



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Senatus Academicus

Wednesday 4 March 2026, 1:10-4pm

G.07 Meadows Lecture Theatre, Doorway 4, Old Medical School, Teviot Place / Microsoft Teams
Voting will be undertaken using Wooclap.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Apologies 13:10-13:20, 10 minutes (items 1 & 2)	
2. Minutes and e-Senate Reports To <u>approve</u> the minutes of the meetings held on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">10 December 2025e-Senate meeting held 28 January – 11 February 2026	S 25/26 3 A CLOSED S 25/26 3 B
2.1 Matters arising Senate Action Log To <i>note</i> updates to the Senate Action Log	S 25/26 3 C
2.2 Report of the Senate Business Committee To <i>note</i>	S 25/26 3 D
3. Convener's Communications 13:20-13:30 (10 minutes)	Verbal Update
Substantive items	
4. Boards of Examiners – 13:30-13:50 (20 minutes) 4.1 Award of Degrees To <i>approve</i> 4.2 Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of a New Late Applications Process for Exceptional Circumstances To <i>approve</i>	S 25/26 3 E CLOSED S 25/26 3 F
5. Briefing to Senate on Student Recruitment and Internationalisation including Partnership strategies 13:50- 14:20 (30 minutes) For <i>discussion</i>	S 25/26 3 G CLOSED DISCUSSION

Break 14:20-14:30 (10 minutes)	
6. Academic Size and Shape 14:30 – 15:00 (30 minutes) <i>For discussion</i>	S 25/26 3 H CLOSED
7. Academic Contribution Framework: Response 15:00 – 15:15 (15 minutes) <i>To note</i>	S 25/26 3 I
8. Senate Standing Committees: Vacancies that arise out-of-cycle 15:15 – 15:25 (10 minutes) <i>To approve</i>	S 25/26 3 J
9. Senate Standing Committees: Mid-Year Reflection on 2025/26 Priorities and Proposal to Disband the Standing Committee Priorities Process 15:25-15:40 (15 minutes) <i>To approve</i>	S 25/26 3 K
10. Update on the Statement of Primary Responsibilities for Senate 15:40-15:50 (10 minutes) <i>To note</i>	S 25/26 3 L
Items for information <i>To <u>note</u> the following:</i>	
11. Research Cultures Action Plan <i>To note</i>	S 25/26 3 M
12. Court Communications <i>To note</i>	S 25/26 3 N
13. Senate Standing Committee business: a. Senate Standing Committees Upcoming Business b. Senate Standing Committee: Membership Update <i>To note</i>	S 25/26 3 O S 25/26 3 P
14. Research Strategy Group Report <i>To note</i>	S 25/26 3 Q
<p>Date of next meeting: Tuesday 19 May 2026</p> <p>Deadline for papers: Friday 10 April 2026</p> <p>If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk</p>	



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Electronic Senate

Confirmed Report of e-Senate held 28 January-11 February 2026

Comments raised via e-Senate can be accessed on the Senate Members Portal

1 Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita - e-S 25/26 3A

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

- Professor Tim Aitman, School of Genetics and Cancer
- Professor Stuart Anderson, School of Informatics
- Professor Alan Archibald, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
- Professor Karen Blissitt, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
- Professor Val Brunton, School of Genetics and Cancer
- Professor Peter Doerner, School of Biological Sciences
- Professor Stephen Gilmore, School of Informatics
- Professor Chris Gregory, School of Regeneration and Repair
- Professor Simon Harley, School of GeoSciences
- Professor Ian Harper, School of Social and Political Science
- Professor Andrew Hudson, School of Biological Sciences
- Professor Lesley McAra, School of Law
- Professor Velda McCune, Moray House School of Education and Sport
- Professor John Mason, School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Research
- Professor Dies Meijer, School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Research
- Professor Stewart Mercer, School of Population Health Sciences
- Professor Simon Parsons, School of Chemistry
- Professor Sheila Riddell, Moray House School of Education and Sport
- Professor Perdita Stevens, School of Informatics

Senate noted the special minutes provided for the Professors listed above.

Three members commented on this item.

One member communicated their approval. Another member named a retiring Professor listed in the paper.

One member extended their special congratulations to current and recent members of Senate who are transitioning to emeritus roles. The member observed a large number of emeritus conferrals and requested an update to the information provided by HR on relationship between retiring professors and the University's Voluntary Severance and Voluntary Retirement schemes. The member also noted concern with the emeritus status of a senior member of the University's former Institute for Academic Development (IAD) in light of Senate's business on the IAD. The comments on this item will be passed to the Senate Business Committee.

2 Court Resolutions - e-S 25/26 3B

To comment.

Senate noted the Court Resolutions

Two members commented on this item.

One member confirmed their approval of the Resolutions.

One member raised questions regarding the proposal for the Chair in Large-Scale Database Systems and queried whether the expertise could be met within existing staff in the context of current recruitment constraints and that justification should be provided for creating a new post. The member also raised questions regarding the funding arrangements for the position, including how the funding is to be allocated to the post, whether the appointment is influenced by the funder and the funders current and long-term expectations in relation to the position and associated resource.

The comments on this item were passed to the paper author.

Senate**4 March 2026****Senate Action Log**

Meeting date	Paper	Paper status	Action	Responsible	Target date	Action status	Update
1-10-25	S 25/26 1G	Closed	A paper be brought to the December 2025 meeting of Senate seeking a decision on the delegation of authority to exam boards for conferral of awards.	Academic Quality and Standards	4 March 2026	Closed	Senate will receive a paper seeking a decision on the delegation of authority to exam boards for conferral of awards at its 4 March 2026 meeting.
01-10-25	S 25/26 1J	Open	Completion of External Review Recommendation 11: We recommend that all Senators should get a briefing note on proper use of the Chat Function, and it should be an important section in induction. This should include information on expected standards of behaviour and the proper use of the CHAT function (see, for example, guidance at Glasgow University or UCL). Misuse	University EDI Lead	By 4 March 2026	Closed	Senate received a paper at its 10 December meeting (S 25/26 20: Senate, Culture and Inclusion) which outlined the plans to progress actions related to EDI.

			of the chat should not be tolerated.				
01-10-25	S 25/26 1J	Open	Completion of External Review Recommendation 12: Senate would benefit from a special session on enhancing and updating knowledge of EDI.	University EDI Lead	By 4 March 2026	Closed	<p>The EDI Lead has confirmed that a session will be held and the content for this is currently in development.</p> <p>The EDI Lead has discussed timing for the session with the Senate Clerk and agreed that the session would coincide with the annual Senate Induction held in late August/early September. The session would be made available to all new and continuing members interested in attending.</p>
01-10-25	S 25/26 1J		Completion of External Review Recommendation 13: An EDI impact assessment/assurance rating should be used in all Senate papers.	University EDI Lead	By 4 March 2026	Closed	The EDI Lead has shared recommendations for improving how EDI is considered in Senate papers. This work will be taken forward as part of the routine annual review and enhancement of Committee processes undertaken by Academic Quality and Standards.
01-10-25	S 25/26 1J		Completion of External Review Recommendation 14: We suggest that the University considers how the developmental membership of Senate could be promoted as part of the induction and	University EDI Lead	By 4 March 2026	Closed	Discussions took place with the Convener of the REAR (the University's Race Equality and Anti-Racism Subcommittee of EDI Committee) on 2 December 2025. Plans are in place to help promote Senate membership to diverse staff communities.

			development programme. Specifically, the Staff BAME network could promote Senate as part of its mentoring programme.				
01-10-25	S 25/26 1J		Completion of External Review Recommendation 15: Consider adding some nominated members to Senate to widen diversity.	University EDI Lead	By 4 March 2026	Closed	This work is being taken forward as part of the annual review and enhancement of Committee processes undertaken by Academic Quality and Standards. The EDI Lead and the Senate Clerk are discussing means to gather data on the diversity and representation of the current membership to help inform targeted proposals to enhance the diversity of the membership moving forward. Phase 2 of this work will consider new nominated member positions This will be developed alongside the annual Senate Elections paper and presented to Senate in the first half of 2026/27.

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

Senate
4 March 2026
Report of the Senate Business Committee

e-Senate agenda: 28 January – 11 February 2026

The Business Committee considered two non-routine papers for the e-Senate meeting held 28 January – 11 February 2026.

Senate agreed on 9 February 2022 that business may be conducted via e-Senate if the item is:

- For information or for formal noting.
- A routine request for observations by Senate from the University Court. Items presented to Senate by Court have been through considerable scrutiny, for example Resolutions to create new Chairs.
- A request for observations or comment on a paper that has previously been scrutinised and approved by one of the Senate Standing Committees based on delegated authority.
- A request for approval of a nomination for the award of Professor Emeritus / Emerita status

Based on the above, the Business Committee agreed to consider the following two papers at its 3 February meeting, where the agenda for the 4 March Ordinary meeting would be discussed.

The title of papers is provided to note:

- **Senate paper: Senate Role in Recruitment and Appointment of Vice-Principals**
- **E-Senate paper: Senate Role in Recruitment and Appointment of Vice-Principals**

The paper authors were informed of the decision of the Business Committee. The paper title and decision will be recorded in the Business Committee Decision Log available on the Senate Members Portal.

Senate Business Committee Ways of Working: 15 January 2026

The Business Committee met on 15 January to discuss ways of working and Committee practices.

The Committee discussed the use and timing of e-Senate and requested that Senate Support prepare a proposal on e-Senate for the April meeting of the Business Committee. The proposal should include options to revise items of business that can be considered via a meeting of e-Senate. Any recommendations relating to a change

in the use and timing of e-Senate would be submitted to Senate for consideration and approval.

The Committee also discussed the handling of items redirected by the Senate Business Committee. The Committee considered enhancements to the redirection process, including setting stricter deadlines for input from elsewhere in the University to ensure a more rapid response to paper authors and Senate. The Committee also discussed point 5 of its Terms of Reference. During the course of the discussion, it became apparent that a member of the Committee no longer agreed with the Business Committee's interpretation of the Terms of Reference as discussed on 13 November 2025. The Committee agreed that further input should be obtained from all members of the Committee, and therefore a survey would be circulated to Committee members to gather views, further informing a discussion on this matter at a future meeting. It was agreed the previous position on redirection would be maintained until the Committee could collectively discuss the survey responses.

The Committee confirmed that from Academic Year 2026/27 late papers would no longer be accepted for inclusion on the Senate agenda.

The Committee also agreed to continue use of the framework for allocating agenda timings as this was proving useful in curating the agenda.

The Committee noted the routine items which cannot be accurately provided by the Senate paper deadline, notably the Report of e-Senate business, Upcoming Senate Standing Committee Business, Updates to Committee Membership and Outcome of Senate and Standing Committee Elections. The Committee agreed that these routine items would be included on the agenda without the Committee having prior sight of these items.

The full unconfirmed minute of the 15 January Ways of Working meeting and the Business Committee Decision Log is available on the Senate Members Portal.

Senate agenda: 3 February 2026

The Business Committee met on 3 February to agree the agenda for the 4 March meeting. The Business Committee considered eleven items of substantive business and agreed that eight of those items be included on the agenda (billet) for the meeting.

The Business Committee agreed to group items thematically, including ensuring items were prioritised based on the likely importance of papers to Senate. The Committee also discussed the potential for additional motions to be raised on the day of Senate as permitted within the Standing Orders. The Committee made a recommendation to the Convener that, where motions are raised at Senate which are not included on the agenda, these be taken at the end of the meeting agenda in line with Senate Standing Order 6: *The order of business thereafter shall, subject to the discretion of the President, be as stated in the Billet.*

The Business Committee received an item titled **Request for briefing to Senate on Student Recruitment and Internationalisation including Partnership strategies.**

The Committee considered the paper and noted it requested that a briefing be given at the May meeting of Senate. The Committee considered the request and acknowledged the importance of discussion on this topic. The Committee agreed to include this on the agenda, thereby expediting a response to the paper authors. Appropriate colleagues would be contacted to provide Senate with a 10-minute presentation on the questions raised, followed by a 20-minute discussion.

The Business Committee agreed that two items of business would be referred to other parts of the University. The details on each of those papers is as follows:

- **On University Executive Responsibility and the Ethics of Care during the Ongoing Crisis in Palestine**

The paper refers to matters which fall with the University Executive's remit. The Committee were informed that the paper refers to live cases and therefore it was agreed that it was not appropriate to discuss these matters at Senate at this time. The paper was referred to the University Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, who has since confirmed that work is currently in development, in dialogue with EUSA, on the campus climate, with the aim to address concerns about impacts on different groups in the University.

- **University Policy and Approaches to Antisemitism**

The Committee discussed this paper, and noted that it sits within the University Executive's remit. The University Executive have held discussions regarding the IHRA definition of Antisemitism and there is an action related to this on the University Executive Action Log. The Executive received a verbal update on this action at their meeting in December and agreed that wider transparent consultation on this matter should take place. The paper has been referred to the University Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, who is coordinating a consultation exercise over the coming months on behalf of the University Executive.

The Committee also received two papers titled Senate Role in Recruitment and Appointment of Vice-Principals. The Committee noted that it had previously received and considered these papers for the 1 October and 10 December Ordinary meetings and the 5-19 November meeting of e-Senate. The Committee agreed to recommend that these papers not be included on the 4 March agenda. The Committee has previously referred these papers to the Senior Lay Member and a response has been provided on these for paper authors, and also for Senate (via the Member's Portal).

The Convener accepted the agenda recommended by the Business Committee for the 4 March meeting of Senate.

The full unconfirmed minute of the 3 February meeting and the Business Committee Decision Log is available on the Senate Members Portal.

Senate

4 March 2026

Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of a New Late Applications Process for Exceptional Circumstances

Description of paper

1. The paper seeks approval to implement a revised late Exceptional Circumstances (EC) application process, which has been developed as part of the Board of Examiners Review. This work supports the Strategy 2030 goals that “We will have more user-friendly processes and efficient systems to support our work”, and “We will offer accessible, responsive and efficient educational services as well as personal, pastoral and professional support”.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is asked to approve the implementation of the revised late Exceptional Circumstances application process from May 2026, based on a recommendation from Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC).
3. Senate is asked to delegate authority to APRC to agree a final position regarding what guidance to give to Schools as to whether late EC cases may, where possible, be taken through Boards of Examiners before the standard publication dates for results (see section 18).

Background and context

The Exceptional Circumstances (EC) process

4. The EC process provides a mechanism whereby students can inform the University of circumstances beyond their control which have had a significant adverse impact upon their performance in a summative assessment (or multiple assessments). The process operates in line with the [EC Policy](#). Students can apply using the EC system for consideration of their circumstances by providing information about their nature and impact, and including supporting evidence. The EC service within Registry Services assesses applications to determine whether they meet the criteria within the EC Policy and can therefore be accepted. Where cases are accepted, they are passed to Schools for action by Boards of Examiners. Boards apply one or more of the actions set out in the Policy in order to mitigate the impact of the student’s circumstances on their course or programme outcomes.
5. Currently, students are required to submit EC applications by the relevant deadline for their School. Applications submitted after the relevant School deadline, but before the final deadline published by the EC service are regarded as “late”, and must include a reason for the lateness and evidence to support this. This is in line with section 4.6 of the EC Policy:

“Deadlines for submission of Exceptional Circumstances are set in such a way as to allow ample time for students to submit their applications. The EC service will therefore only consider accepting submissions after the relevant School deadline where students provide an explanation for why they were unable to submit on time, with sufficient evidence to support this. No late applications will be considered after the final deadline for the relevant Semester published on the EC web pages.”

6. There is no provision within the EC Policy for students to submit EC applications after the final deadline published by the EC service. However, in practice, where a student wishes to apply for ECs after the final EC deadline, they generally approach their School and ask for their case to be considered by the relevant Board of Examiners. Where the School is supportive of the student’s case, they liaise with the EC service to enable the student to submit the application. These cases are usually referred to informally as “retrospective”, as opposed to “late” cases.

Challenges of the current process

7. Honours marks must be ratified by the first week in June, yet the present late EC deadline is set for the Friday after the exam diet finishes, leaving only seven calendar days for EC validation, School EC committees, mark recalculation and Board-paper production. Thirty per cent of all ECs arrive in the final 48 hours before the relevant EC deadline. Cases still awaiting evidence are auto-rejected at the current deadlines, and frequently return as “retrospective” requests via Schools.
8. The majority of cases not submitted by the relevant School deadline would currently be classed as “retrospective”. These are cases that come in after the final EC deadline, and are considered in the first instance by Schools. Where the School is supportive of reconvening in a specific case, they ask the EC Service to process the case so that it can be taken forward by the Board, usually by Convener’s Action. This process not only involves a significant amount of work for Schools, but crucially poses risks in terms of the consistency of decision-making between different Schools as to whether individual cases will be accepted. The retrospective process is also not transparent to students, not being articulated in the EC policy, and is therefore more likely to be used by students who are more assertive and/or more engaged with their Schools.

Development of proposals as part of the Board of Examiners project

9. The Board of Examiners project sought to design a revised process for handling late ECs in order to mitigate the challenges identified with the current process. The project team consulted with Colleges and Schools via the following methods:
 - Engagement with eight Schools to gather information about their current processes and the challenges associated with these, in order to develop designs for a revised process;

- Consultation regarding the initial designs with the Board of Examiners project “Critical Friends” group, which includes academic and professional services representatives from each College, and EUSA;
- Written consultation with staff in Schools and Colleges involved in the handling of ECs via the EC User Group;
- Two open feedback sessions for staff, with around 100 attendees.

Approval process for proposals

10. At its meeting on 1 October 2025, Senate members approved the following motions by majority vote:

- Any regulation change relating to the operation of Boards of Examiners in the academic year 2025/26 must come to full Senate for approval.
- Any change to the operation of Boards of Examiners in academic year 2025/26 that does not require changes to the regulations also requires approval by full Senate. Proposals for potential mechanisms for delegation of approval of minor changes are welcomed; such mechanisms would also require explicit approval by full Senate.

11. Although the proposed revision to the process for late ECs does not involve a change to policy, nor to the operation of Boards of Examiners specifically, the proposals are being brought to Senate for approval as being within the spirit of the motions approved by Senate, and in line with the process agreed by Senate at its December 2025 meeting.

12. Based on the feedback received on the proposals during the consultation process, the design was refined, before being submitted to APRC for consideration at its January 2026 meeting ([paper B](#)), with a view to APRC making a recommendation to Senate. **APRC recommended that Senate approve the proposed process for the handling of late ECs, for implementation from May 2026.** APRC members provided feedback on the proposals from their respective constituencies, which have been taken account of via minor amendments to the final proposals being presented to Senate. Feedback from APRC members primarily related to:

- The timing of proposed deadlines for submission of EC applications, with amendment to these proposed;
- Deadlines for PGT programmes, especially in CMVM;
- Ensuring that especially complex cases which arise after the final, “late” deadline are handled sensitively and without undue administrative burden for students;
- The need to avoid situations where students use both the Late ECs process and the Academic Appeals process to present the same case.

Discussion

Overview of the proposed process

13. The revised process for the handling of late ECs is summarised as follows:

- Students will be able to apply for late ECs using the EC system after the relevant “on-time” deadline has passed;
- A student making a late EC application will be required to provide a reason and evidence for the lateness of their application, in addition to providing an adequate reason and evidence to support their ECs;
- The student’s application will be assessed by the EC service against the criteria used in the Academic Appeals process to assess “good reason” for lateness in ground A appeals;
- Where late cases are accepted – as having both valid ECs, and a “good reason” for lateness – by the EC service, they will be passed to Schools for outcome decisions to be made;
- Schools will be under no obligation to process late EC cases by standard deadlines for publication of results, with students made aware that their outcome is likely to be delayed until after the relevant publication date;
- After the final deadline for late ECs passes, students will be informed that they can no longer apply for ECs using the EC process, but will instead be directed to the Academic Appeals process.

The proposed process represents a change in practice as regards the handling of late ECs, but does not involve a change in underlying policy, since it remains compatible with 4.6 of the EC Policy (see section 4, above). The proposed process is described in more detail below.

Late with evidence route

14. Students will be able to use the EC system to apply for late ECs (i.e. after the initial, “on-time” deadline for applications). Where a student submits an EC application late, they will be required to provide an explanation for the lateness of their application, and provide evidence which specifically supports the reason for lateness. This will be assessed by the EC team in line with the threshold currently exercised by the Appeals team in regard to cases submitted as appeals relating to late ECs (under “ground A”). In these cases, students are required to demonstrate not only that their ECs should be accepted, but also a “good reason” why they were late in making their application. Since current “retrospective” EC cases – “late” cases under the proposed process – could also be submitted as appeals, it is vital that the threshold applied in each process is equally rigorous. As such, the EC team will receive support and training from staff with responsibility for handling academic appeals regarding the approach taken to “ground A” appeal cases.
15. This approach would provide significant benefits for students over the current “retrospective” process. As noted above (see section 7), the current retrospective process is not transparent to students, since it is not articulated in the EC policy

or elsewhere. It is therefore much less likely to be used by students who feel less empowered to request additional consideration from the University, for example because they are a member of a minoritised, or protected characteristic group. Where students apply for retrospective ECs currently, the fact that decision-making is handled locally by Schools based only on minimal information provided in the [Taught Assessment Regulations](#) (64.1) means that there is likely to be significant inconsistency in terms of the outcomes students receive. This inconsistency is likely to be most acutely experienced by students on joint degree programmes.

16. For Schools, the proposed process would reduce the workload currently expended on handling retrospective EC cases, and liaising with the EC service about these, since Schools will now only receive late EC cases which have already been accepted by the EC service. It must be recognised, however, that a risk inherent to formalising and making more transparent the current retrospective EC process through the proposed late EC process is that it will make the process more prominent and therefore have the potential to lead to an increase in late cases, at least initially. The volume of cases will be handled in the first instance by the EC service, with only those late cases which are accepted being passed to Schools for action. From the perspective of Schools, this is therefore likely to offset any increase in cases, since Schools currently review all potential retrospective EC cases, including those which are not accepted. The application of the strict “good reason” for lateness approach applied as part of the appeals process should have the effect of ensuring that only those cases where there is a clear and valid reason for lateness are accepted.
17. The introduction of a more formalised process for handling late ECs also has the potential to lead to a reduction in academic appeal cases, the majority of which currently relate to late notification of ECs. In 2024/25, 64% of academic appeals related to ground A only, “substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in the assessment which for good reason was not available to the examiners when their decision was taken”. Providing this information to Boards of Examiners in a timely fashion for use in their decision-making is the purpose of the EC process, so having a more transparent process for late ECs should reduce the need for students to make use of the appeals process for this purpose.

Handling of accepted cases

18. Students will be advised at the point of submitting a late application for ECs that it is unlikely that any outcomes for accepted cases will be applied in time for the normal publication of their results, and that this may also have an impact on graduation for students due to graduate. Schools are naturally keen to try to take late EC cases through promptly and in advance of finalising decisions at Boards,

where this is possible. However, this can lead to a significant amount of re-work, with Board reports being revised, presenting challenges with “golden copy” and leading to a greater risk of errors. It may be appropriate to allow Schools discretion as to whether they should attempt to take cases through Boards before the standard publication dates, where this is seen as being in the student’s and/or the School’s interest. However, this will likely lead to a degree of inconsistency of experience for students, with some Schools routinely expediting late EC cases, and others choosing to leave them until after the standard publication date. One way to mitigate against this risk of inconsistency would be to instruct Schools to take forward in advance of publication only those late EC cases which relate to students due to graduate imminently, and only where this is feasible. All other cases would be held over until after the publication date and handled together, usually via Convener’s Action, with students subsequently notified of any changes to their course or degree outcomes.

19. APCR discussed in detail the tension between taking a consistent approach for all students, and the desire to expedite cases, where this is considered feasible and beneficial to all parties, but did not arrive at a specific position on this issue. Further consultation with Schools will be undertaken in order to determine what instruction or guidance should be given to Schools about when late ECs should be processed. **In order to ensure clear and timely communication to Schools ahead of the proposed implementation in May 2026, we request that Senate delegate authority to APCR to agree a final position on this matter, taking account of any further feedback Senate members wish to provide.**

Deadlines for “on-time” and late cases

20. In order to support a change in process to allow students to make late applications with evidence in the EC system, it will be necessary to move from having individual School deadlines for “on-time” EC cases to a single University deadline. The final deadline for ECs is currently set by the EC service in consultation with Colleges and Schools, with individual School deadlines being set by Schools. The harmonisation of School deadlines around a single date has long been discussed as a potential way to mitigate inconsistency in the student experience, especially for students taking courses in more than one School.
21. The final deadline set by the EC service is generally one week after the end of the Semester 2 exam period. Several Schools currently align their deadline with the final EC deadline, while others set their deadline up to a week earlier than this.
22. APCR members provided feedback about the indicative dates proposed for the revised process, prompting a need to reconsider these. Registry Services will undertake consultation with Schools and Colleges in order to finalise deadlines

both for “on-time” and late cases. The expectation, however, is that the deadline for “on-time” cases will be a small number of days earlier than the current final deadline, with the new final deadline falling later than currently, albeit substantially before the deadline for the publication of ratified results. The table below provides indicative dates with reference to the existing deadlines for Semester 2, 2025/26. These dates are illustrative and may be subject to change, based on discussion with Schools and Colleges led by Registry Services.

	Deadline for on-time cases	Final deadline for late cases	Final deadline for “retrospective” cases
Current approach	22 – 29 May 2026 (dependent upon School)	29 May 2026	2 years after the original Board decision
Proposed approach	27 May 2026	8 June 2026	All retrospective cases are directed to the Appeals process

Cases submitted after the final deadline for late cases

23. Students seeking to apply for late ECs after the final deadline will be directed to the normal Academic Appeals process, which includes provision for appeals relating to what would constitute ECs under ground A:

“Substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in the assessment which for good reason was not available to the examiners when their decision was taken.”

24. There is an established process within the team responsible for handling Academic Appeals to refer a case back to Boards of Examiners within Schools and request that Boards take voluntary action to reconsider decisions, where the case appears at face value to present compelling evidence for having met one or more grounds for appeal. Where the relevant Board of Examiners is willing to reconvene, this obviates the need to take the case through the full Academic Appeal process. This process will continue to be applicable in cases where students miss the late EC deadline, but can demonstrate clearly that this was due to the impact of their circumstances, therefore meeting the “good reason” test applied to appeals.

25. Where a student applies for late ECs and their application is not accepted, should they attempt to submit an academic appeal based on precisely the same circumstances and evidence, this will not be upheld by the Appeal Committee. An

appeal from a student in this situation will only be upheld where the student has provided substantial new information relating to their circumstances, which for good reason was not available when the decision about their late EC case was taken, or where there is evidence of irregular procedure or improper conduct in the handling of their late EC case.

Elements of previous proposals not taken forward

26. The proposals initially consulted upon included consideration of split deadlines for EC applications relating to coursework, as opposed to exams, and for Honours and pre-Honours/PGT students, based on ensuring an earlier finish to Honours exams in the Semester 2 diet. The consultation yielded significant concerns about the feasibility and desirability of these elements of the design. APRC members reiterated these concerns, recommending that these elements not be considered further at this time.

Resource implications

27. The resource implications for Schools and the EC service in terms of staff workload are outlined in the Discussion section above (especially sections 15-16). Registry Services have confirmed that, with additional training provided to the EC service, the planned activity indicated by the proposals can be supported by the relevant teams.

28. The proposed process for handling late ECs will require changes to be made to the EC system. These changes will enable the system to receive additional reasons for lateness and relevant evidence based on agreed, University-wide “on-time” and late EC deadlines. Based on the endorsement provided by APRC, Student Systems have begun preparatory work to make the required changes to the system, and are confident that these changes can be implemented by the May 2026 EC deadlines.

Risk management

29. The discussion section notes a risk of the proposed process leading to a potential increase in applications for late ECs. This may be offset, however, by a reduction in academic appeal cases relating to late ECs.

30. The existing risk to the student experience regarding the inconsistency of process and outcome inherent to the current retrospective EC process is significant. The fact that the proposed process offers effective mitigation for this risk is a profound benefit.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

31. The proposed process does not have any implications regarding responding to the climate emergency or Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & diversity

32. As noted above (section 14), the proposed process should offer benefits to all students, but especially those from marginalised groups, or with protected characteristics by providing a transparent and consistent route for handling late ECs.

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

33. The Board of Examiners project team has prepared a communications plan to provide timely information to students and staff about the revised process for late ECs. Should Senate approve the introduction of the revised process, this communications plan will be enacted, ahead of the implementation of the process from May 2026.

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Open

Senate

4 March 2026

Academic Contribution Framework: Response

Description of paper

1. This paper provides an update on issues raised at the December 2025 meeting of senate, in relation to the Academic Contribution Framework.
2. This paper is most relevant to Strategy 2030 item (ix): We will have more user-friendly processes and efficient systems to support our work.

Action requested / Recommendation

3. For noting

Background and context

4. In October 2025, the University Executive approved an Academic Contribution Framework that aims to “give academic staff clarity on how their contribution may be captured and how evidence of that contribution may feed into decision-making by evaluators if compulsory redundancy is required”
5. In December 2025, a paper (S2526-2G) was brought to senate and discussed, which (i) noted Senate disapproval of the Framework, (ii) raised a number of concerns about specifics of the Framework, and (iii) raised the possibility of damaging impact of the Framework on the academic culture of the University
6. Many senate members shared their views during the meeting, which expanded upon the themes covered in the paper
7. Since the Senate meeting of December 2025 the working group leading on the framework development have reflected on Senate concerns and would like to share a response and update
8. In the Discussion below we take four major themes raised in the Senate paper and at the December 2025 meeting and provide a response to each. Our response in each case is intended to elucidate the rationale underlying the relevant aspects of the Framework and, where possible, to indicate specific ways in which the feedback is shaping the Framework and associated implementation materials
9. At the time of circulation of this paper (February 2026) specific revisions and additions to the Framework are in progress and Senate are directed to the relevant SharePoint pages to view the latest content prior to the March Senate meeting:
<https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/Staffworkstream/SitePages/Academic-contributions.aspx>
10. Also at the time of writing, the University has an agreement with the UCU Edinburgh branch which means that no staff will be placed at risk of redundancy before 28 April, and therefore the Academic Contribution Framework will not be deployed until after this date at the earliest.

Discussion

Use of Quantitative Metrics within the Framework

11. A common theme between the December 2025 Senate paper, and views shared by members at that meeting, concerns the use of quantitative metrics within the Academic Contribution Framework, specifically total number of published outputs in a given year, total number of funding applications submitted in a given year, and total student contact hours in a given year.

12. The way in which quantitative metrics are deployed within the framework is aligned with the University's Statement on Responsible Use of Research Metrics which notes that qualitative evaluation and human expert academic judgement should be *"supported by responsible and transparent use of quantitative indicators"*
13. Link to the University's Statement on Responsible Use of Research Metrics <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2025-05/Responsible%20Research%20Metrics%20Statement%20May%202025.pdf>
14. It is also of note that the Summary CV which all academics must use when applying for promotion at the University asks academics to share the number of various kinds of publications that they have authored / edited since their last promotion, as well as their grants awarded and total income. This illustrates two specific ways in which quantitative metrics within the Framework are in-step with wider University practices.
15. Link to Academic Promotions SharePoint with CV Summary Form: https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/human-resources/pay-and-reward/SitePages/Forms-_.aspx
16. The Framework working group further maintain the position that use of quantitative metrics is an important part of evaluation of academic contribution, especially in the context of exploring who is making the least contribution, as opposed to whose contribution is the greatest. We strongly contend that publishing some work, submitting some funding applications, and spending some time teaching students, are core activities which academics should be doing as standard. There is a reasonable case that staff doing none of these things, also not contributing in the many other ways encompassed by the Framework, and lacking an explanation in terms of mitigating circumstances, are not making a contribution to the University.
17. Quantitative metrics serve three further key purposes which are: (i) to reduce burden on staff to evidence every aspect of their contribution, by making use of University data and systems, (ii) to make it very clear to staff what contributions are being considered within the framework and minimise the role of "insider knowledge" when it comes to knowing what types of contribution Evaluators wish to hear about, and (iii) to ensure Evaluators must evidence their decision-making process and reduce room for personal preferences to shape the outcome.
18. All quantitative metrics included in the framework are included as part of a basket of measures, and do not drive scoring of contribution in isolation. These metrics are not only listed in the framework alongside other qualitative metrics, but also contextualised with directly linked qualitative information.
19. In a revision of the Framework, the types of qualitative information associated with each quantitative metric is being made more explicit and visible.
20. Qualitative information would be sourced via an Academic Contribution Submission Form, which acts as a template narrative CV for staff to both augment and supplement the data extracted from University systems. This Form is being published on the Framework SharePoint to make this process more visible and clear.

Impact on Academic Culture

21. A second theme in the December 2025 senate paper concerns the potential for damage to the University's academic culture due to a failure to *"acknowledge the value of collaborative and collegial working."*
22. On the contrary, the Framework works to recognise all forms of working including team teaching and team research. For example, this is why quantitative metrics do not differentiate on author position, nor on co-applicant versus principal investigator status in relation to research awards. In this way methods specialists, mid-career researchers and anyone who contributes collaboratively in a team will have their contribution recognised on an equal basis to the person who happens to lead that specific piece of work. Leadership roles are recognised and captured independently.
23. The Framework also considers information about collaborations with other higher education institutions and non-academic partners. In addition, the Citizenship domain

specifically lists a large number of ways in which people work across parts of the University. Qualitative information submitted by staff themselves will contextualise basic information captured from our institutional systems, giving space to share the quality, effect and value of this work.

24. In every domain staff are requested to report examples of “excellence, innovation and creativity” which is a space to invite reporting of any activity not explicitly listed in the framework. This provides a balance of a consistent and explicit structure, with an openness to the myriad ways that university staff approach their work.
25. Furthermore, in a revision to the Framework, following advice from critical friends external to the working group, we have added a new prompt in the Citizenship domain, drawing on the language used in the University’s Guidance on Citizenship: “To include any activities that enable the smooth, collegial and harmonious operation of the University, including examples of respectful, collaborative and considerate actions.”
26. A key consideration to bear in mind when reflecting on the design of the Academic Contribution Framework and its specific elements is that the role of the Framework is to help identify the least contribution, in terms of quality, value, effect and scale. This is a task which is fundamentally distinct from how we might characterise the greatest contribution.

Comments on the Equality Impact Assessment accompanying the Academic Contribution Framework

27. We recognise Senate concerns about the influence of protected characteristics on academic contribution, the need to capture areas of disadvantage beyond legally protected characteristics (such as being first in family to attend University), the use of voluntary disclosures, and the differential impacts of Covid between groups.
28. The EqIA has been updated to include a recognition of the differential impact of Covid for different staff.
29. While the relevant literature is broad and robust, our position is that there is no way to legitimately capture what characteristics apply to a given member of staff or understand the impact of a specific circumstance on contribution without capturing the staff member’s own testimony. The breadth of personal circumstances which would be relevant when attempting to evaluate academic contribution is expected to be very wide and varied, with many not directly related to protected characteristics (e.g. bereavement; caring responsibilities; temporary homelessness).
30. There’s no accurate, scientific, comprehensive measure of accounting for mitigating circumstances, whether systemic or individual. The Framework and its associated implementation materials draw attention to the existence of mitigating circumstances, train Evaluators on the different ways in which disadvantage can manifest, and require them to make thoughtful judgements on a case-by-case basis. HR Partners provide oversight and support to decision-making.
31. The Academic Contribution Submission Form in which staff can share details of their mitigating circumstances explicitly states that any declared information can only have a positive or neutral impact on outcome. Staff will never be disadvantaged by their decision to share personal circumstances.

Impacts of Covid-19 Pandemic and Period of Evaluation

32. We acknowledge the Senate observation that work taking place in the period covered by the Framework is likely to have been influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic
33. Unfortunately, it is impossible to capture evidence of contribution that is not affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, without going back to the academic year 2018/19. This is so far back that many staff will have been in a fundamentally different role or not working at the University at all. Staff should not be challenged to capture records and describe their activities from so long ago.

34. Instead, we limit the impact of the pandemic by selecting a period that is as recent as possible, without reducing to such a narrow timeframe that it risks being a wholly unrepresentative snapshot.
35. Staff will be guided to share the impact of the pandemic on their contribution and Evaluators will be trained on how to incorporate this into their scoring and ultimate decision-making.

Resource implications

36. The Academic Contribution Framework working group, supported by the Strategic Change Service, continues to meet regularly.
37. The group has devoted resource since the Senate meeting in December 2025 to making changes to the Framework paper, and developing accompanying resources, especially the Academic Contribution Submission Form
38. These are designed to address and / or provide reassurance in relation to the matters raised and discussed above.

Risk Management

39. Failure to develop and implement a consistent approach to Evaluation in the context of potential academic staff redundancies could result in extremes of inequitable practice, excess staff confusion, anxiety and distress, and ultimately legal challenges to the University.
40. No redundancy process will ever be free from stress and distress, but the provision of a clear, comprehensive and transparent process is a part of minimising that stress and distress, and ensures that Evaluators make decisions grounded in evidence.
41. Capture of institutional data alongside rich qualitative information reduces the risk that outcome is based on the extent to which a given staff member can persuasively make a case for their contribution, or on that staff member's personal reputation.

Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals

42. This paper is most relevant to SDG8: *"Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all"*

Equality and Diversity

43. The Framework was published with an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) which recognises the potential for discriminatory implementation and articulates key steps to mitigate this risk. The working group are now engaged in creating the training and implementation materials that are necessary to underpin equitable use of the Framework, as described in the EqIA, content from which is paraphrased in paragraphs 44-48.
44. The purpose of the Framework is to support staff to apply a consistent process and criteria across multiple redundancy processes. This should have the effect of reducing the risk of bias/discrimination within any individual redundancy process as Evaluators will have criteria, templates and tools to rely on and not simply personal knowledge of the individual academics within each group. As the Framework is used, supporting guidance and tools will continue to be developed in response to any feedback Evaluators or affected academics provide, and that guidance will include Evaluators considering if there is any evidence of bias in their decision-making, supported and overseen by HR Partners.
45. The University will also monitor any changes in the overall demographic profile of the University's academic staff because of redundancy processes. This will allow it to determine if the identification of groups of academics at-risk of redundancy is potentially resulting in a disproportionate impact on any protected characteristic. For example, if any group within a discipline / sub-discipline area are put at risk, it will

be monitored to understand if there is a disproportionate percentage of people from underrepresented protected characteristic groups compared to the average across the University

46. During the redundancy process, individuals may choose to volunteer to share information with Evaluators on any relevant protected characteristics that apply to them. They can do so where they wish the Evaluator to consider taking that into account when scoring criteria within the Framework. This will facilitate equitable administration of the criteria. The EqIA includes multiple examples of such scenarios and further examples will be included in the guidance notes accompanying the form that academics will use to share such information.
47. The University recognises that systemic inequality may lead to academics from marginalised backgrounds facing more challenges and having fewer opportunities than those from majority backgrounds. By systemic inequality, we mean inequality that arises from the structures and practices of the wider research and academic ecosystem and social environment in which the University is situated. We have sought to highlight these alongside the organisation-specific ones in the Framework EQIA. This document also recognises that any of the protected characteristics may be combined in ways that can create multiple disadvantages.
48. The academic contribution framework draws on evidence of contribution in the period from August 2022 to July 2025 inclusive. It is recognised that work in this period, especially research publications, will be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and its ongoing legacy. This impact may intersect with protected characteristics such that specific staff communities are more heavily impacted (e.g. people with caring roles or a disability).

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

49. Information about the Academic Contribution Framework is published on a dedicated SharePoint where all documentation is being released at the point of readiness
50. This SharePoint also contains a large number of FAQs and the facility to submit questions
51. The Academic Contribution Framework will not be deployed during the period covered by the current UCU agreement.

Consultation

52. This paper responds directly to a paper brought to Senate and to issues raised during the discussion of that paper.
53. The Academic Contribution Framework working group is connected with a wide range of partners from across the University, both potential future users and other key stakeholders such as data system owners.
54. The working group takes every opportunity to respond to feedback and to make that response explicit, and this is the purpose of this paper in relation to Senate.

Further information

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Freedom of information

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Senate

4 March 2026

Senate Standing Committee: Process for handling Senate-elected member vacancies

Description of paper:

1. A proposal to establish a process for filling vacancies in the Senate-elected member category on Standing Committees which remain following the conclusion of the main round of Committee Elections, or which arise out-of-cycle.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. Senate is invited to **approve** the process.

Background and context:

3. Under the Senate Standing Orders (22a), Senate may appoint Committees and delegate powers to these committees. Senate currently delegates powers to three Standing Committees: Senate Education Committee (SEC), Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), and Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC).
4. The membership of the Senate Standing Committees is presented to Senate annually for approval. Each Senate Standing Committee includes three Senate-elected member positions, each position is nominally assigned to a College.
5. An election is held on an annual basis to fill the Senate-elected member vacancies on Standing Committees. Senate-elected members serve a term of one year, and may serve a total term of three years on each Committee.

Discussion

6. In 2024 and 2025 it has been necessary to run an additional election to fill vacancies on Standing Committees which remained following the conclusion of the main round of elections. This has resulted in additional election costs being incurred by the University, and staff time being reallocated to support the running of out-of-cycle elections.
7. In 2024, there were three positions remaining on two Committees (SQAC and SEC) and an out-of-cycle election took place to fill these vacancies. In 2025, there was one position remaining on SQAC. There was only one eligible candidate for this position and therefore it was not necessary to hold an out-of-cycle election.
8. The University's Information Services Group (ISG) has outsourced the running of elections to Civica Electoral Services and the budget required for this will be met by ISG. The cost to the University is approximately £1500-£1800 for each

election, further information is available from the [Information Services website](#). Additionally, staff time must be reallocated to support the running of additional out-of-cycle elections.

9. Prior to 2024, there was an established process for filling vacancies on Senate Committees which remained following the conclusion of the main round of elections. This process was approved by Senate in 2023.
10. Senate is invited to **approve** a process for filling vacancies in the Senate-elected member category which remain following the main election, or which arise out-of-cycle, for example due to elected members demitting from the Committee. This aligns with the process previously approved by Senate in 2023:

Vacancies remaining following the main round of elections (as approved by Senate in 2023):

- *Should one or more of the three places on a Committee remain unfilled following the conclusion of these nomination and (if required) election processes, the vacant place(s) would be offered to member(s) who had unsuccessfully nominated themselves for a place on a different Committee.*
- *Were there more members than places, the place(s) would be distributed to the member(s) who had received the most votes for the Committee that they had stood for (if an election had been held) or by drawing lots (if an election had not been held);*

****NEW*: Where vacancies remain following the above process or arise out-of-cycle, Senate Support will carry out the following actions:***

- *Senate Support will circulate a call for expressions of interest to the elected membership. Where the vacancy is unfilled following the main-round of elections, the call will be circulated early in the new academic year, once new members have joined Senate.*
- *Where the vacancy has arisen out-of-cycle, the call will be circulated as soon as practicable after the vacancy arises.*
- *Senate Support will seek to prioritise interested candidates that enable a balance of Colleges within the three Senate-elected representatives on a Committee.*
- *Should there be more than one eligible nominee, the drawing of lots will be used to determine the successful candidate.*

11. This process prioritises using the results from the main round of elections to fill Senate-elected member positions on Standing Committees, however minimises the requirement to hold additional unplanned elections to fill any vacancies which remain following the main round, or which arise out-of-cycle.
12. This proposal will reduce the resource required to fill vacancies on Standing Committees out-of-cycle and will enable vacancies to be handled in a more expedient manner.
13. This process will enable greater accessibility for elected members to represent on Committees. This proposal also reduces the effort required from members to engage with the Committee representation process. This is particularly relevant

to any positions which remain following the main-round of elections or which arise out-of-cycle, and which may be of interest to new members of Senate.

14. At its 10 December 2025 meeting, Senate approved a revised timeline for holding elections for Standing Committee positions in 2026. The election will be held on an earlier timeframe and this is intended to increase visibility and interest in the elections, as these will take place during the semester rather than over the University summer break.
15. In line with the amendment presented to the 10 December 2025 meeting, the Standing Committee election arrangements are tentative and may be revised by Senate at a future meeting.

Resource implications

16. This proposal is expected to have a positive impact on University election budgets, and on the staff resource required to support the process to fill vacancies.

Risk management

17. This proposal presents a modest risk to the democratic process used to fill elected member vacancies on Senate Standing Committees. This is counterbalanced by the intention to prioritise the results of the main election process, where relevant and available, and to fill vacancies more promptly where these arise.
18. This proposal will enable vacancies on Committees to be filled in an expedient manner, when compared with the requirement to run an election. This will enable robust governance and oversight of Committee work by Senate.
19. Effective academic governance assists the University in managing risk associated with its academic activities.

Equality & diversity

20. The proposal is intended to reduce the barriers for elected Senate members to engage with opportunities for representation on Standing Committees.

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

21. The Senate Standing Committees' Membership and Terms of Reference are communicated via the Academic Services website:
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees>
22. Senate will be informed of Standing Committee election processes and vacancies on the Committees via emails from Senate Support.

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January 2026

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Freedom of Information: Open

Senate

4 March 2026

Senate Standing Committees: Mid-Year Reflection on 2025/26 Priorities and Proposal to Disband the Standing Committee Priorities Process

Description of paper

1. The paper provides Senate with a mid-year reflection on progress toward the 2025/26 standing committee priorities and recommends that Senate disband the committee priorities process moving forward.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is invited to note the progress toward the 2025/26 priorities; and
3. Senate is asked to approve the recommendation that the Standing Committee priorities process be disbanded.

Background and context

Mid-year reflection

4. The committees agreed their 2025/26 priorities in late semester 2 and these were presented to the last Senate of the academic year for noting. Senate was invited to contribute to setting the 2025/26 priorities at its 5 February 2025 meeting.
5. Committees are required to report annually to Senate on action taken under powers delegated by Senate.
6. There is ongoing work taking place across Court Services and Senate Support to clarify and define the responsibilities of Senate in response to the Court External Review and to enable progress toward addressing recommendations on Senate Standing Committees arising from the Senate External Review.

Priorities process

7. The process for setting Standing Committee priorities appears to have originated from an interpretation of the following text, which is in all standing committees' terms of reference:

“The Committee will follow a schedule of business set prior to the start of the academic year which is agreed through consultation with Senate, the Conveners of the other Senate Committees, and other relevant members of the community.”

There is no reference in the statement to committees setting priorities and it is not common practice across the sector for such committees to set their own separate priorities.

8. Committee business is determined by terms of reference (as approved by Senate) and internal and external drivers (see below under Discussion for further information). In practice, the standing committees work to an annual cycle of routine and planned business (e.g. policy reviews and reports) but are also

responsive to developments both within the University and externally. Therefore, setting a full schedule of business in advance of an academic year is not possible or desirable.

9. The process of maintaining and monitoring committee priorities is resource intensive, and an ineffective use of Committee time if business does not support University strategic priorities or meet compliance requirements.

Discussion

Progress with 2025/26 priorities

10. The mid-year update for the Senate Education Committee (SEC) is provided in Appendix 1. A mid-year update on the Committee's priorities will be presented to the 5 March meeting of SEC.
11. The mid-year update for the Senate Academic Policy and Regulation Committee (APRC) is provided in Appendix 2. A mid-year update on the Committee's priorities was presented at the 22 January meeting of APRC.
12. The mid-year update for the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) is provided in Appendix 3. A mid-year update on the Committee's priorities will be presented to the 26 February meeting of SEC.

Future Senate Standing Committee priorities

13. Senate is invited to **approve** the recommendation that the Standing Committee priorities process be disbanded. Senate would have oversight of standing committee business via:
 - Standing committee forward agendas: A new proposal for forward agendas to be presented to Senate on an annual basis, usually at the first meeting of the academic year.
 - Reports of Upcoming Business: A routine Committee paper presented to each meeting of Senate.
 - Email notification when Committee agendas and papers are published: A routine practice that Senate members are notified when Committee papers are published.
 - Elected Senate representation on each Standing Committee: there are three elected Senate representatives on each Standing Committee and these members represent the wider elected membership of Senate.
 - Senate and Committees Newsletter: the newsletter communicates key updates on Senate and Committee business to the wider University and is published 2-3 times per year at key points in the Committee cycle.
14. Senate itself does not agree priorities for its work and focus in a given year. The work of Senate is largely driven by the strategic priorities of the University, as approved by the University Court and defined processes outlined in the Senate Standing Orders (for example, elections and receipt of annual reports from Standing Committees).

15. The work of the Standing Committees are influenced and shaped by discussions which take place at Senate and Standing Committees. Those discussions will continue to identify and shape areas requiring consideration. The Standing Committees work within defined remits as approved by Senate based on University priorities and carrying out the functional business required to meet requirements in line with each Committees remit.
16. The Senate 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 education technology and educational aspects of information technology more broadly. The business of the Education Committee reflects the key priorities and projects of the University on taught and research student matters, in alignment with the University's strategic aims.
17. The Academic Policy and Regulations Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for the University's framework of academic policy and regulation, apart from those aspects which are primarily parts of the Quality Assurance Framework. The business of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee follows a defined structure based on the requirement to review policies regularly, and responds to University strategic priorities.
18. The Senate Quality Assurance Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for the framework which assures standards and enhances the quality of the student learning experience. Much of the Committee's work is informed by outcomes of established quality processes and external and regulatory requirements.

Resource implications

19. The staff resource required for the committee priority setting process is increasing and disproportionate to the output. It risks creating additional work which has resource implication across the University, including for members of committees. The work of the committees is dictated by University strategic priorities and the obligation to meet external requirements, and therefore, setting priorities does not add value,

Risk management

20. It is vital that Committees ensure work they undertake aligns to their remit. Failure to fulfil its remit raises potential risks associated with the University's framework of academic policy and regulations and the student experience.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

22. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with the recommended action. The Standing Committees are responsible for considering the equality and diversity implications of business for relevant items. Any equality

and diversity implications which arise from discussion are outlined and considered by the relevant standing committee and Registry Services.

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

23. The annual report of Standing Committees will provide an update on the Committee progress toward the agreed priorities for 2025/26.
24. Discussions on Senate Standing Committee remits are expected to continue following the Court's consideration and approval of a Senate Statement of Primary Responsibilities.

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January 2026

Freedom of Information Open

Appendix 1: Senate Education Committee priorities mid-year update 2025/26

Curriculum Transformation

- In **September 2025**, the Committee were informed that a more substantive update on the Learning and Teaching Workstream, would be provided at the November meeting and following further meetings of the University Initiatives Portfolio Board (UIPB).
- In **November 2025**, the Committee received a verbal update on the Learning and Teaching workstream, and members were directed to the workstream's SharePoint hub for details on specific projects taking place as part of the wider workstream.

Learning and Teaching Strategy implementation and evaluation

- In **September 2025**, the Committee received a verbal update on the progress of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. Members were informed that discussions were taking place with Academic Quality and Standards around the development of an oversight group to help coordinate strategy implementation. A small number of measurable actions would be required to demonstrate traction of implementation. A further requirement to gather information on existing activities across Schools and Colleges could also be required, to showcase good practice internally, as well as externally during the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review in 2027/28.
- In **November 2025**, the Committee received a paper which proposed governance and leadership arrangements to support the effective implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030. The Committee approved the establishment of two sub-groups of the Committee:
 - The Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Group (LTSIG) has been formed and their first meeting is expected to take place in February 2026.
 - The Curriculum Development and Innovation Group (CDIG) has been formed and their first meeting is expected to take place in February 2026.

Information on the Strategy and the membership and activity of the sub-groups can be found on the [Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030 SharePoint](#).

Student support model – support for ongoing implementation

- In **September 2025**, the Committee received a Student Surveys 2025 Results and Responses paper which included results relating to student support and resulting actions in response.

Appendix 2: Senate Academic Policy and Regulation Committee mid-year update 2025/26

Curriculum Transformation Programme

- The University has refined its approach to curriculum development, with prioritised components of the programme now being taken forward via a Curriculum Development and Innovation Group aligned to the Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan and reporting to Senate Education Committee. While the programme of work will change, APRC will be consulted as appropriate where developments relate to areas of policy within the Committee's remit.

Scheduled review of policies

- Progress is being made with regard to the review schedule for policies, with guidance documents relating to PGR theses being brought for approval to the January meeting of APRC. The Code of Student Conduct is currently being reviewed by the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA). It is anticipated that proposed revisions to the Code will be brought for approval to the May 2026 meeting of APRC (before proceeding through the Court Resolution process). Colleges and Schools are being consulted about requested amendments to the Assessment and Degree Regulations, with any proposals for essential updates coming for approval to the March or May meetings of APRC.
- Due to the reallocation of staff resources within Academic Quality and Standards to meet institutional priorities (e.g. relating to the Learning and Teaching Workstream, and the Board of Examiners Project), some policy reviews scheduled for the current session will not be completed by the end of the session. The below table provides information regarding the status of documents scheduled for review in the current session. Academic Quality and Standards will seek to take forward the outstanding reviews on a prioritised basis, and provide an update to APRC in due course.

Document	Status of review
Course Organiser Outline of Role	Not started.
Degree Regulations – Postgraduate	Consultation with Colleges and Schools underway. Expected at March 2026 APRC.
Degree Regulations – Undergraduate	Consultation with Colleges and Schools underway. Expected at March 2026 APRC.
Degree Programme Specification Guidance	Not started.

Dual, Double and Multiple Awards Policy	Not started.
Code of Student Conduct	Being reviewed by OSCCA. Expected at May 2026 APRC.
Expected Behaviour Policy in relation to Appeals, Complaints, Student Conduct and Related Procedures	Being reviewed by OSCCA. Expected at May 2026 APRC.
Framework for Curricula	Not started.
Models for Degree Types	Not started.
Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees	Consultation with Colleges and Schools underway. Expected at May 2026 APRC.
Taught Assessment Regulations	Consultation with Colleges and Schools underway. Expected at May 2026 APRC.
Thesis Format Guidance	For approval at January 2026 APRC.
Including Publications in Postgraduate Research Thesis: Guidance	For approval at January 2026 APRC.
Lay Summary in Theses - Guidance	For approval at January 2026 APRC.
PhD by Research oral examinations by video link (Videolinked PhD oral)	Not started.

Appendix 3: Senate Quality Assurance Committee mid-year update 2025/26

Responding to 2023 Quality Enhancement & Standards Review (QESR)

At our recent Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), acknowledged the progress we have made across the range of activities in response to the recommendations of the [QESR](#). The recommendations relating to oversight and planning for growth of student numbers, pace of change, implementation of policy and practice, strategic approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching, and recognition and support for academic staff development have been completed.

Immediate and significant action has been taken to establish an appropriate approach to ensure effective and consistent implementation and monitor feedback turnaround times. Ongoing monitoring will continue to embed and drive improvement. The evaluation of the new student support model is ongoing and will be the focus of the February meeting of SQAC.

Progress has been made on training for postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach in terms of reviewing training provision, reinforcing the mandatory induction and training expectation and establishing appropriate governance for oversight of the policy. However, still ongoing is implementation of the new governance arrangements to ensure that training provision is effective and of the quality required by PGR students.

We have taken several actions to support ongoing work to address awarding gaps. A strand of activity is seeking to identify good practice across the sector and initiatives that have been tested and/or effective elsewhere. We have been active participants in Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) and a co-lead institution (in partnership with Edinburgh College) in the Supporting Access, Progression and Successful Outcomes (SAPSO) project, which aligns with the work of our SQAC Student Success task group. We anticipate that the STEP project, along with the ongoing work of our task group, will have a significant impact on the way we oversee the support we provide to all our students and will help us address awarding gaps across the University.

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

In **September 2025**, SQAC approved updates to the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) process to align with the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#). The University Standard Remit (ensuring consistent coverage of key aspects of the student experience across all IPRs) and IPR Impact Analysis (the key document and reference point produced by the School for its IPR) were comprehensively revised. A new box template format was also introduced that should make it easier for schools to understand what specific responses are required for each area and therefore keep responses succinct and to the point (hopefully reducing time and effort required). It will also help us to compile and administrate the responses by facilitating systematic processing and AI analysis. An IPR Action Plan has also been introduced which directly mirrors (in text and process) the University level SEAP template. The IPR action plan will be submitted to SQAC (instead of the 14 week response) and then

an updated version will be submitted annually along with the School annual monitoring report. This will ensure that our annual monitoring and IPR processes have a formal link and should facilitate better continuous engagement throughout our two key QA processes. The IPR handbook, documentation and guidance were also comprehensively revised.

Evaluation and monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the new student support model (SSM)

In **September 2025**, SQAC reviewed the themes arising from student support responses provided by Schools in their annual quality reports. Echoing the responses from the previous year 2023/24, Schools generally reported that the implementation of Student Advisors has been perceived positively, but there are concerns about workload challenges, the ratios of Student Advisors to students and whether adequate opportunities are available for students to have conversations around academic matters. Schools continue to make significant efforts to deliver Cohort Lead events and opportunities for engagement, but reported that these are not always well attended. As noted above, a paper on the evaluation and ongoing monitoring of the Student Support Model will be presented to the February meeting of SQAC.

The student support related issues and themes identified through the annual quality reports and IPRs were referred to the Student Support Continuous Improvement Group (SSCIG). In response, SSCIG is also undertaking a consultation of students and staff on the Cohort Lead role which will feed into a Student Support Community of Practice event in April. The event will include a set of workshops with key stakeholders to understand what additional support and guidance is needed for the Cohort Lead role so that enhancements can be put in place for the start of the 2026 - 27 academic year.

Student Voice

The Committee continues to monitor and contribute to the activities around Student Voice, including through quality assurance processes including Internal Periodic Reviews, Annual Monitoring and the Thematic Review which is due to begin later in semester 2.

The Academic Planning department within Registry Services is leading on Student Voice work, with a current focus on a policy and guidance review of SSLCs, establishing an SSLC action log to surface recurring actions and themes across Schools and Colleges, and exploring what we hope to achieve with course evaluation and feedback. A report on these activities will be brought to the Committee before the end of the academic cycle. SQAC has responsibility for approving changes to the Student Voice and related policies.

Student Data Monitoring

In December 2025 SQAC discussed the Student Data Monitoring Task Group that was active throughout 2024/25. New terms of reference for the Group were proposed, in order to facilitate the group continuing with piloting work to address awarding gaps within the University. It was agreed by the Committee that there was a need to pilot action and interventions, and have improved data analysis as a long-

term objective. The Group has been renamed as Student Success Task Group and will continue it's work throughout 2025/26 and beyond. The Convener of SQAC will co-convene the Group alongside the EUSA VP Education.

A report on the Group's activities and findings will be presented to the Committee by the end of 2025/26 cycle.

Enhance Senate understanding of arrangements and effectiveness for quality assurance regarding internal systems and change processes

Senate is notified when SQAC agendas and papers are available to access. Senate receives notification of Committee Upcoming Business at each of its meetings and receives detailed information on Committee activities via the Senate Standing Committee Annual Report.

Senate

4 March 2026

Update on the Statement of Primary Responsibilities for Senate

Description of paper

1. The paper provides Senate with an update on the progress towards developing a Senate Statement of Primary Responsibilities (SOPR). The update outlines the work undertaken to date and provides members with a reminder of plans for consultation to gather feedback and timelines for completion of this work.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is invited to note the paper

Background and context

3. At its 10 December meeting, Senate received a paper outlining plans to develop a Statement of Primary Responsibilities (SOPR).
4. The impetus for developing an SOPR for Senate is a recommendation arising from the [Externally-Facilitated Effectiveness Review](#) of the University Court which concluded in June 2024:
 - 3. That Court articulates the role of Court and the different responsibilities of Court and Senate more clearly, both to new Court members and to continuing members on a regular basis.**
5. The development of the Statement is also intended to support a future review of the Senate Standing Committees. This is a recommendation from the Senate Externally Facilitated Review which concluded in 2023. It was agreed by the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group (disbanded in July 2025) that meaningful progress toward addressing recommendations on Senate Standing Committees was challenging in the absence of an approved SOPR.
6. The University Court is responsible for governance oversight of Senate and the SOPR will require Court's approval.
7. The Vice-Principal and University Secretary, Leigh Chalmers, is the senior lead for this work. This role has overall responsibility for governance at the University and is directly accountable to University Court. The day-to-day work is being undertaken by professional services staff in Court Services and Academic Quality and Standards. Staff from Legal Services will be involved where legal advice is required.

Discussion

Update on progress since 10 December meeting – as at 26 January 2026

8. The project team has undertaken sector benchmarking and the results of this are published on the Senate Members Portal. The benchmarking has been used to inform best practice and identify approaches at comparable institutions which may be adopted. Benchmarking is not intended to prohibit alternative options and solutions from being identified. Benchmarking focussed on other Scottish ancient universities as the governance structure of these institutions is underpinned by similar legislation. Benchmarking also considered modern Scottish and Russell Group institutions, though it should be noted that these institutions have governance structures which are not directly comparable to Edinburgh due to the differing legislation underpinning academic governance.
9. Senate is not responsible for the development or approval of the Statement of Primary Responsibilities, this is the responsibility of Court, however, will be consulted to gather feedback throughout the development of the SOPR. Senate engagement will be sought via discussions at Senate meetings, where time is allocated on the agenda, and with a formal consultation exercise to gather feedback from all members to be undertaken via the Senate Members Portal.
10. A critical friend's group comprised of elected academic Senate members is being established, to ensure the voice of academic elected Senate members are involved in the development of the SOPR, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the [Senate External Review Task and Finish Group – Recommendations paper \(S25/26 1K\)](#). A call for expressions of interest was circulated to Senate on 14 January, with a deadline for responses by 23 January. The membership of the group will be published on the Senate Members' Portal.
11. Senate Members were invited to provide feedback, on the paper presented to the 10 December meeting. Seventeen members (0.05%) responded to a feedback survey available via the Senate Members' Portal from 26 November – 19 December 2025. An analysis of this feedback is available on the Senate Members Portal.
12. Senate will continue to receive regular updates on a bi-monthly basis via the Senate Members Portal. This work is expected to complete by the beginning of AY 2026/27 should Court approve the SOPR at its June 2026 meeting.
13. A progress update as of 26 January on key actions within the project are provided below:

Action	Timescale	Responsible	Update
Desk-based benchmarking	October	Senate Support	Complete & published on

			Senate Members Portal
Meetings with Scottish ancient Universities	October – November, subject to the availability of colleagues	Senate Support & Court Services	Complete
Paper for December Senate	October - December	Senate Support & Court Services	Complete
Consultation with critical friends' group	December – January	Senate Support to facilitate	Ongoing
Senate consultation	December – February	Senate Support to facilitate	Ongoing
Paper for March Senate	January	Senate Support & Court Services	Complete
Further development work focussed on the SOPR and items delegated to Senate Standing Committees	March – April	Senate Support & Court Services	
Consultation with critical friends and wider Senate	March – April	Senate Support to facilitate	
Paper for May Senate	April	Senate Support & Court Services	
Seek approval for the Senate Statement of Primary Responsibilities from Court	June	Court Services	

Senate Standing Committees

14. A recurring theme from the feedback gathered on the paper presented to the 10 December meeting was that the work to develop an SOPR should ensure

alignment with the short-life working group on the delegation of Senate authority. The development of the SOPR is a separate exercise with a distinctly different focus to the work being undertaken by the short-life working group, which is focussed on delegation of responsibilities.

15. Senate Standing Committees are expected to have delegated responsibility for specific elements of Senate's responsibilities. Whilst the Terms of Reference for the Standing Committees are within the responsibility of Senate, the SOPR will reference the importance of the Committees as part of Senate's effectiveness. The development of a terms of reference for the Standing Committee is scheduled to take place in 2026-27 following approval of the SOPR by Court.
16. It is possible that future recommendations relating to Senate Standing Committees may result in a revision to the Committees to align with the approved Senate SOPR.

Resource implications

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

Risk management

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

Equality & diversity

19. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with providing this update. Equality impact assessments will be completed where required for any further proposals to be developed in response to the AdvanceHE review of Senate and its committees.
20. The [Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance](#) outlines expectations on Equality and Diversity, these will inform the development of the Statement and any elements which may impact on EDI.

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

21. Senate were informed of the plans for consultation in a paper to its 10 December meeting.
22. Senate receives bi-monthly updates on the project, and contact at key points or where consultation to gather feedback is required.
23. Actions taken in response to recommendations from the External Review of Senate will be evaluated. Court is responsible for carrying out the recommendations and review of actions in response to its External Review.

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January 2026

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SENATE

4 March 2026

Research Cultures Action Plan 2026-28

Description of paper

1. The University approved its first Research Cultures Action Plan in February 2023. As we approach the end of our first action plan period (December 2025), Annex 1 presents our second Research Cultures Action Plan for the period 2026-28 inclusive.

2. The successful delivery of this Action Plan will contribute to the People and Research Pillars of our Strategy 2030 and the Environment priorities of our Research & Innovation Strategy.

Action requested / Recommendation

3. Senate is invited to note the Research Cultures Action Plan 2026-28 as approved by Research Strategy Group at their November 2025 meeting.

Background and context

4. The University approved its first Research Cultures Action Plan in February 2023 and the associated Delivery Plan in August 2023. Over the last two and half years, work has been ongoing across the University to complete and embed the actions agreed in these plans.

5. At our December 2025 reporting point 84% (65.5) of actions in our current plan are complete, with a further 10% (8.5) actively ongoing. A detailed progress report on our first plan is available on our [Research Cultures website](#).

6. To maintain momentum and build on the success of our first action plan, we have developed our second action plan over the last 6 months through a consultative and iterative process.

Discussion

7. The Action Plan is structured around the same underpinning values as our first plan

- Citizenship & Collegiality,
- Wellbeing,
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion,
- Ethics & Integrity,
- Learning & Reflecting

and sets out priority areas for action under four headings that build on our 2023 Action Plan

- Recognition & Career Development
- Engagement & Good Practice
- Open & Responsible Research
- Data & Evaluation

8. In total there are 68 actions, of the 68 actions 14 actions are already approved as part of other action plans (CoARA Action Plan, Researcher Development Concordat, Technician Commitment etc.) and another 10 actions commit us to continue undertaking

activity initiated in the 2023 Action Plan. There are 44 actions that represent new public commitments as part of this action plan.

9. Within the 68 actions that have been prioritised to be included in our Research Cultures Action Plan 2026, there are 6 that when completed are likely to support a step change in our cultures. These actions have been identified via discussions with College Research Committees and the Research Cultures Forum.

10. Priority actions are listed below and highlighted in the action table in Appendix 1

- Action 1.3: We will pilot the pooling of research staff in two research areas
- Action 1.14: We will explore the feasibility of establishing a technical career pathway for the University
- Action 1.16: We will work to implement the recommendations of our Review of Race & History
- Action 3.5: We will analyse the data from our Report + Support platform to identify areas that may require additional support or intervention
- Action 3.7: Implement a university wide ethics workflow and record management system
- Action 4.4: We will integrate HR data with our research proposal data to identify actionable insights to direct support to staff groups with lower submission or success rates.

11. The development of this plan has been undertaken in broad consultation since May 2025 with idea generation with the Deans of Research Cultures and Research Cultures Forum, iterations and draft plans being shared with several groups (see Consultation) and individuals, and the action plan being amended and refined based on this feedback during its development.

Resource implications

12. There are no new financial requests in this action plan, many of the actions build on investments made during our first action plan. All actions have been agreed with the action holders and are confirmed as deliverable in November 2025, and built into forward work plans.

13. Realising an improvement in our research cultures across the university requires an emphasis on taking time and care in many activities and processes we have not prioritised in recent years. Prioritising and making time to improve our cultures and working practices will require additional engagement and time from Services, Colleges, Schools and individuals.

Risk Management

14. There continues to be significant and growing expectation on UK institutions to improve their research cultures. The risk of not maintaining momentum and demonstrating progress in this area, and associated areas such as research integrity, ED&I, staff and student development, will likely be felt in reduced research grant income (where we are not able to competitively articulate our approach in research bids) and in assessment of our REF 2029 submission, and the resulting REG income.

15. This action plan demonstrates our continued cross-university commitment to improving our research cultures. It also summarises much of our planned activity so it can be easily adapted for inclusion in bids, nominations and our REF submission.

16. Research Cultures are highly localised, and overall, our culture will take years to shift. Despite the work already undertaken across the University to improve our research cultures and plans detailed in Appendix 1, it is likely that there are individuals having a poor experience that will not feel this report addresses their immediate challenges. There

is also likely to be a larger group that aren't perceiving any positive change to the research culture.

17. With the current financial challenges in the sector, it is likely to be difficult for Schools, Colleges and Services to maintain, on an ongoing basis, the actions that have been completed in our previous plan, as well as business as usual activity that we would have recently considered to be foundational and embedded. Although actions in this 2026-28 plan are agreed as deliverable and built into workplans for action leads currently, the situation may change over the three years. This represents a risk not just for this plan but overall for our research and organisational cultures.

Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals

18. This action plan will maintain progress on our Sustainable Research & Innovation Practice work through actions 3.19 and 3.20.

19. The action plan will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals below:

- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
- Reduce inequality within and among countries

Equality and Diversity

20. Appendix 1 outlines actions that, in tandem with other aspects of our Research & Innovation Strategy and ED&I action plans etc., will support us to realise an improvement in our research cultures which is likely to benefit social groups and job families that are currently under-represented or under-recognised members of our research community.

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

21. The action plan was published on our external [Research Cultures website](#) on the 5th January 2026. The plan will be included in VP Research & Innovation email updates, IAD staff and student newsletters, Research Cultures Sharepoint notifications and blog posts. Head of Research Cultures will attend meetings and seminars to share our plans.

22. As with our previous action plan action holders will report quarterly to the Head of Research Cultures on progress, with progress updates being available to view on our [Research Cultures Sharepoint](#) site quarterly.

23. [Research Cultures Delivery Group](#) membership will be updated to represent the areas holding actions in the new action plan and continue to meet twice yearly to monitor progress and address any issues arising in maintain progress.

23. This action plan outlines specific actions to evaluate the impact of actions in our previous plan as part of our research cultures activity. We will also use UoE Staff Survey, UoE Research Cultures Survey and PRES results to understand the impact of this action plan.

Consultation

24. In the six months over which this action plan has been developed broad consultation and agreement has been sought at several points including requesting suggested action areas, feedback as the plan developed and securing action confirmation from

College Deans of Research Cultures and College Deans Ethics & Integrity, Research Cultures Forum, Research Cultures Delivery Group (including Chair of the Technician Steering Group and Academic lead for Postgraduate Research), Researcher Development Concordat Implementation Group, CMVM Research Committee, CMVM Research Staff Committee, CMVM Research Managers Group, CSE Research Committee, CAHSS Research Committee, Research Support Operational Executive,

Health & Wellbeing Committee, IAD Researcher Development Team, Careers Service, HR Partnering Team, Talent & Development Team and ED&I Team, University ED&I Lead, ERO (including Head of REF, Impact Team, Research Integrity & Governance team, and Research Strategy Team), InFrame team, Edinburgh Innovations, Sustainability & Social Responsibility, Communications & Marketing, Health, Safety & Wellbeing team, Library Research Support team and UKRN Institutional Leads

25. Some actions in the plan have been drawn from RSG papers and other action plans and public commitments already approved through university governance routes.

Further information

Author(s)

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Freedom of information

Open

Research Cultures Action Plan

2026-28

Professor Liz Baggs, Vice-Principal for Research & Innovation

Alex Peden, Head of Research Cultures

November 2025

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Foreword from our Vice-Principal for Research & Innovation

Fostering a research environment in which research, researchers and those that enable research can thrive is central to our mission as a University, as set out in our Strategy 2030. In 2024 we published our Research and Innovation Strategy in which we outline our commitment to improving and strengthening the research environment and career development for everyone in our research community. The Research Cultures Action Plan is a key vehicle progress and monitor delivery of activities against our aims. The 2026-2028 Action Plan builds on our previous University-wide action plan and outlines a range of important initiatives aimed at implementation and expansion of our work to date.

As a University community we are immensely proud of what we have collectively achieved over the last three years and are committed to this work being continued and strengthened through the next action plan period. Crucially, our research cultures activity is strongly connected to and supported by other strategic work at the University, such as our Technician Commitment activity, Researcher Development Concordat commitments, ED&I commitments, Research Integrity commitments and Community plan among many others. Communication, responsibility, professional development and recognition are at the heart of this work.

The UK Higher Education sector is facing challenges over this action plan period. A strong commitment to strengthening research cultures, with transparency on expectations, behaviours and agreed action, will help support us in adapting and adjusting in a responsible and collegial way.

The development of this action plan was led by our Head of Research Cultures and drafted in consultation with academic staff, research staff, PGR students, technical staff and professional services colleagues through various groups and committees as well as the Research Cultures Forum. I am grateful to all for their time, input and effort, and I look forward to us working together to deliver the activities in this new action plan.

Professor Liz Baggs

Vice-Principal for Research & Innovation

November 2025

What is Research Culture?

Our research cultures are built on the values, expectations and behaviours that shape how we support, deliver and communicate our research. They are built and maintained by all of us through the actions, interactions, behaviours, decisions, policies and processes that we all encounter and perform while undertaking or supporting research.

These cultures are felt and influenced by us at individual, team, department, university and wider discipline level. Research cultures can be experienced differently at each level and within each discipline, which is why University of Edinburgh acknowledges that we both experience and contribute to multiple research cultures, and that a university the size of Edinburgh will have many research cultures.

Improving our research cultures is everyone's responsibility.

Our Research Cultures Landscape

Our Research Cultures Action Plan sits alongside a number of University strategies, commitments and action plans that work collectively to improve our organisational and research cultures.

University Strategies & Policies

- Strategy 2030
- Research & Innovation Strategy 2030
- People Strategy
- Behaviours Charter
- Zero by 2040
- Review of Race & History
- Our Community Plan
- A University of Sanctuary

University of Edinburgh is a signatory of, and committed to

- Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
 - Technician Commitment
 - UKRI Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training
 - UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity
 - San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)
 - Coalition of Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)
 - Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK
 - NCCPE Manifesto for Public Engagement
 - Athena SWAN Charter
 - Race Equality Charter
 - Stonewall Workplace Equality Index
 - Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research & Innovation Practice
-

Progress on our Research Cultures Action & Delivery Plan 2023-25

Our first Research Cultures Action Plan was agreed by University Executive in February 2023. The plan included measures to recognise collegiality and citizenship in academic promotions, more targeted support for under-represented groups, and specific work to improve research cultures for our Postgraduate Research Students.

The research community addressed in the Action Plan encompasses all those involved in research, from undergraduates gaining their first experience of research to established academics leading in their field and those providing the services and support that enable a flourishing research environment.

The Research Cultures Delivery Plan was developed over the summer of 2023 by a short-life working group tasked with elaborating the actions set out in the Research Cultures Action Plan.

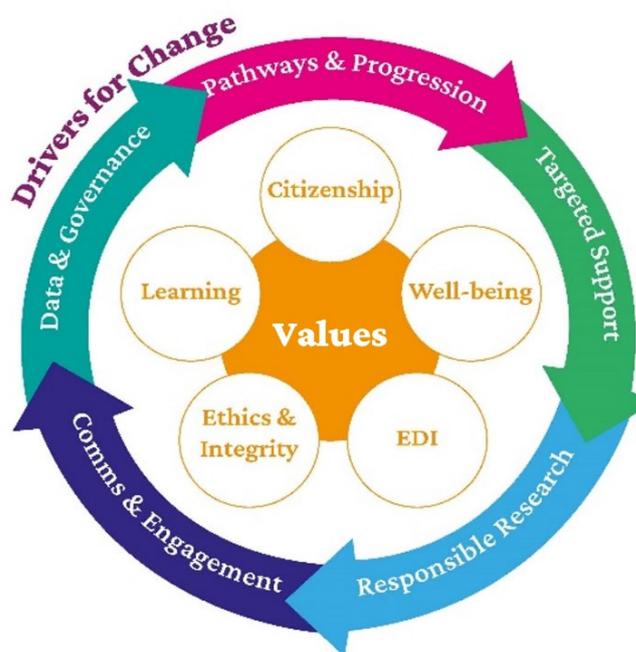
Specifically, the Delivery Plan:

- described the specific measures that will be taken to deliver each of the 41 actions set out in the Action Plan;
- clarified the timeframe for their delivery;
- established which parts of the organisation are responsible for delivery.

In this refreshed Research Cultures Plan 2026-28 we aim to build on the work undertaken in our first plan and incorporate new areas of work to support the continuous improvement of our research cultures.

Progress includes

- Citizenship & Collegiality will become an essential criterion in our academic promotion processes
- Postgraduate Research Cultures plan published, with over 70% of actions completed
- Continued support for the Open Research Conference, Research Professional Staff Conference and Research Good Practice Week.



[Progress on our Research Cultures Action Plan | Research Cultures SharePoint](#)

[login required]

Research Cultures Action Plan 2026-28

Strategy

Our Research Cultures Action Plan 2026-28 supports our Research & Innovation Strategy commitments to build and maintain a collegial and inclusive environment for our whole research community, and reinforce our commitment to responsible research practices.

We know that advancing knowledge is a team effort, drawing on a range of contributors beyond the lead academic: from research students and postgraduate researchers, postdoctoral fellows and early and mid-career researchers, through technicians, research enabling staff and, collaborators and participants from across sectors, institutions and borders.

This Action Plan builds on our 2023-25 Action Plan to continue to improve our research cultures in line with our values, and details action in four areas across our whole research community:

- Recognition & Career Development
- Engagement & Good Practice
- Open & Responsible Research
- Data & Evaluation

We will continue to support ongoing activities that improve our research cultures, several of which pre-date our first research cultures plan.

Values

As part of the work to define our first Research Cultures Action plan we identified core values, these same values will continue to guide this new plan and are foundational to our approach to improving our research cultures.

The values of our Research Cultures activity are:

Citizenship & Collegiality

We aim to create cultures that are inclusive, respectful and supportive, for everyone contributing to our research. The environment in which we conduct research is created by, and is the responsibility of everyone in the University – including, but not limited to, academic staff, senior leaders, technicians, students conducting research, research managers, research enabling professional services staff, data scientists, archivists, statisticians, software developers and those managing research facilities.

Many of our staff and students lead by example to improve our working cultures. Through this action plan we will increase the sharing of good practice and continue to expand the routes to explicitly recognise and encourage colleagues' contributions as a route to improve our research cultures.

Wellbeing

To undertake good quality research, it is essential that we work to ensure that our research cultures do not foster unhealthy working practices or inappropriate behaviours. But there are often pressures in the work and study environment that work against individual well-being, and our collective well-being.

Some of these pressures are structural or contractual than can impact on our ability to plan our lives, and can leave colleagues feeling vulnerable and uncertain. Other factors are behavioural, where workload

and environmental pressures can be associated with poor supervision, management and leadership practice, or inappropriate behaviours.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The higher education sector has made progress advancing equality and inclusion over the last 20 years, particularly for women in research roles. However significant challenges remain, with some issues more acute in particular disciplines. Far less attention has been paid to other forms of inequality in higher education: including those from ethnic minority backgrounds; those with a disability; members of the LGBTQ+ community; and those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

The University is committed to addressing these barriers and ensuring our research community is inclusive, diverse and representative of our broader population. Our Research Cultures activity will continue to influence, support and adopt our [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion](#) work.

Ethics & Integrity

We are committed to ensuring our research cultures reinforce and support the highest standards of research practice. Ethical considerations should inform our research questions and goals, our research methods, who we collaborate with, how we collaborate, and how we share and archive our insights and findings. In many areas, the ethical considerations confronting our research have become more complex, with new areas of consideration becoming more important to a wider range of research areas.

Through this action plan we will support ethical research and the wider professional standards around conducting rigorous and open research with integrity, as well as a range of more specific areas, such as reproducibility and methodological rigour, and open research.

Learning & Reflecting

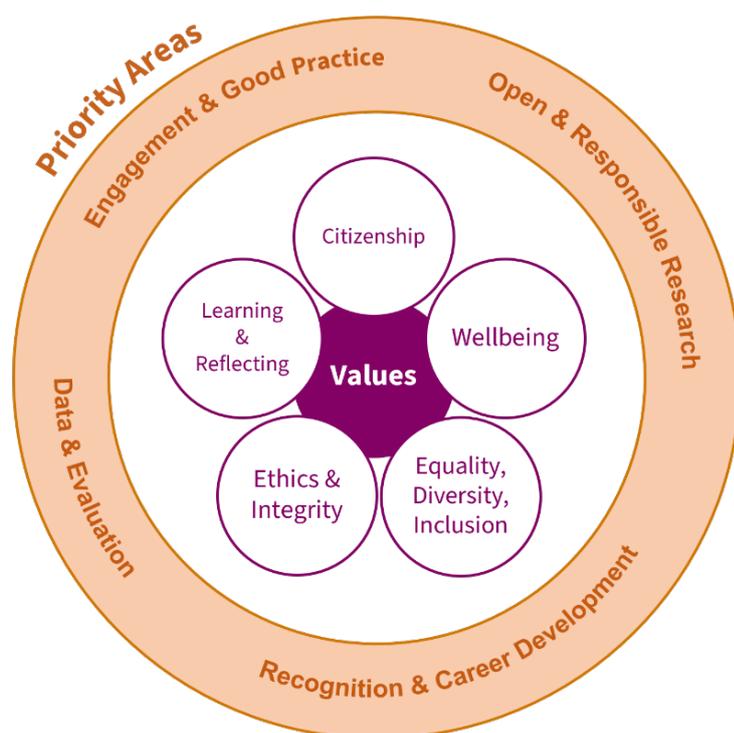
As a university, we are committed to the development of students and staff, and applying our knowledge and expertise to continually adjust and update how we support positive research cultures. This ethos is also core to our identity as researchers and as professionals supporting research: in our roles, we constantly challenge and question practices in our environment, and strive to produce rigorous data and analysis to update our beliefs and guide our conduct. We will continue to operate a similar spirit of curiosity, rigour and learning to underpin all aspects of our research culture.

We are fortunate to have colleagues who are specialists in many aspects of research culture and we will continue to engage with and benefit from Scottish, UK wide and international collaborations undertaking research on how we undertake research.

Priority Areas

Over five months we have listened, discussed and taken feedback from our research community to understand their concerns and what the priorities for this next plan should be. The priority areas for our 2026-28 Action Plan build on the actions undertaken in the previous plan and include new areas of work to adapt to the changing emphasis required to support our research community. Our priority areas are:

- Recognition & Career Development
- Engagement & Good Practice
- Open & Responsible Research
- Data & Evaluation



Recognition & Career Development

Career development continues to be a high priority in our research cultures plans. At a time of financial constraint in UK higher education and research policy turbulence world-wide it can be hard to identify opportunities to maintain a career in the research community. We aim to support all our research students and staff involved in research to identify career development opportunities that allow them to use and develop their skills, or take a different career direction, as well as considering how our own processes support a variety of career options. We will continue to work to recognise and value all the diverse contributions to our research effort, providing routes to formally recognise activity that supports others and promotes a good organisational culture, as well as working to value a much broader range of contributions to research, research outputs and achievements than we have traditionally.

Priorities

- We will build on the work to update our academic promotion process, by reviewing other related processes and policies to fully embed citizenship & collegiality, responsible use of metrics, and a recognition of a wider range of contributions to research, across all job families. Through these updated processes we will be more able to value and recognise the importance of civic engagement, impact, translation and innovation in our research.

Relevant Actions: 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.15, 1.18, 1.20, 2.1, 2.14

- We will reduce precarity for staff by encouraging uptake of good practice, investigating the feasibility of new operational models to provide a wider variety of contractual and role opportunities, and understanding and supporting the diverse career routes and opportunities for our research staff

Relevant Actions: 1.3, 1.4, 1.9, 1.21

- We will understand the pros and cons of introducing Narrative CV formats into our recruitment, and provide further materials and training.

Relevant Actions: 1.5, 1.6

- We will support our research-enabling and technical colleagues to network and share good practice across the University to enhance upskilling and career development.

Relevant Actions: 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.17, 1.22, 1.23, 3.13

- We will support the work of the Race & History Response Group to identify and implement their recommendations to improve our research cultures, and we will utilise ED&I tools to address underrepresentation in our staff profile

Relevant Actions: 1.8, 1.16, 1.19, 1.20

Engagement & Good Practice

We have many areas of our university working to build and maintain good research cultures and others where practice is poorer or less consistent. It can be difficult to appreciate good culture when you are working in it and undertaking good research practice. It can also be hard to recognise when things aren't going well, or need to be improved, if this is what you are used to. With this action area we aim to continue to network colleagues across the university to support good practice sharing and increase engagement in reflection and continuous improvement of our research cultures.

Priorities

- We will seek out and embed learning and good practice from recognition campaigns and Research on Research projects, both those we are directly involved in (InFrame, ARRC, CoARA Boost) and those we aren't. We will continue to actively contribute to the development of the UKRI Good Practice Exchange.

Relevant Actions: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.10, 2.11, 2.14

- We will work through our REF2029 preparations, organisational management support and research bid development support to share good practice between colleagues, groups and Schools. We will reach beyond research culture focused committees to support those in departments or bid leadership to consider their practice and obligations.

Relevant Actions: 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9

- We will continue to recognise that each area, College, School and discipline has different priorities, successes, needs, contexts and issues in their research cultures. We will support the sharing of good practice between Schools to allow them to reflect on and adapt initiatives that have benefitted other areas so they are fit for their context.

Relevant Actions: 2.4, 2.5, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14

Open & Responsible Research

We will continue to develop our understanding and implementation of open and responsible research practices, including our work to make our research and innovation practice environmentally sustainable. We will support a tailored approach that recognises complete openness is not appropriate in all situations, and there are many routes to adopting open research practice beyond open access journal publications.

Priorities

- We will encourage a broader understanding of responsible research and innovation practice across those undertaking and enabling research, innovation and commercialisation.
Relevant Actions: 3.1, 3.2
- We will review policies, processes and materials that set out expectations of behaviour, the routes that hold us to account, and manage stress in our university. We will analyse data from our Report + Support platform to identify areas that may require targeted intervention.
Relevant Actions: 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6
- To support the roll out of our ethics workflow system we will review all associated policies, processes, guidance and training. We will create new resources and consolidated information and policies where required, including to support our research security.
Relevant Actions: 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10
- We will continue to implement our Open Research plans and adopt good practice from the UKRN Open Research Programme.
Relevant Actions: 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16
- We will review our supervisor training, support and associated processes including sharing good practice across our PGR programmes.
Relevant Actions: 3.17, 3.18
- We will continue to embed sustainable research and innovation practice to allow us to understand and reduce the environmental impact of our research and innovation activity.
Relevant Actions: 3.19, 3.20

Data & Evaluation

We will continue to use data to inform our research cultures approaches, and will encourage more, and more transparent, evaluation of actions undertaken in our previous plan to support ourselves as a learning organisation and in sharing good practice. We will continue to review, evaluate and adapt our current activity in light of feedback, efficacy and changing policy or international developments.

Priorities

- We will review question sets and work to increase participation rates in surveys that support us in understanding our research cultures, both internal and national.
Relevant Actions: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
- We will integrate and analyse data sets to identify groups of staff that may require different support from that already offered, and develop targeted support for these groups.
Relevant Actions: 4.4, 4.5,
- We will evaluate actions undertaken in our 2023-25 action plan to understand if they achieved their intended impact. We will learn from and share our successes as well as understand why our plans may not have succeeded.
Relevant Actions: 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11

Reading the Action Table

Related Action Plan	Actions shaded in orange are actions we have already committed to that have been mapped across from existing research cultures related action plans.
Priority Action	Actions shaded in purple have been identified as new priority actions by the research community.
Continuing Activity	Actions shaded in light blue are activities that we will continue to undertake through this action plan period to support our research cultures
New Actions	Actions without shading represent new research cultures actions for the period 2026-28

Responsibilities

There is work to improve our research cultures in every department, School, Institute and College. We know some of the things that are having the biggest effects can be the most complex to change. The University is working internally, with Unions, with other universities, funders and governments to address these issues, alongside the actions in our Research Cultures Action Plans.

Our University still work to do on our research cultures. Our senior staff rightly hold the most responsibility, but we all hold some responsibility for our research cultures. Each or our actions and interactions contribute to the research cultures, and there are steps we can all take to support ourselves, improve our practice and behave appropriately and responsibly while we research and work at our University.

- Communicate the aspects of research culture that are important to you, to your team and department
- Be aware of the policies, processes and services that affect you, your work and your team
- Be considerate and respectful to others
- Take time to make sure responsibilities and accountabilities in your work are clear
- Network across and beyond the University
- Take action to support your own health and wellbeing
- Set expectations to support a healthy work-life balance, and be open about these

Research Cultures responsibilities by role

- [Our Responsibilities | Research Cultures SharePoint](#)

[login required]

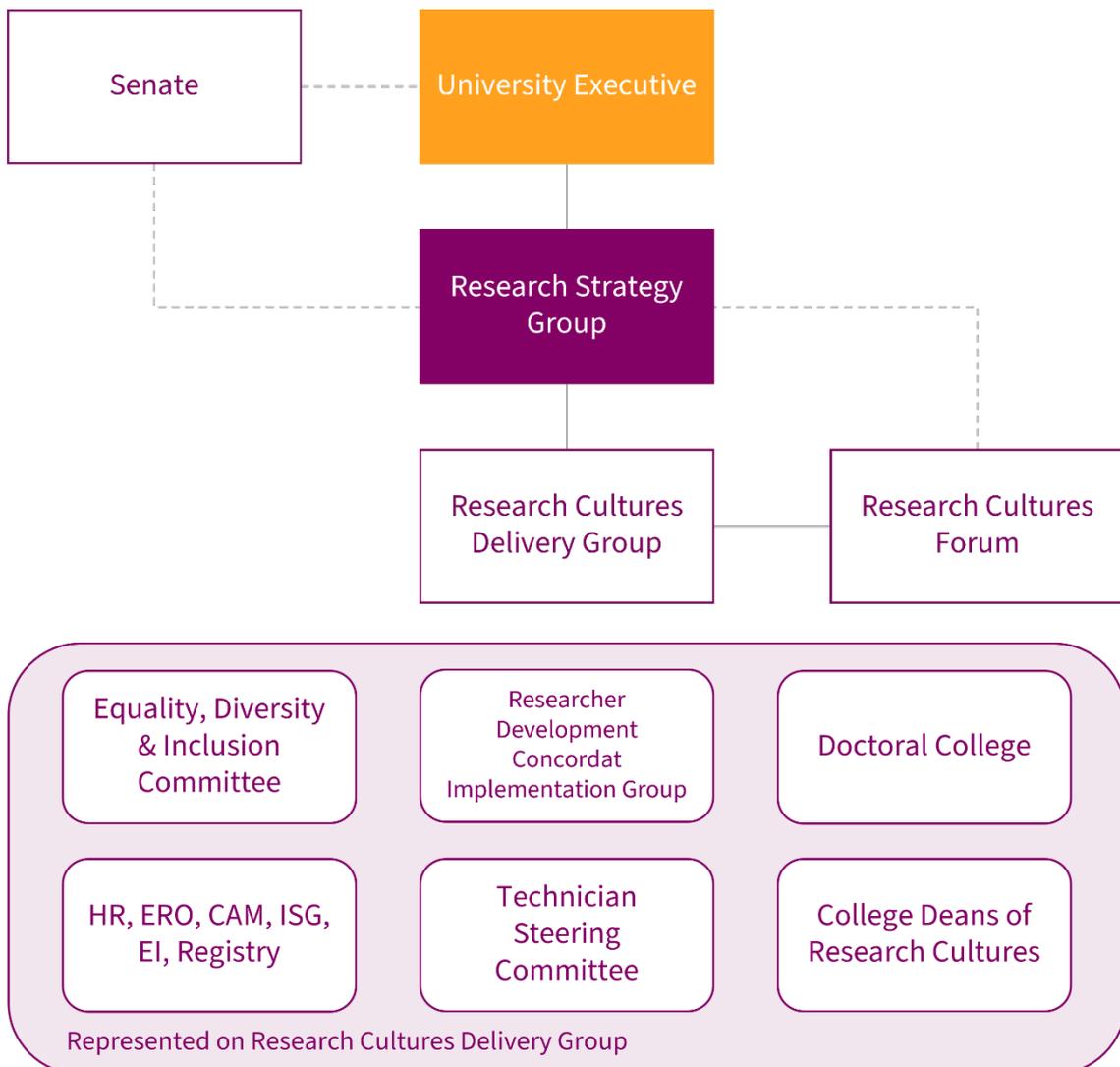
Progress, Transparency & Accountability

As demonstrated by our CoARA action plan and Action Plan Progress Report 2023-25, it is not only the actions undertaken in this plan that improve our research cultures. Actions undertaken as part of ED&I action plans, HR policies, and the normal business of reflection and review within departments and Schools contribute significantly. Maintaining activity that supports good organisational culture and taking decisions with positive working cultures in mind is everyone’s responsibility.

Governance Structure

Our Research Cultures Action Plan will be monitored by our Research Cultures Delivery Group on behalf of the Research Strategy Group. Those delivering actions will be accountable to the Vice-Principal for Research & Innovation, supported by advice from our research community through the Research Cultures Forum.

- [Research Cultures Delivery Group | Committee Site](#)
- [Research Cultures Forum | Committee Site](#)



Evaluation

Positive research cultures can reduce the space for poor behaviour and practice, they should also provide routes for recovery and redress if things do go wrong, however they cannot prevent or protect us from all negative experiences. We will use a variety of methods to understand the efficacy of our actions in improving our research cultures, while bearing in mind that our organisational cultures can be swayed significantly by external factors beyond our control.

We will continue to use national and institutional surveys to gauge the overall perceptions of our research culture by different staff and student groups. We will use reviews, evaluations, feedback and engagement data to understand if resources, policies and training resources are achieving their aims.

Transparency

We will continue to be transparent about the actions undertaken, and their progress, as part of this plan by sharing our Research Cultures Action Plan progress tracker on our Research Cultures SharePoint site.

- [Progress on our Research Cultures Action Plan | Research Cultures SharePoint](#) [login required]

Action Table

Action Number	Year	Action	Aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Success Measures	Responsibility
Recognition & Career Development							
1.1	2026-27	We will review our P&DR process to incorporate citizenship & collegiality, our innovation pathway, and responsible assessment and use of metrics.	To allow P&DR discussions to better reflect updated grade profiles and academic promotion route	Updated P&DR guidance and forms Updated training for managers including an approach to responsible research assessment	Citizenship and collegiality is discussed as part of annual review, not just at recruitment or promotion Our innovation pathway is supported through annual review discussions	Increased understanding of and engagement in collegial activity Increased understanding of, and engagement in innovation activity	HR, Colleges
1.2	2026-27	We will add responsible research assessment and use of metrics into recruitment training and processes.	To increase understanding of and engagement with responsible assessment principles and practice Secure resource to evaluate the embedding of responsible research assessment practice	Updated recruitment guidance and forms Updated training for recruiters including an approach to responsible research assessment	Responsible research assessment is the norm for staff recruitment An evaluation of the adoption of responsible research assessment	Responsible research assessment is covered in recruitment training and included in recruitment processes An evaluation identifies the increase in adoption of responsible research assessment processes	HR, Colleges, Schools
1.3	2027-30	We will pilot the pooling of research staff in two research areas.	To test the design, implementation and resource implications of pooling research staff to enable employment on longer term or open ended contracts as a route to reduce precarity	Two pilot programmes to test pooling of research staff in 1) a School 2) a cross-School research area. Evaluation of the two pilot programmes	If successful, recommendations for design and operation of a research staff pool.	Undertaking a pilot of a research staff pool Understanding of benefits and drawbacks a research staff pooling approach	RSG, Colleges, Schools, HR
1.4	2027-30	We will share good practice and encourage uptake of the design and operation of a route to Open Ended Contracts for those holding substantive Fellowship awards.	To reduce precarity by sharing approaches across Schools for routes for those with substantial fellowships awards to progress on to Open Ended Contracts	Schools identify fellowships that are considered substantive in their area. Clear and transparent expectations and processes, tailored to Schools/Colleges for fellowship holders to progress to Open Ended contracts.	Increase in applicants for fellowships choosing to host their bid at UoE. Increase in retention rate of those that are awarded substantive fellowships. Reduction in feeling of precarity amongst those holding substantive fellowships.	An increase in number of Schools, from 2024, operating a clear and transparent route for fellowship holders to progress to Open Ended contract. Improved scores in Research Cultures precarity questions for those at early career stage.	RSG, Colleges, Schools, HR
1.5	2027-28	We will identify actions and timescales to take forward recommendations from the Narrative CV Working Group	To explore the feasibility and benefit of employing narrative CV formats for academic recruitment To investigate routes to encourage and recognise a broader range of contributions to research	An action plan to take forward recommendations from the Narrative CV Working Group	Routes to test benefits and drawbacks of using narrative CV formats in staff and research student recruitment	Understanding of benefits and drawbacks of narrative CV approach across recruitment	TBC – various, likely HR, Colleges, Schools, ERO

<p>1.6</p> <p>Researcher Development Concordat Action</p>	<p>2026-27</p>	<p>We will develop a Narrative CV support framework to allow Schools/Colleges/Research staff Societies/Researcher Champions to access materials and training to support the development of narrative CVs locally, as well as centrally supported by ERO</p>	<p>To provide further information and updates on policy and good practice in narrative CV</p> <p>To support local staff to access materials and run training that supports staff to develop narrative CVs</p>	<p>Train the trainer resources for Narrative CV development sessions</p> <p>Online resources providing updates and examples</p>	<p>Increased understanding of Narrative CVs in research staff and local areas</p> <p>Increase in number of researchers preparing Narrative CVs</p> <p>Improved success rates for applications by underrepresented groups</p>	<p>Number of local events run</p> <p>Number of attendees at local events</p> <p>Engagement with online resources</p>	<p>ERO</p>
<p>1.7</p> <p>CoARA Action</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>Continue to work with Pure to encourage the integration of the CRediT taxonomy into the system</p>	<p>To allow the easy and embedded recognition of a wide variety of contributions to research via our University RIS system</p>	<p>Incorporating CRediT taxonomy is specified in the Pure development pathway</p>	<p>There is a clear timetable from Pure to incorporate the CRediT taxonomy into the Pure system</p>	<p>A target date for incorporation of the CRediT in our Pure system is confirmed</p>	<p>Library, Head of Research Cultures</p>
<p>1.8</p>	<p>2026-27</p>	<p>We will embed and utilise positive action in recruitment processes and practices to address underrepresentation in our staff profile</p>	<p>To embed positive action in recruitment where a need is identified</p> <p>To support Schools or Research Groups to increase the diversity of their recruitment</p>	<p>Positive action process</p> <p>Updated diversifying recruitment policies and guidance</p> <p>Tailored briefing/training sessions</p>	<p>Awareness of and understanding of when to positive action in recruitment could be used</p> <p>Use of positive action in research and research & teaching positions where a need is identified</p>	<p>Improvement in underrepresentation in identified areas</p>	<p>HR, Schools, Colleges, Research Leaders</p>
<p>1.9</p> <p>Researcher Development Concordat Action</p>	<p>2027-29</p>	<p>We will increase our understanding of the different and diverse career options for our research staff</p>	<p>To support staff and PGR students to understand the broad range of the career options available to them</p>	<p>Scoping report on options for collecting destination data for research staff leaving the university</p> <p>If feasible, routes for collecting and analysing destination data</p>	<p>To create a data set of research staff destinations to inform our career development support to researchers and our engagement with employers</p> <p>To increase awareness of different and diverse career options for our research staff</p>	<p>Publication of scoping report</p> <p>Destination data is collected and analysed</p> <p>Insights from analysis informs our career support and employer engagement</p>	<p>ERO, Careers Service, Concordat Implementation Group</p>
<p>1.10</p>	<p>2026-27</p>	<p>Scope a cross university induction offer for research related Professional Services staff</p>	<p>To understand if there is an interest in a cross-university induction resource</p> <p>To provide information on key aspects of the research ecosystem and UoE processes</p> <p>To network, connect and learn across Colleges, Schools and Services</p>	<p>Scoping document to determine interest and need</p> <p>Suggested topics, speakers and schedule</p>	<p>To provide a baseline understanding for all research professional service staff of key areas of the research ecosystem and associated UoE approach and processes</p>	<p>Decision on whether to develop an induction</p> <p>If supported, development of an induction offer</p> <p>Attendance or engagement by participants and provision of sessions/resources by Research Professional Services staff.</p>	<p>Research Support Operational Executive, HR</p>

1.11	2027-28	We will scope a Research Professional Services Committee	To understand whether there is interest in a Research Professional Services committee, similar to the Technician Steering Committee To provide focus and energy to develop research Professional Service staff related actions, activities and resources	Scoping report to determine interest and remit Terms of reference, membership and articulation with other university committees	To provide a mechanism to organise and share practice across the university To deliver activities to support skill and career development of research professional service staff	Decision on whether to develop a committee If supported, development of terms of reference Call for members issued and applications received	Research Support Operational Executive
1.12	2026	We will develop a Community of Practice (CoP) for Professional Services staff involved in the management and delivery of externally funded projects	To provide a space to network and share practice across externally funded research delivery roles	Scoping of CoP to determine interest and remit Terms of reference, membership, and initiation of regular meetings/interactions	To provide a mechanism to organise and share practice across the university To deliver activities to support skill and career development of research professional service staff employed to manage externally funded projects	Call for members issued and applications received Spread of Colleges, Schools and disciplines represented and actively engaging with the CoP	Research Support Operational Executive
1.13	2027	We will understand the use of hybrid job roles (where a role is considered to have both academic and professional service aspects) across the University, and how staff in these roles engage with processes and policies	To understand the job types that are most likely to consider themselves hybrid To understand how these job roles develop, and how individuals in these roles interact with our policies and processes	Hybrid role mapping data and analysis	Improved understanding of roles that are considered, or consider themselves to be hybrid	Understanding of which job families are most likely to develop hybrid roles Understanding of number of staff who consider themselves to have hybrid roles Clear routes through processes for staff with hybrid roles	HR, Technician Steering Committee, Research Support Operations Executive
1.14	2026-27	We will explore the feasibility of establishing a technical career pathway for the University	To understand our technical workforce and, if feasible/desired, develop clear and consistent approach to progression for this staff group	Technical workforce mapping data Job description and naming convention mapping, and suggested routes to standardisation	Improved staff experience and succession planning for technical staff and facilities Improved talent attraction and retention To meet our Equality Outcomes	Feasibility report published with recommendations Technical workforce mapping data created Improved staff survey scores from technical staff on survey questions related to career prospects	Technician Steering Committee, HR
1.15	2027	We will identify and support those who line manage technical staff	To understand the roles, experiences and job families of those who line manage our technical services staff, in order to provide them with the information and skills to undertake their role	Technical workforce mapping data Briefing, information and resources to allow non-technical staff managers to support their technical staff	Improved line management support and advice to our technical staff, no matter the career experiences of their manager Improved retention and progression Improved use of policies Improved workload management	Technical workforce mapping data created Information and resources for managers of technical staff created	Technician Steering Committee, HR

Priority Action
Technician Commitment Action Plan

<p>1.16</p> <p>Priority Action</p>	<p>2026-28</p>	<p>We will work to implement the recommendations of our Review of Race & History through the Review Response Group</p>	<p>To continue to examine and address our institutional history and organisational culture</p> <p>To address the under-representation of Black students and staff at our university</p>	<p>Projects, reports, recommendations and actions from various committees and commissioned projects</p>	<p>Further information about our own institutional history with race</p> <p>Actions taken to improve our racial climate</p> <p>Actions taken to increase the number of Black staff and students</p> <p>Response Group actions agreed and progressed</p>	<p>Improved responses in staff and student surveys from minoritized staff and students</p> <p>New projects and reports sharing information on our history & race</p>	<p>ED&I Lead, University Executive, various - TBC</p>
<p>1.17</p>	<p>2025-26</p>	<p>We will encourage PGR managers and administrators to join the Research Support Staff Conference organising group, and suggest sessions</p>	<p>Increase participation of PGR support staff in Research Support Services Conference through increase in relevant content</p>	<p>Presentations and working groups relevant to PGR support staff</p>	<p>Route to share good practice and policies for PGR support</p> <p>PGR support staff more fully engaged in wider research support community</p> <p>PGR support staff better networked across Schools and Colleges</p>	<p>Increased attendance from PGR support staff</p> <p>Increased number of sessions led by or for PGR support staff</p>	<p>Research Support Operational Executive, Doctoral College, Colleges</p>
<p>1.18</p> <p>CoARA Action</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>Our REF 2029 reviewer training will include CoARA aligned information on responsible research assessment and assessment of diverse research outputs</p>	<p>To increase understanding and engagement with responsible assessment principles when building our submissions, to value non-journal research outputs</p>	<p>Responsible assessment and use of metrics guidance and training for those engaged in preparing our REF 2029 submissions</p> <p>Assessing and valuing diverse research outputs guidance and training</p>	<p>Broader community engaging with responsible assessment training through exposure as part of REF 2029 preparation</p>	<p>Increased awareness of responsible assessment approaches</p> <p>Increased awareness of opportunities to include non-traditional outputs in our REF submission</p>	<p>Head of REF, Head of Research Cultures</p>
<p>1.19</p> <p>Continuing Activity</p>	<p>2025-28</p>	<p>We will continue to highlight the diverse experiences and contributions of our research community through our internal and external communications</p>	<p>To increase the diversity of research related communication</p>	<p>Communications highlighting the diverse experiences, skills and contributions of our whole research community</p>	<p>News articles, blogs, newsletter content and other communication assets</p>	<p>Number of articles and assets highlighting underrepresented and/or underacknowledged groups from our research community</p>	<p>CAM, University EDI Lead, EDIC, Colleges, Schools</p>
<p>1.20</p>	<p>2026-27</p>	<p>We will review and adapt our research leadership training</p>	<p>To increase the relevance of our training programme, and review the support to those interested in moving into research leadership roles</p>	<p>A refreshed research leadership training scope and evaluation plan</p> <p>An external tender to supply the training</p> <p>The appointment of a delivery partner and delivered training</p>	<p>A development programme relevant to the needs of our aspiring research leaders</p> <p>A cohort with the skills to move into research leadership</p> <p>A plan for continuous improvement and evaluation of the development offer</p>	<p>Increase in number of participants in a programme aimed at supporting aspiring research leaders</p> <p>Colleagues that haven't held leadership positions previously applying for research leadership roles, and being successful</p>	<p>ERO</p>

1.21 Continuing Activity	2026-28	Continue to support, and increase awareness of Post-doc Appreciation Week	To engage in discussion and learning on topics important to our Research Staff and Post-doc community	Agenda of events and sessions Openly available information and resources where appropriate	Increased networking between research staff Increased understanding of issues faced by research staff from a range of backgrounds, by the wider research community Increased demonstration of appreciation of the research staff from the wider research community	Increase in number and spread of events during Post-doc appreciation Week Increase in attendance at events overall, and increase in School diversity of attendees Attendance from Academic Faculty at sessions and online/in person appreciation for research staff and post-docs	Research Staff Societies , Research Staff Champions ERO, Colleges
1.22 Continuing Activity	2026-28	Continue to support an annual Technician Week	To engage in discussion and learning on topics important to our Technician community	Schedule of events attended by UoE, UK and international attendees	Increased networking between technicians Sharing of good practice and areas of development Increased understanding of issues faced by technicians from a range of backgrounds, by the wider research community	Increase in attendance at events overall, and increase in School/Service diversity of attendees Attendance from non-technical staff e.g. HR, School/College leadership and Academic Faculty	Technician Steering Committee
1.23 Continuing Activity	2026-28	Continue to support a Research Support Services Conference	To engage in discussion and learning on topics important to our Research Enabling Staff community	Regularly scheduled event(s) attended by UoE colleagues across Research Enabling Staff roles	Increased networking between research enabling staff Sharing of good practice and areas of development Increased understanding of issues faced by research enabling staff from a range of backgrounds, by the wider research community	Conference event continues to be held annually Resources and slides can be shared and accessed beyond those attending in person	ERO, Colleges

Action Number	Year	Action	Aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Success Measures	Responsibility
Engagement & Good Practice							
2.1	2026-28	We will increase awareness of our recognition campaigns and awards	To increase recognition for all those undertaking and supporting research, and our research culture	Diverse case studies and examples of activity to support a positive research culture and/or improve research cultures	Increased understanding of activity that could be taken locally or personally to improve research cultures Gratitude expressed publicly to those that support positive cultures or improve our research cultures	Increase in nominations for Good Research Practice Week Recognition Awards Increase in nominations for Seek, Find, Celebrate Increase in nominations and awards across recognition campaigns and awards for research culture improvement activity	Head of Research Cultures , College and Service Group Management, ERO, Technicians Steering Committee
2.2	2027-28	We will disseminate and embed the learning from InFrame and its Culture Catalyst Projects	To support the improvement of policies, procedures and practice in light of evidence provided by InFrame and its subprojects	Resource library of InFrame operating procedures and project outputs Project teams are connected with stakeholders who can act on findings of projects	Policies, procedures and practice is improved by embedding outputs of InFrame and the catalyst projects	InFrame outputs are disseminated Groups/Schools/Services act on project findings to improve research cultures	InFrame Project Lead , Head of Research Cultures, Catalyst Project Leads (including ERO, EI, Library, Doctoral College, Colleges, Schools, Technician Steering Committee)
2.3	2027-28	We will disseminate and embed the learning from our CoARA Boost Project	To support the improvement of researcher assessment policies, procedures and practice in light of evidence provided by our CoARA Boost Project	Resources sharing good practice and implementation advice	Good practice from the project is shared across Schools	Schools outwith the project original partnership adopt the suggested practice	CoARA Boost Project Lead , Head of Research Cultures, Library Open Research Team
2.4	2026-29	We will refresh our research cultures priorities tailored to each of our three Colleges	To continue to reflect on disciplinary or organisational differences in our research cultures and identify specific areas for development To define and commit to actions/priorities tailored to each specific College's needs	A College Research Cultures Plan/Priorities for each of our three Colleges	Tailored Research Cultures activities that take into account the different issues across disciplines, and the progress and gaps in each of our Colleges, aligned with University strategies and commitments, including ED&I Increased understanding and engagement, improved systems, processes and policies in each College (as appropriate)	Publication of College Research Cultures Plans/Priorities Regular progress updates on these plans report to Research Strategy Group and shared within the College	College Deans of Research Cultures
2.5	2026-28	We will continue to share research cultures activities in Schools via our Research Cultures Catalogues and via our REF 2029 preparations	To continue to share good practice in research culture related activity	Increased number of entries in the catalogues Cross school discussions of actions and activities	Areas of good practice shared and implemented in other Schools	Increase in variety of activity included in, and variety of contributors to, the Research Cultures Catalogues.	Colleges

2.6	2026-28	We will continue to support an annual Good Research Practice Event. Our 2026 event will be in collaboration with other Scottish Universities	To continue to develop and share good research practice	Increased participation from academic staff Cross school, college and university discussion of approaches and methods	Good research practice methodology shared and implemented in other Schools and Universities	Increase in variety of session available and attended by UoE staff and PGR students Increase in participation by academic staff and PGR students Increase in nominations for Good Research Practice Week recognition awards	ERO , Colleges, Schools
Continuing Activity							
2.7	2026-28	We will utilise REF 2029 preparations to engage School leadership in reflection and action on their local research cultures priorities.	To engage local leadership in reflection on the research culture they are responsible for To support local leadership to take actions to address identified priorities.	Increased contributions to research cultures catalogues	Increased activity to improve research cultures in Schools	Maintain strong scores in the new People, Culture & Environment section in REF 2029	Schools , Colleges, Head of REF, Head of Research Cultures
2.8	2026-27	We will consolidate the learning and development offer to deliver a clear package of support for those holding organisational management positions	To better support those taking up an organisational management position	Organisational management role induction and handover process.	Identification of academic and professional services roles that should be supported by this induction Increased consistency across Schools in organisational management approaches, application of policies, responsibility and accountability. Increased understanding and awareness of these roles, their responsibilities, accountabilities and constraints.	Launch of training package and registrations to attend Increased number and diversity of candidate pool for organisational management positions	HR , Colleges
2.9	2025-26	We will develop a training and support package to embed positive research cultures in research bids and projects	To better support the embedding of positive research cultures in funded research projects	Regular overview sessions and workshops for those developing bids Online resources and toolkits	Increased understanding and awareness of research cultures activity in academic population Embedding of good practice in research teams	Maintain or increase success rate with funders/funding schemes where research cultures activity is an essential criterion Increased pool of successful applicants to share their approach and experience of embedding research cultures in their funded project	ERO , Head of Research Cultures
2.10	2025-27	We will partner with and support the development of the UKRI Research Culture Good Practice Exchange	To share and learn from good practice across the UK	Shared open access resources from UoE Learning from other UK Institutions	Working across the UK to improve research cultures collaboratively, rather than competitively	Number of resources / case studies we share Event attendance by UoE staff/PGR students Resources from other Universities used when developing our approaches	Head of Research Cultures

<p>2.11</p> <p>CoARA Action</p> <p>Continuing Activity</p>	<p>2026-28</p>	<p>We will continue to engage with Research on Research (RoR) projects, and network and connect across the UK and internationally to share and learn from good practice</p>	<p>Learn from, contribute to and support research on research projects relevant to our research cultures priorities</p>	<p>Connections with RoR projects, engagement in their research and access to their outputs</p>	<p>Access to larger pool of evidence to support adoption and implementation of research culture initiatives</p> <p>Influencing and engaging beyond UoE to improve research cultures</p>	<p>New partnerships, participation and connections with RoR activity</p> <p>Adoption or adaption of RoR project outputs</p>	<p>Head of Research Cultures, Deans of Research Cultures</p>
<p>2.12</p> <p>Researcher Development Concordat Action</p>	<p>2026-27</p>	<p>We will build on our PI training offer to support local areas to deliver tailored information.</p>	<p>To support the development of tailored local support for PIs and Research leaders.</p>	<p>Online training resources outlining Researcher Development Concordat responsibilities</p> <p>Guidance and resources to support local units to implement good practice and induction for PIs</p>	<p>Research leaders and managers understand their responsibilities and implement good practice.</p> <p>PIs are aware of local expectations and processes associated with this</p>	<p>Local resources developed</p> <p>PIs attending or participating in local induction/training/briefing</p>	<p>ERO</p>
<p>2.13</p> <p>Continuing Activity</p>	<p>2026-28</p>	<p>Continue to hold Research Cultures Forum meetings that are open to the whole University community</p>	<p>To share updates, progress and engage in discussion in an open manner with the University research community</p>	<p>Regularly scheduled meetings that can be attended by any staff and students at the University</p>	<p>Increased engagement and awareness of the research cultures policy agenda and action being undertaken at UoE</p> <p>A route to access insight and feedback from across the research community</p>	<p>Increase in attendees at Forum open meetings</p>	<p>Co-Chairs of Research Cultures Forum</p>
<p>2.14</p> <p>Continuing Activity</p>	<p>2026-28</p>	<p>We will continue to hold an annual Impact Festival including a celebration event awarding Research Impact Prizes</p>	<p>To celebrate, inspire, reward and share good practice in research engagement, innovation and impact</p>	<p>Annual programme of events</p> <p>Impact prizes across a variety of categories</p>	<p>Enhanced visibility and recognition of engagement, innovation and impact</p> <p>Sharing and learning from good practice inspiring and encouraging colleagues to think about their own research impact</p>	<p>Maintenance of participation levels across the whole research community and variety of roles</p> <p>Participation from across research disciplines</p>	<p>ERO, EI, CAM, Colleges, Schools</p>

Action Number	Year	Action	Aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Success Measures	Responsibility
Open & Responsible Research							
3.1	2026	We will embed Responsible Research & Innovation in our Engage innovation and commercialisation training	All staff and students undertaking commercialisation training are aware of Responsible Research & Innovation approaches and considerations	Responsible Research & Innovation module as part of EI Engage training	Increased awareness in research community of the meaning, and practice of Responsible Research & Innovation	Development of Responsible Research & Innovation module Number attendees undertaking Engage training including new Responsible Research & Innovation module	Edinburgh Innovations
3.2	2026-27	We will provide responsible research and innovation training to EI business development staff	All staff supporting commercialisation are aware of Responsible Research & Innovation approaches and considerations	Training for EI staff	Increased awareness in EI of the meaning, and practice of Responsible Research & Innovation	Development of Responsible Research & Innovation training Percentage of EI staff that have undertaken Responsible Research & Innovation training	Edinburgh Innovations
3.3	2027-28	We will review and update our Behaviours Charter	To refresh and re-communicate our values and expectations of behaviour in how we do our work and interact while at work.	Refreshed Behaviours Charter Communications plan and associated resources for new Charter Embedding of values and behaviours charter in relevant policies, processes and induction	Consistent expectations across the organisation of how we work as well as what we do. Increased awareness of the university's expectations of behaviour of staff and students	Increased staff and student awareness of the Behaviour's Charter Improved staff survey scores survey on questions related to bullying, harassment and discrimination	HR, All Schools, Colleges & Departments
3.4	2027-28	We will review and update our Dignity & Respect Policy	To refresh and re-communicate our values and expectations of behaviour in how we do our work, how we interact while at work, what behaviour is unacceptable and the process for addressing unacceptable behaviour.	Refreshed Dignity & Respect policy and processes Communications plan and associated resources for new policy and processes New policy embedded in relevant communications, activities and induction materials.	Consistent expectations across the organisation of how we work as well as what we do. Increased awareness of the university's expectations of behaviour of staff and students A clear and effective process to address bullying and harassing behaviour.	Increased staff and student awareness of the Dignity & Respect policy Upward trend in engagement with Report + Support.	HR, All Schools, Colleges & Departments
3.5 Priority Action	2026-28	We will analyse the data from our Report + Support platform to identify areas that may require additional support or intervention	To understand and address working, teaching and research practices that have prompted multiple/linked report + support submissions from a school, department or team	Report + Support submission analysis	Investigating the causes of submission to Report + Support through environmental assessments and other tools Targeted interventions to address poor working cultures and behaviours	Improved scores in staff surveys for questions concerning confidence to report issues Improved scores in staff surveys for questions concerning addressing poor behaviour	HR, Colleges, Schools

<p>3.6</p> <p>Framework to Support Wellbeing Activity</p>	<p>2026-27</p>	<p>Support the rollout of the Framework to Support Wellbeing Activity (including arrangements for Managing Stress) to support staff, line managers and organisational managers understand their responsibilities to manage work related stress.</p>	<p>To support line managers, Schools and Colleges to prevent and manage stress in their staff</p> <p>To support staff in recognising and managing stress</p>	<p>Stress Risk Assessment documents and processes</p> <p>Skills development resources for staff, managers and departments in preventing and managing stress</p>	<p>Meeting our legal obligations to prevent and manage workplace stress</p> <p>Better understanding of the drivers of stress and routes to manage it through job descriptions, workload management and time allocation.</p> <p>Reduction in the levels of workplace stress related to research in the university</p>	<p>Reduced reporting of stress or overwhelm in staff and PGR student surveys</p> <p>Increased use of Stress Risk Assessments throughout the university</p>	<p>Health, Safety & Wellbeing, All Schools, Colleges & Departments</p>
<p>3.7</p> <p>Priority Action</p>	<p>2025-27</p>	<p>Implement a university wide ethics workflow and record management system</p>	<p>To consistently manage and record ethical decisions on research projects across the university</p>	<p>An ethics record management system used across the university</p> <p>Guidance and training to support the use of the new system</p>	<p>Increased consistency in ethical review processes across the university</p> <p>Improved record keeping and analysis of ethical review and decision making</p>	<p>System is implemented across the University.</p> <p>System is used as the basis for ethics record keeping in all Schools</p> <p>Number of ethics reviewers, committee members and ethics process managers undertaking system training</p>	<p>ERO, Strategic Change</p>
<p>3.8</p>	<p>2026-27</p>	<p>We will scope training for ethics reviewers and ethics committee members and propose a training framework</p>	<p>To review training available to ethics reviewers and ethics committee members.</p> <p>To agree a University wide training framework</p>	<p>Review of existing ethics reviewer and committee member training and guidance</p> <p>Training framework for ethics reviewers and ethics committee members</p>	<p>Additional support for reviewers, understanding and practice of ethical research, the role of ethics approval, ethics reviewers and ethics committee members</p>	<p>Development of ethics reviewer and committee member training framework</p> <p>Percentage of ethics reviewers and committee members that have undertaken the training</p>	<p>ERO, Colleges</p>
<p>3.9</p>	<p>2026-27</p>	<p>We will map and review existing ethics and integrity related policies and guidance, including those related to emerging areas</p>	<p>To understand the current local, College and university policy and guidance landscape in ethics and integrity.</p> <p>To identify good practice that can be shared across the university</p>	<p>Overview of policy and guidance landscape, with good practice identified</p>	<p>Understanding of current policy and guidance available</p> <p>Promotion and wider adoption of identified good practice</p> <p>Increased co-ordination and consistency of approach across the University</p>	<p>Production of policy and guidance landscape report</p> <p>Good practice is shared and adopted beyond originator</p>	<p>ERO, Colleges, Schools</p>
<p>3.10</p>	<p>2026-28</p>	<p>We will take actions including in communication, training, policies, processes and continuous improvement in respect of approaches to research security</p>	<p>To implement and operationalise the Trusted Research Evaluation Framework status of Intermediate</p>	<p>An action plan against priority areas, including due diligence processes, communications, training and cybersecurity.</p> <p>Delivery of a communications and training plan.</p> <p>Cont.</p>	<p>Proportionate and measured approach to risk management.</p> <p>Support researchers, schools and colleges to undertake research in a rigorous and secure manner, that complies with UK and other relevant research security requirements.</p>	<p>Production of action plans for 25-26 and 26-27.</p> <p>Production of communication, training and education resources</p> <p>Revised policy and reviewed processes to support research and researchers.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Trusted Research Evaluation Framework Task & Finish Group (I-TREF)</p>

Review of due diligence processes and risk management.

Review and evaluation of progress against action plan.

<p>3.11</p> <p>Open Research Roadmap</p>	<p>2026-27</p>	<p>We will update and consolidate information on UoE specific materials on Open Research approaches and tools</p>	<p>To provide more information on the routes available to support high quality open research practices at UoE</p>	<p>Open Research at UoE information, development and training materials</p> <p>Updated Open Research webpages, materials, policies and processes</p>	<p>Support Schools and Colleges to encourage the increase of OR practices utilising appropriate UoE processes and systems</p>	<p>Increase in number of people undertaking training and accessing resources</p> <p>Spread of Schools and disciplines represented in those that undertake training or access resources</p> <p>Increase in Open non-journal deposits in Pure.</p>	<p>Library Research Services, UKRN Institutional Leads</p> <p>Colleges, Schools</p>
<p>3.12</p> <p>Open Research Roadmap</p>	<p>2027-28</p>	<p>We will develop a framework describing Open Research competencies across career stages and job roles</p>	<p>To support staff and PGR students to self-assess their open research awareness, and training needs</p> <p>To increase awareness of skills and methods that support open research practices</p>	<p>Review of existing external competency frameworks</p> <p>Report of consultation with staff and PGR students on framework development</p> <p>Open Research Competency Framework</p>	<p>Increased understanding by individuals and teams of their existing open research skills and areas for development</p>	<p>Production of Open Research Competency Framework</p> <p>Increased engagement in training and uptake of Open Research practices</p>	<p>Library Research Services, Colleges</p>
<p>3.13</p> <p>Open Research Roadmap</p>	<p>2027-28</p>	<p>We will develop training and resources for staff who are (or who may become) data scientists or data stewards</p>	<p>To provide advanced training in data science and data stewardship to those undertaking these activities</p> <p>To continue to invest in and promote professionalisation of data science and data stewardship roles</p>	<p>Training resources and materials</p> <p>Scoping report for potential data stewardship qualification programme</p>	<p>Increase data stewardship skills for those holding relevant roles</p> <p>If feasible, qualification offering in data stewardship/data science including course materials and mentorship programme</p>	<p>Production of training resource and materials</p> <p>If qualification is approved, enrolments and awards from this qualification</p>	<p>Library Research Services, Colleges</p>
<p>3.14</p> <p>Continuing Activity</p>	<p>2026-28</p>	<p>Continue to support an annual Open Research Conference</p>	<p>To share updates, progress and engage in discussion and learning on Open Research topics</p>	<p>An annual conference event attended by UoE colleagues, UK and international attendees</p>	<p>Sharing good practice in Open Research approaches</p> <p>Influencing internally, nationally and internationally in Open Research</p> <p>Identifying and discussing barriers and opportunities in Open Research</p>	<p>Increased attendance from UoE academic faculty</p> <p>Maintenance of previous attendance levels, including attendance by national and international attendees</p>	<p>Library Research Services</p>
<p>3.15</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>We will build on and expand our local network of UKRN Open Research Programme (ORP) trained people.</p>	<p>To accelerate the uptake of high-quality open research practices by upskilling local champions.</p>	<p>Identify contacts to amplify UKRN ORP training</p>	<p>A group of individuals with the skills and tools to support the uptake of OR practices</p>	<p>Number of people undertaking “Train the trainer” sessions</p>	<p>UKRN Institutional Leads, Library Research Services, Colleges, Schools</p>

Support local contacts to disseminate good practice and provide relevant OR advice to their School/discipline.

High quality locally available and tailored advice provided to staff and research students.

Spread of Schools and disciplines represented in those that undertake training

Increase in Open non-journal deposits in Pure.

<p>3.16</p> <p>Continuing Activity</p>	<p>2026-28</p>	<p>We will continue to develop the Participatory Research Network and Participatory Research Resource Library</p>	<p>To build a community of practice and practical support for researchers to engage the public throughout the research lifecycle through participatory approaches, co-design or citizen science</p>	<p>Regular meetings and active teams channel</p> <p>Programme of events</p> <p>Development of an online resource library</p>	<p>Colleagues are better supported to include and collaborate with publics throughout the research lifecycle in an ethical, respectful and mutually beneficial way</p>	<p>Increase number of members of the network</p> <p>Colleagues actively contributing to develop events, resources and build the community</p>	<p>Library, ERO</p>
<p>3.17</p>	<p>2027</p>	<p>We will undertake an audit of PGR programmes to share good practice across our portfolio and establish a baseline offer to all research students</p>	<p>To gather and share good practice in – ED&I approaches in recruitment and supervision, - skills training, - access to experiential learning and flexible study</p>	<p>Good practice audit report shared with PGR teams</p> <p>Agreed baseline PGR offer</p>	<p>Increased awareness and implementation of good practice in recruitment and supervision across the portfolio</p> <p>Increased consistency in PGR experience across portfolio</p>	<p>Number of good practice examples adopted outside of originating School/programme</p> <p>Improved PRES responses on student experience</p>	<p>Doctoral College</p>
<p>3.18</p>	<p>2027-28</p>	<p>We will review our supervisor training, support and associated policies and processes</p>	<p>To better support good supervisory practice across our PGR portfolio</p>	<p>Refreshed mandatory supervisor training modules</p> <p>Refreshed policies and processes for PGR student complaints regarding supervisory practice</p> <p>Online resources and toolkits</p> <p>Community of practice for PGR supervisors</p>	<p>Improved standard of supervisory practice across the university</p> <p>Improved student experience for PGR students</p>	<p>Increased undertaking of UKCGE supervisor accreditation</p> <p>Reduction in PGR complaints regarding supervisory practice</p> <p>Improved PRES responses on student experience</p>	<p>Doctoral College, Registry</p>
<p>3.19</p> <p>Sustainability Framework Action</p> <p>Continuing Activity</p>	<p>2026-28</p>	<p>Continue to embed the Concordat for Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice</p>	<p>To embed policy, practice, data and reporting against the concordat into business as usual.</p> <p>Support staff and research students to embed sustainable practice in their research.</p> <p>Ensure labs secure sustainability accreditation</p>	<p>Training and development resources to support staff and research students in understanding how to reduce the environmental impact of research</p> <p>Development of options to, and understanding of feasibility of, increasing the equipment sharing across the University</p>	<p>Increased awareness of environmental sustainability as a part of responsible research practice.</p> <p>Staff and research students undertake training on sustainable research practice</p> <p>Inclusion of sustainable research practice in research policies, processes and procedures.</p>	<p>Increasing uptake year on year of training on sustainable research practice.</p> <p>Increased awareness of sustainability in research identifiable in research cultures survey questions.</p> <p>Implementation of equipment sharing processes, increased equipment sharing practice.</p>	<p>SRS, Colleges, Schools, Research Leaders</p>

3.20

Sustainability
Framework
Action

2026-
27

Rollout the School Sustainability Framework to support Schools in embedding environmental sustainability actions.

To allow Schools to understand and reduce the environmental impact of their research and innovation activity

Schools will develop a sustainability action plan tailored to their research and innovation activity.

Schools will provide regular progress updates against their plan

Better understanding of the sustainability impact of research and innovation activity, and an opportunity take action to reduce that impact

Reduced environmental impact of our research and innovation activity

Schools have a sustainability action plan that includes research and innovation activity

Progress against School action plans are delivered and reported, contributing to UoE sustainability targets.

SRS, School Management Teams

Action Number	Year	Action	Aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Success Measures	Responsibility
Data & Evaluation							
4.1	2026	We will review and update the research culture survey question set before the 2026 launch	To better capture the experiences of research enabling staff and SHAPE researchers To align with other relevant surveys e.g. Athena SWAN, UoE Staff Survey etc.	Establishment of a Research Cultures Survey Steering Group An updated question set A rubric to link new question set to previous set for continued comparison across years	Better understanding of the range of research culture experiences, and therefore opportunity to address currently unseen areas Maintain ability to compare to previous question set data	The 2026 survey is launched with an updated question set.	Research Cultures Survey Steering Group
4.2	2026-28	Continue to run a Research Cultures Survey every 2 years	To provide survey data to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of our progress on improving our research cultures	Survey deployed every 2 years Analysis of each deployment undertaken, reported and shared	Understanding of progress on improving research cultures Identification of issues or successes in particular staff groups or demographic groups	Increased proportion of staff and PGR students responding to survey Increased use of survey results across Colleges, Schools and departments	Research Cultures Survey Steering Group
4.3	2026-28	We will work to increase response rates in our UoE Staff Survey, PRES Survey and our PGR responses to GOS.	To improve the quality of the survey data sets	Dashboards and analysis of survey results	More robust understanding of the staff and PGR experience, and therefore opportunity to address unseen areas.	Increase in response rates for UoE Staff Survey and PGR PRES Surveys.	Colleges, Schools, Doctoral College, HR
4.4	2026-27	We will integrate HR data with our research proposal data to identify actionable insights to direct support to staff groups with lower submission or success rates.	To better understand the different, and differences, in submission and success rates across our populations To use the insights from this analysis to develop support or resources	Analysis of research proposal data by submitter characteristic Plan of action to address any issues identified in the analysis	Better understanding of the submission behaviour of our community Where issues are identified, actions taken lead to improvements in associated metrics/data	Integration of HR and research proposal data Publication of a report identifying trends and or areas for action Development of a plan to address any identified issues	ERO
4.5	2026-27	We will analyse quantitative and qualitative data to develop a set of Mid-Career Research (MCR) profiles to inform a tailored package of development opportunities	To better understand the different needs, behaviours and goals of MCRs To use these insights to develop an informed programme of support for this transitional career stage	High-level cross-institutional report setting out strategic approach to developing MCR talent New bespoke package of research funding development opportunities for MCRs	Better understanding of the diverse community of MCRs across the institution Improved development opportunity support that purposely target the MCR stage MCR are equipped with the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to succeed in career progression	Evaluation report is published and actions are taken to improve support for MCRs Launch of bespoke package of MCR development opportunities Engagement of MCR community with these new opportunities	ERO
4.6	2028	We will evaluate our PI training offer.	To understand if it is meeting its aims To update the offer if needed to maintain relevance	Evaluation report Actions stemming from report	PI training offer is regularly reviewed and updated PI training offer remains engaging and relevant to audience	Evaluation report is published and actions are taken to update offer Maintenance or increase in participation in offer	ERO

4.7	2028	We will evaluate our Ethics & Integrity training	To understand if it is meeting its aims To update the training, if needed, to maintain relevance	Evaluation report Actions stemming from report	Ethics & Integrity training is regularly reviewed and updated Ethics & Integrity training remains engaging and relevant to audience	Evaluation report is published and actions are taken to update training Maintenance or increase in participation in training	ERO
4.8	2027-28	We will run focus groups to evaluate our communication and implementation of responsible research assessment	To understand the perception and experience of research assessment processes in light of our CoARA commitments	Report from focus groups Actions stemming from report	We understand the efficacy of our communication and implementation of responsible research assessment processes	Focus groups are held and report published Action is taken in response to the report	Head of Research Cultures
4.9	2026	We will evaluate our Online Abuse SharePoint site.	To understand if it is meeting its aims To update the resource, if needed, to maintain relevance	Evaluation report Actions stemming from report	Online Abuse SharePoint is regularly reviewed and updated Online Abuse SharePoint remains engaging and relevant to audience	Evaluation report is published and actions are taken to update SharePoint content Maintenance or increase in engagement with resources	CAM
4.10	2027	We will evaluate our Research Communications training, Public Engagement Training and associated online resources	To understand if they are meeting their aims To update training and resources, if needed, to maintain relevance	Evaluation reports Actions stemming from reports	Communications training, Public Engagement training and online resources are regularly reviewed and updated Training and resources remain engaging and relevant to audience	Evaluation report is published and actions are taken to update our training and resources Maintenance or increase in engagement with training and resources	CAM, ERO
4.11	2027-28	We will evaluate Report + Support for staff	To understand if it is meeting its aims To identify actionable insights to inform targeting, support and resolution	Evaluation report Actions stemming from report	Report + Support is regularly reviewed and updated Report + Support remains useful and relevant to staff	Evaluation report is published and action plan is developed	HR

Glossary

CAM	Communications & Marketing, University of Edinburgh
CoARA	Coalition for the Advancement of Research Assessment
EDI	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
EDIC	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, University of Edinburgh
EI	Edinburgh Innovations, University of Edinburgh
EPSRC	Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council
ERO	Edinburgh Research Office, University of Edinburgh
EUSA	Edinburgh University Students' Association
GOS	Graduate Outcomes Survey
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Record
HR	Human Resources, University of Edinburgh
MRC	Medical Research Council
NCCPE	National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement
P&DR	Performance & Development Review
PI	Principal Investigator
PGR	Postgraduate Research(er)
PRES	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
RCDG	Research Cultures Delivery Group, University of Edinburgh
RCF	Research Cultures Forum, University of Edinburgh
RSG	Research Strategy Group, University of Edinburgh
SRS	Social Responsibility & Sustainability, University of Edinburgh
UKCGE	UK Council for Graduate Education
UoE	University of Edinburgh
VP	Vice Principal
VP R&I	Vice Principal for Research & Innovation, University of Edinburgh

Senate

4 March 2026

Communications from the University Court

Description of paper

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

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is invited to note the report.

Background and context

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

Discussion

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

Resource implications

5. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

Risk management

6. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

Equality and diversity

7. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

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

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

Author

Daniel Wedgwood
Governance & Court Services
January 2026

Freedom of Information

Open Paper

Appendix 1:

1 December 2025

1 Principal's Report

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

- There had been two announcements in the UK Government budget directly affecting English universities, the full implications of which for Scottish institutions were being examined. These were raising, over two years, caps on undergraduate tuition fee levels and a planned levy (subject to consultation) on international student fees.
- The freezing of National Insurance payment thresholds, also announced in the UK budget, would raise the University's staff costs.
- The Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Bill was progressing through Stage 2 scrutiny in the Scottish Parliament.
- The Scottish Funding Council had announced its conditions of grant for exceptional funding for the University of Dundee, following that institution's widely publicised financial difficulties.
- Professor Mark Parsons and colleagues had won significant new funding for AI Infrastructure, which related to the previous award to the University of the new UK national supercomputer.
- The University's Pleasance Gym had been named Education Facility of the Year at the National Fitness Awards.
- The University had won a Queen Elizabeth Prize for Education, in recognition of the Centre for Fire Safety Engineering's education, training and research.

2 Senate report

Court noted the report, including the confirmed minutes of the Senate meetings held on 24 April 2025 and 20 May 2025 and the confirmed e-Senate report of 27 August – 10 September 2025. In discussion, it was noted that it was hoped that improvements could be made to the tone and efficiency of Senate business and that there had been significant work on this since Senate's last effectiveness review.

3 Finance and Planning

Court received a full update on the University's financial position and discussed progress towards achieving the budget for 2025-26 and 2026-27, and associated risks. Court also received an update on student intakes.

Court approved the Annual Report & Accounts 2024/25.

4 Student Experience Update

Court received an update report on work to enhance the student experience and discussed the implications for the student experience of current work to reduce the University's costs. It was noted that improvements to the student experience remained a high priority and that this was factored into planning processes.

5 Annual People Report

Court received the Annual People Report. It was noted that this year's report aimed to strike a new balance between reporting operational policy detail and conveying positive developments. This new approach was commended.

6 Laigh Year Regulations

Court approved the proposed amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations, applicable to students seeking to take a year out of study to take up a position as a sabbatical officer in Edinburgh University Students' Association.

7 Resolutions

Court approved Resolutions to create two professorial chairs.

8 Other Items

Regular reports were received from the Students' Association, the Sports Union, the Development and Alumni Office and Court's committees. Court also received the Annual Health & Safety Report and a report on Court's annual internal effectiveness review. Court approved revised Senate Election Regulations and amendments to the Delegated Authority Schedule consequent on the disbandment of Knowledge Strategy Committee.

Senate

4 March 2026

Senate Standing Committees - Upcoming Business

Description of paper

1. This paper informs Senate of the main points of activity and business the Senate Standing Committees will consider between March and 22 May 2026.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is invited to note the upcoming business of the Senate standing committees.
3. Please note that this paper is not intended for discussion during the meeting as it provides an update for information.

Background and context

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

Discussion

5. A summary of the Standing Committee upcoming business paper is provided in Appendix 1. This summary is to inform Senate of the main points of activity and business the Senate Standing Committees will consider between March and 22 May 2026.

Resource implications

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

Risk management

7. This activity supports the university's obligations under the 2023 Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

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

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

10. Any comments raised by Senate will be reported to the Standing Committees at their next meeting.
11. Additionally, the Senate Committees' Newsletter is prepared after each round of Committee business and this will provide information on business undertaken by Senate and its Standing Committees to the wider University community.

Author

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Freedom of Information: Open

February 2026

Appendix 1: Senate Standing Committees: upcoming business March – 22 May 2026**Senate Education Committee (SEC)**

Upcoming business:	Brief description and context:
1. Curriculum Development	This is a standing item on SEC agendas and a Committee priority for 2025/26. SEC will continue to discuss curriculum development the priorities and direction of travel, in alignment with the wider Learning and Teaching workstream. At its May meeting the committee will review proposals for the future oversight and management of Challenge Courses.
2. Assessment and Feedback Groups	Assessment and Feedback is a SEC priority for 2025/26. Reports from the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group and the External Quality Review Oversight Group remain a standing item on the committee, whereby updates are routinely provided to SEC. At its March meeting the committee will receive the Assessment and Feedback Policy for discussion. The policy has been developed through a review of the University's Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities.
3. Mid-year Reflection on Committee Priorities	The Committee will review progress and updates on its priorities for 2025/26 as part of the mid-year review.
4. University-level strategy and initiatives	The Committee will receive an update on: the Bristol Case Action Plan and the learning and teaching elements of the Regenerative Sustainability Strategy.
5. Student Support	At its March meeting the Committee will be asked to discuss and approve a proposal to create a working group on School-level PGR pastoral support
6. School Accessibility Reviews	This Committee will receive an annual update on the Accessibility Reviews conducted via the Learn Ultra project.
7. Student Surveys	The Committee will discuss the outcomes of the Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report.
8. Policy	The Committee will be asked to approve the revised Open Educational Resources Policy.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)

Upcoming business:	Brief description and context:
1. Annual Reports 2024/25: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Appeals • Student Conduct • Complaint Handling 	The Committee will consider the annual reports from these service areas and discuss themes and areas for action. This is standard annual business for the Committee.
2. Student Support Model: Monitoring and Evaluation	The Committee will consider the report from the project board and discuss good practice within the model and any areas for development. The Committee will consider the evaluation framework for the support model going forward.
3. Annual Monitoring 2025/26 Templates	The Committee will consider the programme, School and College annual monitoring templates for 2025/26 and be asked to approve any changes to the reporting templates and submission arrangements.
4. Short Courses Annual Update 2024/25	The Committee will receive an update from the Short Course Strategy Group outlining the activities that developed in 2024/25, including the launch of the Short Courses platform in June 2025.
5. Mid-year Reflection on Committee Priorities	The Committee will review progress and updates on its priorities for 2025/26 as part of the mid-year review.
6. Programme and Course Approval Management Policy	The Committee will receive an update on proposals to the Programme and Course Approval Management Policy as part of the routine review of policies.
7. Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	The Committee will review final reports and any responses provided by Schools in relation to their Internal Periodic Review.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

Upcoming business:	Brief description and context:
1. Annual review of Regulations	At its March meeting, the Committee will consider proposed essential amendments arising from Schools and Colleges to the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations.
2. Board of Examiners Project	The Committee will comment as required on proposals arising from the project which have implications for academic policy, providing recommendations to Senate where requested.

Senate**4 March 2026****Senate Standing Committee Membership 2025/26****Description of paper:**

1. This paper notifies Senate of updates to the membership of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. Senate is invited to note the updates to the membership of the Senate Education Committee, marked in track changes in Appendix 1.

Background and context:

3. Under the Senate Standing Orders (22a), Senate may appoint committees to which it delegates powers and approves the membership of these committees annually. A detailed background on the practical application of Senate Standing Order 22a was provided to Senate at its 20 May 2025 meeting ([Paper S24/25 6H](#)), though no proposal for application was formally adopted.
4. Senate currently delegates work to three standing committees: Senate Education Committee (SEC), Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), and Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC).
5. Senate Standing Committees formally report to Senate annually, in addition to providing updates on upcoming business at each ordinary meeting of Senate. These committees feed into and out of College level committees (Undergraduate Education, Postgraduate Education, Quality Assurance) and specialist Support Services (the Institute for Academic Development, Careers Service, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Registry Services) via committee membership. Therefore, some committee roles are ex officio, to ensure that committee members have the appropriate knowledge, expertise, responsibility and accountability to fulfil the committee remit.
6. The type of standing committee member and how and why they are appointed is as follows:

Type of member	How and why they are appointed
Ex-officio	By virtue of their position. For example, the College Deans of Quality (or equivalent) are ex officio members of Quality Assurance Committee; Edinburgh University Students' Association Vice-President Education is an ex officio member of Education Committee.
Nominated	Nominated by colleges with responsibility for a particular, relevant area. For example, the Colleges shall each nominate

	two senior members of staff within the College with responsibility for learning and teaching.
Senate member	Elected by Senate. To represent Senate on standing committees. Elected academic staff members, Senate Assessors, and the Academic Staff Member of Court are eligible.
Co-opted members	Chosen by the convener for their expertise in a particular area, expected to serve for a time-limited period.
External member	Appointed from out with the University due to their relevant skills, experience and external viewpoint. Only SQAC currently has an external member.

Source: [Senate Standing Committee members' guidance](#)

- The current terms of reference for each standing committee are available on the [relevant committee page](#).

Discussion

- This paper notifies Senate of a routine update to the membership of the Senate Education Committee.

Resource implications

- There are no additional workload implications as there is already support in place for staff and students who are members of a Senate Committees.
- There are workload implications for staff and students who become new members of Senate Committees.

Risk management

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

Equality & diversity

- The composition of the Senate standing committees is largely determined according to defined role-holders (e.g. defined Assistant or Vice-Principal, Director of a defined Professional Service or delegate) or as representatives of particular stakeholders (e.g. a College or the Students' Association). The membership is therefore largely a consequence of decisions taken elsewhere to appoint individuals to particular roles. Ensuring that appointment processes support a diverse staff body is part of the broader responsibility of the University.

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

Details of the Senate Standing Committees' Membership and Terms of Reference are communicated via the [Academic Quality and Standards webpage](#).

Author

Academic Quality and Standards

October 2025

Freedom of Information: Open

Appendix 1: Senate Education Committee

Senate Education Committee - Composition

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

Role on SEC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
	Students' Association			
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Heather Innes	Ex Officio	No
1 x postgraduate research student representative	Postgraduate Research Student Representative	Patience Mulungi		No
1 x Head of School from each College chosen by the Heads of College	Head of School, CSE	Professor Jason Love		Ex Officio
	Head of School, CAHSS	Professor Willem Hollman		Ex Officio
	Head of School, CMVM	Professor Lisa Boden		Ex Officio
3 x elected member of Senate	Representative of Senate	Dr Sam Coombes	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026	Academic
	Representative of Senate	Professor Patrick Walsh	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026	Academic
	Representative of Senate	Professor Antonis Giannopoulos	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026	Academic
Head of Academic Quality and Standards or nominee	Head of Academic Quality and Standards	Nichola Kett	Ex Officio	No
Director of Institute for Academic Development, or nominee	Head of Academic Development, Academic Quality and Standards.	Professor Cathy Bovill	Ex Officio	Academic
Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions, or nominee	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions	Dr Shane Collins	Ex Officio	No
Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services, or nominee	Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services	Dr Melissa Highton	Ex Officio	Ex Officio

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

Senate

4 March 2026

Communications from Research Strategy Group**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides a summary of issues discussed at the meeting of RSG on 25 November 2025. The Group's responsibility for research policy and strategy are directly relevant to the achievement of the following outcomes set out in Strategy 2030, which are further developed in the University's Research and Innovation Strategy 2030:¹

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

Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is invited to note the report.

Background and context

3. RSG monitors delivery of the University's Research and Innovation Strategy and its Research Cultures Action Plan². In 2025-26 RSG has met on 23 September and 25 November. It will hold meetings on 3 February, 28 April and 25 June. The RSG meeting on 3 February takes place after the deadline for papers for the meeting of Senate on 4 March 2026.

Discussion

4. Please see appendix 1 for a report of business conducted at the meeting of RSG on 25 November 2025.

Resource implications

5. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

Risk management

6. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

Equality and diversity

7. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

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

8. The [Research Strategy Group committee site](#) provides access to the agenda of meetings and open papers. The minutes of each meeting are uploaded after they have been formally approved.

9. Senate members may be interested in reading the [weekly ERO digests of news relevant to R&D](#) in the social, political and economic landscape in Scotland, the UK and further afield.

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

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

10. The most recent briefings on the Research strategy and Policy pages on the ERO Sharepoint Hub are:

- [UKRI Budget allocations for 2026-27 to 2029-20](#) (12 January 2026)
An analysis that outlines the key developments prior to the publication of the new UKRI budget including the new UKRI budget allocation model which is a radical change from the previous model before looking in more detail at the four elements of the UKRI budget. The briefing ends by covering the reaction to the UKRI budget and the likely timing of the release of further strategic information by UKRI.
- [Horizon Scanning the R&D landscape from the UK Budget week](#) (5 December 2025)
An analysis to identify potential R&D funding trends of the speeches that DSIT ministers and the UKRI CEO gave in UK Budget week (24 to 28 November) as well as key updates on the UKRI and DSIT websites, the new UKRI Framework document, and the UKRI Corporate Plan Update 2025-27 and subsequent sectorial reaction.

12 Authors

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Dr Susan Cooper, Research Policy Analyst and Secretary to RSG
REF, Research Policy and Performance Directorate, Edinburgh Research Office.

13 Date

26 January 2026

Freedom of Information

13. Open Paper

Appendix 1:

Key points from the meeting of RSG on 25 November 2025

1. RSG Convenor's briefing

The key points in the oral briefing from the VP Research and Innovation covered:

- REF2029 pause which was expected to end on 10 December
- Post 16- Education and Skill white paper -ongoing efforts to seek clarity on what specialisation would mean in practice
- The DSIT allocation of its R&D budget for the spending review period (2026-27 to 2029-30; research counts as capital)
- R&I workstream developments
- Competitive strand of the UKRI-led Local Innovation Partnership Fund

2. R&I workstream – Commercialisation Project

The CEO of Edinburgh Innovations gave a short oral report on the plans to develop a comprehensive commercialisation action plan. It was agreed that there would be a fuller discussion at the meeting of RSG on 28 April.

3. UK wide Negotiations with the 'Big 5' Academic Publishers - update

Jisc (UK higher education sector's technology and digital organisation), acting for the UK sector had negotiated a revised deal for 2026-28 with the big five academic publishers (Elsevier, Springer Nature, Taylor & Francis, Wiley and Sage). The objective of the negotiations was to secure fair, equitable and sustainable agreements that meet the evolving needs of UK universities and the research community. At the time of the meeting, HEIs were considering the deal and the consultation would close on 2 December.

Senate may wish note that on 12 December, JISC announced that the 'Big 5' had met the sector-agreed thresholds for acceptance.

4. PGR Strategy-update

After a re-evaluation, it had had been agreed that the University needs a PGR action plan. To that end, the co-convenor of the Doctoral Colleges Management Group would set up a working group with the intention of developing a draft plan by late spring which will be brought to the meeting of RSG in June.

5. Research Ethics of Arms & Defence Implementation and Defence Funding

Members discussed a paper providing an update on the development and implementation of the University's framework for research partnerships in defence and security. It sets out the principles-based approach developed by the Research Ethics of Arms and Defence (READ) Working Group in response to Senate's May 2024 request, describes progress in operationalising these principles through the Implementation of Research Ethics for Arms and Defence (I-READ) committee, and outlines next steps towards full implementation in Spring 2026.

The framework positions Edinburgh to engage responsibly with an evolving policy landscape whilst maintaining our values-led, discovery-focused approach to research. The framework makes use of existing governance structures as much as possible, integrating defence and security research ethics review into established processes rather than creating parallel.

6. Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice– one year on

The University of Edinburgh, as an early signatory to the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice in 2024, has committed to achieving progress on Sustainable Research Practice. The RSG report to the February 2025 Senate meeting included a section on the approach to progressively embedding environmental sustainability into all research and innovation activities.

Members noted that focus on had been to ensure that ‘wet’ labs would meet the requirements of CRUK and Wellcome. This this had been a substantial achievement. It was noted considerable amount of progress been made in regard to the other thematic areas of the Concordat but more work was needed. The proposals for further action were wholly supported after members had considered the multiple reasons for being proactive, such as reinforcing the University’s position as a leader in the area of making Research and Innovation sustainable and enabling the university to save energy and resources, thus contributing to efforts the University’s objective of being net zero by 2040.

7. New Framework for Developing University Leadership

It was proposed that the new Framework will build on the University’s successful Strategic Leadership Programme, which had run six times between 2019 and 2025, will have an approach that alternates between a Standard model (open to all) and a Targeted model (tailored to underrepresented groups or disciplines). Members welcomed the plans for the new Framework and agreed a working group to take this forward to tender.

8. Research Cultures Action Plan 2025-28

The new RCAP is intended to both maintain momentum in areas that had featured in the previous plan as well as introducing new objectives. Members agreed it is important to demonstrate that the University retains a commitment to improving the research culture especially at this time, to ensure delivery on Strategy 2030 priorities.

9. Reports from the Deans of Research

College Deans were thanked for their informative reports that present concise picture of key achievements, ongoing activity, planned activity as well as cross-College opportunities and challenges.

10. Annual report from Development and Alumni

D&A’s annual report covered its activity in 2024-25, plans for 2025-26 that are relevant to RDI, as well as a list of research related donations of over £10k. Members learnt that ‘gifts’, especially those that are wholly or partially to support research, are to be more contractual so that there is clarity on both sides.

11. Items presented for approval

Members approved the Terms of Reference for the Research Cultures Survey Steering Group which will become a subgroup of RSG.

12. Items presented for information

- Research Assurance and Accountability Report, 2025-26. A RAAR report must be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council each year as a condition receiving funding from the SFC’s Research Excellence Grant budget

- KPI reports covering Research Grants and Application and Industrial and Translational awards
- Latest Terms of Reference for the Technician Steering Committee and Doctoral College Management Group
- Activity reports from Interdisciplinary Research Development Team, Library Research Support, Edinburgh Research Office as well as report on the measures being taken to implement the Trusted Research Evaluation Framework
- Reports from RSG sub-groups: Research Support Operational Executive; Major Initiatives Group; and the REF board.