

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on
 Tuesday 30th September 2025, 2-5pm
 Hybrid meeting: Charles Stewart House Cuillin Room
 and Microsoft Teams**

1. Attendance

Present:	Position:
Professor Tina Harrison	Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) (Convener)
Professor Matthew Bailey	Dean of Quality, CMVM
Dr Michael Barany	Senate Representative
Dr Sari Pennings	Senate Representative
Marianne Brown	Head of Academic Planning (Registry Services)
Brian Connolly	Academic Policy Manager, Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
Dr Anne Desler	School Representative of CAHSS
Faten Adam	School Representative of CSE
Professor Cathy Bovill	Head of Programme Development and Teaching Enhancement, Institute for Academic Development
Professor James Hopgood	Dean of Education Quality and Enhancement, CSE
Heather Innes	Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator, EUSA
Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar	School Representative of CMVM
Dr Emily Taylor	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation, CAHSS
Katya Amott	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
Meg Batty	Acting Committee Secretary, Registry Services
In attendance:	
Beth Bicher	Presenter for BoE Item
Apologies:	
Professor Nazira Karodia	Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching, Edinburgh Napier University

2. Welcome and introductions

The Convener welcomed members to the first Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) meeting of 2025/26 and in particular the four new members: **Katya Amott**, Vice President (Education), Students' Association; **Heather Innes**, Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator; **Professor Cathy Bovill**, Head of Programme Development and Teaching Enhancement, Institute for Academic Development; and **Dr Sari Pennings**, Senate elected representative. The Convenor also welcomed returning elected Senate member, **Dr Michael Barany**, who is in his final year as a member of SQAC.

It was noted that there was a vacant elected Senate representative position. The Senate elected members agreed to take this to back to Senate to decide the action to move this forward.

3. Minutes of previous minutes (SQAC 25/26 1A)

The Convener noted the following updates in relation to the outstanding actions from the 15 May 2025 meeting: the Student Support Thematic Review would be addressed under agenda item 8; and the details of the SRUC external examiner had passed to the College of Science and Engineering.

The Head of Programme Development and Teaching Enhancement, Institute for Academic Development, requested a clarification to Point 9: IAD funding is provided by the PTAS fund and not the development fund.

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2025.

Action: Committee Secretary to amend minutes to reflect the change to Point 9.

4. Matters Arising

QAA Institutional Liaison meeting

The Convener reported that the annual Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM) with Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) had taken place in August. It was the first ILM under the new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) and covered academic year 2024/25. The discussions focussed on the actions from the most recent external quality review, the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) and the University's Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP). It was noted that the University had yet to receive feedback from the QAA on the meeting and this year's ILM was expected to be held in Semester 2.

5. University of Edinburgh Students' Association Vice President Education Priorities 2025/26 (SQAC 25/26 1B)

The VP Education presented the Committee with their priorities for academic year 2024/25:

- Work with the VP Welfare to address the awarding gap and provide additional support for Widening Participation (WP) students;
- Following on from the University Race Review, continue to work on how this links with the curriculum, particularly through the lens of decolonisation.
- Advocate for student voice in university processes including the assessment and feedback priorities and timetabling.
- Ensure the student experience is protected in relation to the changing University landscape and during the process of uncertainty including staffing changes and portfolio reviews.

Members discussed ways of protecting the student experience within the current challenging financial context for the University. The VP Education reflected that it was

important to protect student voice and make space for them to raise concerns on the changes impacting them. It was recognised that some student feedback methods are not costly and it is important to listen to students and act upon their feedback where feasible. The Convener noted that this was also echoed in the Annual Monitoring reports, with student voice and closing the feedback loop flagged as key priorities. The Head of Programme Development and Teaching Enhancement, Institute for Academic Development noted that the intended theme for the next Learning and Teaching Committee will be Student Voice.

The Committee discussed the tension between priorities such as decolonisation of the curriculum and the required financial targets, noting that some courses contributing to decolonisation struggle to meet the 21-student threshold. The VP Education proposed looking further into interdisciplinary learning and reviewing course pre-requisites to remove barriers from students engaging and enable cross interdisciplinary learning. The Convener noted that the Learning and Teaching workstream may support decolonisation work in the future and the portfolio review may help by not having hard cut-offs for strategically important courses. Also, Schools could investigate funding these courses in other ways or looking at how to increase the student numbers. It was noted that some courses are focussed on British Colonialism, however with our broad international population there may be appetite for courses relating to other colonial powers. Views of wider Senate elected members were fed into this discussion, noting that student voice must be prioritised alongside the staff voice (e.g., what is impacting students on the ground and what is impacting staff morale and in turn student experience?). It should be seen that student voice, staff ownership and staff governance work in the same direction.

The Committee asked what the student view of the awarding gap is and what students need the University to do better. The VP Education noted that many students are not aware of the awarding gap as an issue and that widening participation (WP) students face a number of non-academic barriers (such as the need to work full-time) which can detrimentally impact their grades and their sense of belonging at the University. EUSA is seeking to raise awareness of the links between WP and awarding gaps, and particularly awareness of the support that is available. The Convenor noted that work to tackle the awarding gaps across the University was an ongoing priority and a specific recommendation from the QESR. It was noted that a paper from the Student Data Monitoring Task Group (the primary focus of which is the awarding gaps) will be submitted to the SQAC later this year.

Action: College Deans of Quality to raise the awarding gap to relevant College Committees for review.

The Committee asked VP Education for their views on paid opportunities for students. The VP Education reflected Student Paid Opportunities are a positive and noted that EUSA is exploring how to create more paid opportunities for students.

The Committee noted its support for the priorities set out and expressed its commitment to work with the VP Education throughout the year to accomplish these priorities.

6. School Annual Quality Reports 2024/25: Sub-Group Report (SQAC 25/26 1C)

The Committee discussed the sub-group report highlighting good practice and areas for further development from the School Annual Quality Reports. It was noted that for the 2024/25 reports Schools had been asked by SQAC for specific reflections on the following institutional priorities: the [Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities](#); the [Student Voice Policy](#); student support arrangements; and Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI).

The Committee noted the examples of good practice in relation to key aspects of the student experience as set out in the principles of the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#). It was agreed that the next meeting of the Directors of Quality Network will focus on good practice in relation to the current institutional priorities (see above) and will be informed by learning from this year's annual monitoring process. It was also agreed that good practice examples should be shared with the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) in order to inform training and staff development provision.

Action: Committee Secretary to confirm good practice examples for each College (and identify possible speakers for a good practice sharing event) with the Deans of Quality.

Action: Committee Secretary to share good practice examples with the IAD.

Action: Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) to arrange a good practice sharing event in semester one with the Directors of Quality Network.

The following themes were identified across the reports, with areas for development and actions at University level highlighted where relevant:

6.1 Staff Experience

The Committee noted that almost every report had reflected on the financial context of the sector and the University. The uncertainty and effects are widely felt within Schools and the reports reflected on many different aspects, including the effect on staff morale, resources and workload, student experience and quality of provision. The Committee agreed that the title of this theme should be changed to include the impact of these issues on the student experience.

Action: The Committee Secretary to amend the heading to 'Staff and Student Experience' within the Sub-Group report.

The Committee discussed the appropriate action in relation to this theme. A number of reports raised concerns that Schools had been given financial targets without clear guidance on what the strategic priorities are for the University. It was noted that there may be a tension between the priorities of individual Schools and the need for the University to ensure consistency and an equitable experience for all students. Examples cited included the directive to reduce local staffing in roles that are non-student facing while also requiring Schools to engage in University strategic change initiatives such as the Boards of Examiners project. It was also noted that inconsistency or differing practice may arise due to a number of factors (e.g. inequality, under-resourcing, poor or unclear planning) and therefore viewing practices through the lens of consistency can lead to the solution adopted being the lowest common denominator which Schools may not be able to implement.

It was suggested that the Colleges have a key role in coordinating the response to these targets and helping their Schools to prioritise student-facing activity. It was agreed that the Sub-Group report should be circulated to College level Committees (such as College Curriculum Committee and College Education Committee) to raise awareness of the themes and discuss possible actions at College level.

Action: The Convenor to review the action for Staff and Student Experience theme to ensure that it is clear what is being asked and who is responsible.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer theme to the Deputy Secretary Students (as the relevant workstream Convener) and request a response be submitted to the December meeting of the Committee.

6.2 Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

As a new section included in the annual monitoring process for 2024/25, there was much reflection on the topic of GenAI in the reports. Schools detailed the wide range of activities they have undertaken to meet the challenges and opportunities posed by AI, particularly in relation to assessment. However, the reports also indicated inconsistency with how GenAI practices are being adopted, even within Schools, and a tendency in some areas to reintroduce exams in an attempt to AI-proof the integrity of assessment in response to increased cases of Academic Misconduct.

The Committee discussed the varying expertise of staff and noted that in many cases they are behind students in their knowledge and understanding of GenAI. There is a perception that students are using GenAI more frequently to complete assessments and reports noted the increased use of live translation software and the implications of this for language development. While GenAI training for staff is available, it is basic and needs to be enhanced with more in-depth provision for staff across the University.

Action: AQS to share responses from Schools on this topic with Senate Education Committee and the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group for their consideration as they progress with activities and guidance in this area.

6.3 Assessment and Feedback

The Committee noted the considerable efforts and significant improvements made by Schools to comply with the three-week turnaround time for feedback and the provision of rubrics or marking criteria for each assessment. It was agreed that it would be useful to remind colleagues of the guidance in the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities in relation to late submissions and moderation, which allows for moderation and feedback to be released prior to all submissions being received.

The Committee noted that the quality and consistency of feedback provided to students was highlighted by Schools as an area needing further focus and enhancement. Some Schools also reported their ongoing concerns and challenges with the University's Extensions and Special Circumstances Policy. Particular issues referenced in the reports include the disproportionate effects on large end-of-semester submissions, concerns over upward shifts in classification due to special circumstances adjustments, the administrative burden of high volume of extensions and the number of cases adversely affecting the ability to respond to significant cases in a timely fashion.

Action: AQS to share responses from Schools on this topic with Senate Education Committee and the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group for their consideration as they progress with activities and guidance in this area.

Action: College Deans of Quality to follow up with individual Schools on specific issues identified by the sub-group.

6.4 Student Support

The Committee noted that the success of Student Advisor role and the challenges linked to the Cohort Lead role remain key themes in student support reflections. While the implementation of Student Advisors has generally been perceived positively, 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. A number of reports raised concerns about the sustainability of running events with low uptake, especially in the current financial climate, and the potential demoralising effect on colleagues who are making continual effort to build cohorts and community in their School.

Action: Student Support Continuous Improvement Group to review responses in full as part of their evaluation of the Student Support Model and submit a response to the December meeting of the Committee.

6.5 Student Outcomes and Awarding Gaps

The Committee noted that all Schools had been asked to analyse the outcomes and awards data held on the central dashboard in order to identify any gaps or outliers in their areas. The Sub-Group noted that the responses reflect broader, systemic challenges within the University, as well as the sector, and highlight the need for ongoing strategic monitoring and initiatives at institutional level.

Action: AQS to share responses with the Student Data Monitoring Task Group to help inform the Group's recommendations to SQAC for institutional level monitoring and approaches to sharing good practice.

6.6 Board of Examiners Review

The Committee noted that several Schools used the reports to comment on the Boards of Examiners (BofE) review and proposed changes. Concerns were shared around the asynchronous practices being proposed and how to maintain the richness of discussion that is captured in the current process. It was noted that a paper on the BofE review is considered under agenda item 9.

6.7 Locally Developed Systems and Processes

The Committee noted that some Schools have developed and implemented local systems to enhance operations and support, citing a lack of central provision. Members raised concerns as to the efficiency of these local systems and the risk that they may not be in compliance with University data protection and records management requirements. It was agreed that the University needed to understand both the

underlying needs these efforts are attempting to address and the perceived gaps in central provision.

Action: AQS to share examples of locally developed systems and processes with the Deputy Secretary Students to consider as part of the teaching administration workstream.

6.8 Student Attendance and Engagement

The Committee noted that Schools had reported concerns regarding low attendance levels for lectures and community building events. The Dean of Quality in CAHSS noted that section 2.2.8 of the Sub-Group report appeared to indicate that the Sub-Group endorsed receiving marks for attendance however, this is incorrect. Awarding marks for attendance may enforce inequalities where a student may not be able to attend. The Committee commended Schools for creating innovative engagement ideas to promote attendance but noted that marks being awarded purely for attendance was not endorsed.

Action: The Committee Secretary to amend the Sub-Group Paper to clarify that awarding marks for attendance was not endorsed.

6.9 Postgraduate Research (PGR) Funding

The Committee noted that some Schools had reported that concerns that the decline in funding and scholarship availability for Postgraduate Research (PGR) students, both externally and internally funded, was affecting the intake and sustainability of some PGR programmes. Some Schools commented that these constraints threaten the University's competitive edge in research and adversely affect the ability to attract top-tier candidates to PhD programmes. They indicated that there is a pressing need for alternative funding solutions, to ensure sustained research excellence and maintain high-quality educational opportunities.

6.10 PGR Student Experience and Community

The Committee noted that reports had raised concerns regarding the lengthening PhD completion times, the withdrawal of IAD devolved funding, and that PGR students are not included in the Student Support model. The Head of Programme Development and Teaching Enhancement, Institute for Academic Development raised that the IAD devolved funding has been paused and not withdrawn permanently. It was noted that, whilst there will be some impact to the student experience, there were indications that the activities implemented through this funding replicated activity going on elsewhere therefore the impact may not be as large as expected.

Action: Committee Secretary to amend the Sub-Group paper to reflect that the IAD devolved funding has been temporarily paused.

6.11 English Language Skills

The Committee noted that some Schools had raised concerns regarding English language skills, with some students (particularly at taught postgraduate level) struggling despite meeting the language entry requirements. Increasing use of translation software and GenAI was noted as a possible contributory factor.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer theme to Student Recruitment and Admissions and request a response be submitted to the December meeting of the Committee.

6.12 Learning and Teaching Infrastructure

The Committee noted that a number of Schools had reported timetabling delays and concerns that allocated teaching space was not fit for purpose. It was noted that the same issues had been reported last year and that this was an ongoing cause for concern due to the critical role played by timetabling and teaching space in the student and staff experience. The Committee noted that work was being undertaken to address these issues as part of learning and teaching workstream, overseen by the Associate Principal and Deputy Secretary Students.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer theme to the Deputy Secretary Students (as the relevant workstream Convener) and request a response be submitted to the December meeting of the Committee.

It was noted that at the February meeting the Committee will be invited to approve the updated reporting templates for academic year 2025/26. The template updates will be informed by learning from this year's annual monitoring process and the recently refreshed [TQEF Guidance](#) emphasising the use of data and evaluation of impact in quality reporting processes. In addition, AQS is currently assessing options for the online submission of reports to facilitate collaboration between colleagues contributing to the reports within Schools and enable more efficient processing and analysis of reports at University level. It was also noted that the new School structure in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) would be reflected in the 2025/26 annual monitoring process.

7. Internal Periodic Review Themes 2024/25 (SQAC 25/26 1E)

The Committee discussed the themes and areas for development identified via the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) process in 2024/25. It was noted that it is a requirement of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for institutions to include themes from internal quality review processes in the annual submission of the Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP). Furthermore, these themes help to inform the lines of enquiry of external review teams in preparation for an institution level Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER).

It was noted that the following IPR themes aligned with the themes identified through the annual monitoring quality process (discussed above):

Student Support

Student Advisors were commended across IPRs but reviews also highlighted the inconsistencies in the delivery of the Cohort Lead role and the issue of PGR students' non-inclusion in the Student Support model.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer theme to the Student Support Continuous Improvement Group (SSCIG) to inform the ongoing development of the Student Support model and request a response be submitted to the December meeting of the Committee.

PGR Student Experience

Several reviews commended initiatives focussing on PGR community building. However, IPRs highlighted the need for further work to improve the consistency and quality of the University's training provision for Tutors and Demonstrators. It was noted that the provision of training for PGR students who teach is an ongoing area of action in response to the recommendation of the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review in 2023.

Action: Committee Secretary to share theme and recommendations with the Doctoral College to support the sharing of good practice.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer theme regarding the provision of PGR training to the University PGR Lead and the External Quality Review Oversight Group and request a response be submitted to the December meeting of the Committee.

Careers and Employability Skills

A number of reviews indicated the need for better integration of skills and career development within the curricula. In particular, more explicit signposting to where skills are already embedded in programmes would help students to better identify the skills they are acquiring. Colleges noted the work across reviews to better embed careers and employability in to the curriculum which aligns with the new Skills for Success framework.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer the theme to the Skills for Success working group and the Careers Service and request a response be submitted to the December meeting of the Committee.

8. Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)- Process updates (SQAC 25/26 1E & 1F)

Internal Periodic Review (SQAC 25/26 1E)

The Committee discussed the proposed updates to the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) process to align with the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#).

It was noted that The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) requires all tertiary sector institutions to periodically review and evaluate their provision on a periodic cycle of not more than six years in line with the [TQEF Guidance](#). The University meets this requirement via the [Internal Periodic Review \(IPR\)](#) process and a report on internal review activity is included each year in the annual institutional report to the SFC, the [Self Evaluation and Action Plan \(SEAP\)](#). The TQEF came into effect in 2024/25 and the SFC refreshed the TQEF Guidance in July 2025. Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) has reviewed the IPR process to ensure alignment with the refreshed guidance and the process and documentation used by the SFC/Quality Assurance Agency for the institutional periodic review process, the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review \(TQER\)](#).

The Committee approved the following changes:

- **University Standard Remit** - revised to mirror/align with the TQEF and TQER principles and sections. Where possible/appropriate text and prompt questions have been drawn directly from TQEF and TQER guidance and links included to

source documents (ensuring that the University collects all the specific evidence needed for our SEAP and TQER). The University Standard Remit ensures consistent coverage of key aspects of the student experience across all IPRs (undergraduate and postgraduate).

- **IPR Impact Analysis** (previous 'Reflective Report') - renamed to emphasise the evidence and impact evaluation ethos that runs through the new TQEF and TQER. The new name also makes the connection between this school level report and the University level Strategic Impact Analysis (SIA) which is submitted for the institutional level review, the TQER. Again, where possible/appropriate text and prompt questions have been drawn directly from TQEF and TQER guidance and links included to source documents.

The Impact Analysis (IA) is the key document and reference point produced by the School for its IPR. The IA is used by the School as a self-evaluation of key aspects of the student experience, as set out in the four sections of the University Standard Remit. It was noted that the new box template format 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 AQS to compile and administrate the responses by facilitating systematic processing and AI analysis.

Action: AQS to liaise with the College Deans of Quality to agree appropriate word count guidance for each IPR IA section and specific guidance on data and evidence.

- **IPR Action Plan** – a new part of the process replacing the 14 week and year on responses. The IPR action plan 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 Committee discussed the size and shape (i.e. full School reviews or specifically taught reviews (UG and PG) and research reviews) of IPRs going forward, particularly in the light of the ongoing portfolio reviews. It was also noted that in order to make the organisation and administration of IPRs more manageable for AQS in the coming years some Schools will be encouraged to considered holding their review in semester one (currently most Schools opt for a semester two review).

Action: AQS to include more detailed guidance on the inclusion of the Student Voice in the IPR Handbook.

Professional Services Review (SQAC 25/26 1F)

The Committee discussed the proposed updates to the Student Support Services Annual Review (SSSAR) and Thematic Review processes process to align with the TQEF.

The Committee noted that the SFC requires all tertiary sector institutions to periodically review and evaluate their professional services contributing to the student experience on

a periodic cycle of not more than six years in line with the TQEF Guidance. Universities in Scotland typically meet this requirement via periodic reviews of each service, periodic thematic reviews across services, or by including student facing elements of services within their periodic reviews of academic provision. The University of Edinburgh meets the requirement via the [Student Support Service Annual Review \(SSSAR\)](#) and the periodic [Student Support Thematic Review](#). The University is currently the only Scottish institution that runs an annual review of professional services. The SSSAR process has previously been commended by both internal and external reviewers for successfully highlighting good practice and sharing insights across services. However, feedback from reviewers has also occasionally noted a tendency for service reflections to be driven by a service (as opposed to student user) perspective and the need for impact analysis to determine actions. Effective student engagement and an emphasis on impact evaluation are key underlying principles of the TQEF.

The Committee approved the following changes:

- **SSSAR Suspension** - in order to ensure closer alignment with the TQEF, and peers across the sector, the SSSAR is suspended for AY 2025/26 pending the outcome of a review of the University's approach to student facing services review (timeline below). The suspension of the SSSAR process will allow AQS the time and space to conduct a consultation on options for an enhanced Professional Services Review process. This process review will examine options to increase opportunities for students to get involved and seek to embed greater emphasis on impact analysis when setting and evaluating actions.
- **Thematic Review** - the Student Support Thematic Review will proceed this year as agreed by SQAC in May 2025, focusing on how our student facing services support our LGBTQ+ students. This will ensure that student facing professional services continue to be reviewed during the intervening period. Fiona McClement, the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Lead and Chair of the EDI Committee, has agreed to be the Co-Convenor of the Thematic Review with a student Co-Convenor (to be confirmed). Learning from the Thematic Review will inform the recommendations of the process review.
- **Review Schedule** - Both reviews will report back to SQAC by end of 2026-27 with any approved new arrangements implemented at the start of 2027-28. In order to allow the staff Co-Convenor to complete existing work commitments the review will commence towards the end of semester two and continue throughout academic year 2026-27.

Action: AQS to liaise with the Students Association and the Thematic Review Co-Convenor to explore options for starting the student consultation element of the Thematic Review earlier in semester two, although not within the window of the exam diet.

9. Board of Examiner Review Implementation update (SQAC 25/2 1G)

The Committee discussed the Board of Examiners (BoE) project with Beth Bicher (representative from the BoE project team) in attendance to respond to questions from members.

The Committee noted the Board of Examiners review aimed to address a number of well-recognised concerns with existing processes. It was noted that the review process has highlighted that there are too many courses to get through boards and that the portfolio review may help to resolve this issue. It was noted that the review of exam questions is currently completed in an asynchronous way and some Schools have been conducting asynchronous boards since the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, members raised concerns that the project timeline was too ambitious and therefore the consultation stage had seemed rushed and too restricted with concerns that the voices of key stakeholders were not being heard. The project is aiming for pilot in January 2026 and members did not feel that the changes can confidently be implemented. The delegated authority means Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) will review and approve the final proposed policy changes at the meeting due to be held in November. However, the Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation (CAHSS), commenting as Convener of APRC, noted that there were actions from APRC that may be required and therefore they cannot confidently state the timeline or approval in November APRC until these actions are complete. They also noted that the delegated remit of APRC is focussed on existing policies and regulations and the current proposed changes can be completed under the existing BoE policy.

The Committee noted that questions and concerns have been raised by staff in the CAHSS and CMVM BoE project forums about the potential benefits and risks the proposed asynchronous process. Issues highlighted included the significant time that could be taken to chase academics for their decision and concerns that silence will be assumed as consent as opposed to non-engagement. It was noted that whilst the motivation for the project may be to enable BoE processes to happen more quickly, it could, in fact, ultimately lead to a delay in decisions being released due to academic workloads and the time taken to chase up asynchronous responses from members.

Members noted concerns that moving to an asynchronous process could lead to a loss of essential quality discussions with course organisers and external examiners. During COVID-19, when BoE meetings were online, there was a perception that there had been a reduction in the quality of academic discussion and it is a key concern that this will happen again through the asynchronous process. In response it was noted that the proposed plan recommended a separate quality meeting be arranged to ensure these discussions are not lost. This separate meeting would ensure that discussions on quality are not side-lined as can be the case at Board of Examiners meetings with extensive ratification agenda (sometimes up to 50+ courses), and members will be more present and engaged at quality focused meetings. Also, the quality meeting could be completed earlier, even before the BoE, for year-long courses which may allow changes to be implemented early enough for the following semester (not always possible in the current process).

Members discussed academic judgement, particularly when things go wrong (e.g., course disruption or errors in exams will not be inputted). Course organisers may not have the required authority or experience to action mitigation or scaling within an

asynchronous process. BoE meetings utilise a hive mind of expertise to discuss and agree how to address these issues. Moving to asynchronous process leaves a gap where this function is currently focused and messages on a discussion board is not a suitable replacement for these decisions and is over reliant on external examiners to address this deficit. This feeds the wider perception that this project is administratively focused and driven. The Convener noted that a bank of standard scenarios and responses to issues could be collated to support asynchronous decision making.

Members discussed the preparation of paperwork for BoE meetings, noting that it is a significant administrative task (usually a manual process), particularly around Exceptional Circumstances. It was agreed that this element of the process must be taken into consideration during the BoE project as the BoE meeting is the least workload intensive part but will be the part that will be impacted the most. It was noted that whilst the switch from Special Circumstances to Exceptional Circumstances was intended to decrease numbers, there has not been an even decrease across Schools or Colleges.

The Committee expressed its commitment to working with the BoE project team and to being involved in the development and review of the proposals. However, in addition to the BoE changes the Committee noted concerns regarding the number of strategic changes and priorities across the institution that Schools and Colleges are expected to implement with very short timelines.

10. Committee Terms of Reference and Membership 2025/26 (SQAC 24/25 1I)

The Committee noted that the Terms of Reference had been updated to reflect that the Knowledge Strategy Committee has been dissolved, and to reflect the changes in Committee membership. The Convener noted that the new School Representative of CMVM, Jill MacKay, would join the Committee from the next meeting.

The Committee agreed to Co-opt Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar in relation to her expertise in online programmes and her position as Director of Students at the Edinburgh Futures Institute.

The Committee discussed the unfilled Senate elected representative position. The Convener noted that this was not an action for SQAC but for Senate and suggested that one of the Senate Elected members raise it at the next meeting of Senate.

11. Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses (SQAC 24/25 1J)

The College Deans of Quality were invited to comment on the IPR reports and responses within their College:

The Dean of Quality, CMVM confirmed that the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine Postgraduate Research Provision report actions are in progress and there was nothing required from the Committee.

The Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation, CAHSS noted that the SPS PGR and LLC reports had highlighted the need for more PGR Widening Participation data. The reports also noted the need for more guidance on Tutor and Demonstrator training which has now been provided at a College level alongside expectations. SPS

UG year on report asked to review the number of core and compulsory course along with their requirements and pre-requisites for progression which was part of the CTP work. As the CTP work has since been paused progress has slowed but they hope to continue engagement through the portfolio review.

The Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, CSE commended the good practice highlighted in the reports and acknowledged the areas for improvement. The year-on responses were comprehensive and it was noted that the recommendation in Geosciences regarding the Tutor and Demonstrator training is an institutional priority, which therefore would be followed up.

12. A.O.B.

There was no other business.

13. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 4th December 2024, 1.30pm – 4.30pm.