of your work, and a corresponding reference in your reference list.

The Library's guide to using generative AI gives very useful guidance on this.

## Environmental and social impact of generative AI

Many in our community are concerned about the negative impacts of generative AI in areas such as:

Energy and resource use

Exploitative labour practices

Intellectual property

You may wish to read more about these via the links above.

While there are ongoing efforts to reduce the environmental impact of the datacentres that make AI models work, it is clear that use of generative AI has a higher impact than, for example, a simple web search. If you are concerned about this, consider using the locally-hosted instance of Llama in ELM (see above). It is more efficient in terms of resource use, and provides a more transparent alternative to OpenAI, meaning that it is easier for the university to measure and manage its power consumption.

You might also try to limit use of generative AI to purposeful rather than casual use.

## Links to other sources

**Principles**

Edinburgh Student Assembly principles on the use of generative AI

Russell Group principles on generative AI use in education (pdf)

**Further guidance**

Generative AI use for students (guidelines tailored to taught students)

Library guide to using generative AI in academic work

COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics): authorship and AI tools

European Research Area Forum Guidelines on the Responsible Use of Generative AI in Research

**Training**

Generative AI self-study course for students (to follow)

University of Edinburgh Digital Skills Programme

**Academic misconduct guidance**

Further guidance on academic misconduct (including plagiarism) and how to avoid it

University of Edinburgh Academic Misconduct Procedures

University of Edinburgh Research Misconduct Policy

**Senate Education Committee**

**25 September 2025**

# Membership and Terms of Reference 2025/26

## Description of paper

1. The paper outlines Senate Education Committee's (SEC) Membership and Terms of Reference for 2025/26.

## Fit with remit

| Education Committee | Y/N |
|---|---|
| Promote strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners. | **Y** |
| Promote innovations in learning, teaching and assessment, embrace new teaching methods and consider cross-cutting themes such as research-led and technology-enhanced learning, digital and information literacy, education for employability, internationalisation and lifelong learning. Consider and promote local developments or initiatives with substantial implications for University learning and teaching strategy, policy, services or operations. | **Y** |
| Oversee policy relating to students' academic experience and proactively engage with high-level issues and themes arising from student feedback. | **Y** |
| Give specific consideration to instances in which the experience of one particular cohort of students or learners (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research students, and those involved in non-standard programmes) may diverge from that of others. | **Y** |
| Anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in learning and teaching for all cohorts of students and learners. | **Y** |
| Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity. | **Y** |

## Action requested / recommendation

2. The Membership and Terms of Reference are presented to SEC for members to note and advise of any forthcoming changes not already highlighted.

## Background and context

3. The membership for SEC is presented to Senate annually for approval. Any subsequent amendments to the membership are reported to Senate at the next Ordinary meeting held in October 2025.

4. 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. In October 2022, Senate agreed to expand the membership of each Standing Committee to include three elected Senate members. An election is held annually to fill the three positions. All committees include student representation.

**Discussion**

5. The updated Committee membership for SEC will be presented to Senate for noting at its October meeting.

6. Changes to membership to take effect from 1 August 2025 are highlighted.

7. The SEC webpages will be updated with membership once all positions are confirmed.

8. At its meeting of 20 May 2025, Senate approved the standing down of the Knowledge Strategy Committee on 1 August 2025; and approved additions to the terms of reference of the Senate standing committees. The updated terms of reference took effect from 1 August 2025.

9. The additions to the SEC Terms of Reference are highlighted below:
   1.1 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, including educational technology and educational aspects of information technology more broadly.
   3.2 The Committee may bring matters to the attention of the University Executive and/or Information Technology Committee as required.

10. The SEC Terms of Reference are published via the following Academic Quality and Standards webpage: SEC Terms of Reference

**Resource implications**

11. No amendments with resource implications are proposed.

**Risk management**

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

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

13. N/A

**Equality & diversity**

14. The composition of the Senate Committees is largely determined according to defined role-holders (e.g. defined Assistant or Vice-Principal, Director of a defined Support Service or delegate) or as representatives of particular

stakeholders (e.g. a College or the Students' Association). The membership of SEC is therefore largely a consequence of decisions taken elsewhere to appoint individuals to particular roles. Ensuring that appointment processes support a diverse staff body is part of the broader responsibility of the University.

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

15. SEC's Membership and Terms of Reference are communicated via the following Academic Quality and Standards webpage: https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/education

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Academic Quality and Standards
September 2025

**Presenter**
Professor Colm Harmon
Vice-Principal Students

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| Name | Position | Term of Office |
|---|---|---|
| Professor Colm Harmon (Convener) | Vice-Principal Students | Ex Officio |
| Professor Tina Harrison (Vice-Convener) | Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) | Ex Officio |
| Professor Mary Brennan | Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching) | |
| Dr Lisa Kendall | Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching) | |
| Professor Laura Bradley | Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research) | |
| Professor Gill Aitken | Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching) | |
| Alexandra Laidlaw | Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching) | |
| Professor Ruth Andrew | Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research) | |
| Professor Linda Kirstein | Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching) | |
| Lorna Halliday | Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching) | |
| Professor Jamie Pearce | Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research) | |
| Katya Amott | Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association | Ex Officio |
| TBC – election held in October | Postgraduate Research Student Representative | |
| Heather Innes | Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association | Ex Officio |
| Professor Jason Love | Head of School, CSE | |
| Professor Willem Hollmann | Head of School, CAHSS | |
| Professor Lisa Boden | Head of School, CMVM | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Nichola Kett | Head of Academic Quality and Standards | Ex Officio |
| Dr Velda McCune | Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's nominee) | Ex Officio |
| Dr Shane Collins | Representing Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions | Ex Officio |
| Dr Melissa Highton | Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services | Ex Officio |
| Shelagh Green | Director for Careers and Employability | Ex Officio |
| Marianne Brown | Co-opted member (Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling) | 1 August 2024 - 31 July 2027 |
| Professor Sian Bayne | Co-opted member (Digital Education) | 1 August 2023 - 31 July 2026 |
| Lucy Evans | Co-opted member (Student Experience) | 1 August 2025 - 31 July 2028 |
| Dr Sam Coombes | Representative of Senate | 1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026 |
| Professor Antonis Giannopoulos | Representative of Senate | 1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026 |
| Professor Patrick Walsh | Representative of Senate | 1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026 |
| Patrick Jack | Committee Secretary | |