THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Summary of Senate business – 10 December

The following document provides a record of the business undertaken at the 10 December meeting of Senate. This document provides an interim summary of the outcomes and next steps for each item of business. This document is intended as an interim reference until the full minute is available for publication.

There is a short statement under each item of business, including a breakdown of voting, where relevant, and the action that will be taken to progress each item.

Where the outcome of voting is relevant to other University Committees, these will be relayed to the relevant body via reporting as specified.
The relevant Committee will determine where further action or response is required. Where a response or update is received, this will be shared with members via the Senate Members' Portal and communicated via email.

2. Minutes and e-Senate Reports

To *approve* the minutes of the meetings held on:

- 1 October 2025 - **S 25/26 2 A**
- e-Senate meeting held 5-19 November 2025 - **S 25/26 2 B**

Both sets of minutes were approved without requiring a vote.

Next steps: The approved minutes and e-Senate report to be published on the Senate website.

3. Report of the Senate Business Committee

A motion advised to Senate Support on 28 November was moved by one of the proposers following the report of the Business Committee. The motion asked that Senate note a representation made by five members to the University Court regarding the suppression of Senate business. The Convener of the Business Committee advised this would be managed by the Senate Business Committee processes.

Next steps: the representation and a response from the Business Committee to be published.

Substantive items

4. Transparency, Accountability and Senate Oversight in the Context of Financial Restructuring - S 25/26 2 E
To *approve*

The motions and amendments were approved via a vote. A breakdown of the voting results are provided below.

Next steps: The outcome of voting will be relayed to University Court via routine reporting. The outcome of voting will be relayed to University Executive.

Amendment to Motion A.1:

At the end of A1 below subpoint 4, add: "5) Alongside, and not in place of these other requests, Senate further requests to receive all past agendas, papers, and minutes of the University Initiatives Portfolio Board, Learning and Teaching Board, the Research and Innovation Board, and the Staff workstream Board from appropriate responsible parties

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	127
Not approve	11
Abstain	6
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	1

Amendment to Motion A.2:

At the end of A2, add: "As one element of this overarching request for accountability, it is recommended that all future agendas, papers, and minutes of the University Initiatives Portfolio Board and all related groups and committees that form part of the Strategic Review are routinely made accessible to Senate."

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	138
Not approve	9
Abstain	8
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	0

Senate **approved** the following motions, including amendments:

Senate is asked to approve the following points as statements of Senate's collective view and requisition to the University Executive:

Motion A.1. Senate formally asks for detailed information pertaining to the restructuring of the University planned by the Executive by the next Senate meeting. To allow for proper scrutiny this information should be provided, if possible, in an itemised format by School and include, but not be limited to, the following:

1) **Ongoing and planned academic and structural changes** covering course closures, degree programme modifications, staff reductions, recruitment freezes, and estate downsizing, with rationales, costs and impact assessments.

2) **Financial planning and risk management** including state of reserves, revenue, capital projects, and cost-benefit analyses of proposed actions.

3) **Stakeholder engagement and reputational impact** detailing consultations with staff and students, alongside assessments of potential reputational risks.

4) **An analysis of the factors that motivate** the changes and how the planned changes preserve the University's mission and values

5) Alongside, and not in place of these other requests, **Senate further requests to receive all past agendas, papers, and minutes of the University Initiatives Portfolio Board, Learning and Teaching Board, the Research and Innovation Board, and the Staff workstream Board** from appropriate responsible parties

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	139
Not approve	10
Abstain	5
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	0

Motion A.2. Senate formally asks the Executive to maintain clear accountability in the restructuring of the institution, beyond budget setting. Senate recognises the critical importance of Heads of School and local leadership teams in implementing changes, given their detailed understanding of local needs. However, the Executive should remain responsible for strategic coherence and consequences and provide clear evidence to Senate that local feedback and cross-consideration of risks have been thoroughly assessed before any proposed restructuring or budget setting. As one element of this overarching request for accountability, it is recommended that all future agendas, papers, and minutes of the University Initiatives Portfolio Board and all related groups and committees that form part of the Strategic Review are routinely made accessible to Senate."

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	142
Not approve	6
Abstain	4
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	1

Motion A.3. Senate formally affirms its statutory responsibility under the Universities (Scotland) Act 1889 (as amended in 1966) to regulate and superintend the teaching and discipline of the University and to promote research. Given that major restructuring proposals directly affect the organisation, delivery and quality of teaching and research, Senate requires detailed data to enable it to fulfil these statutory responsibilities.

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	136
Not approve	5
Abstain	3
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	8

5. Board of Examiners Project – Update and Approval Process - S 25/26 2 F
To *approve*

The paper was approved without a vote, with the exception of Paragraphs 26-28, a breakdown of the voting results and amendments are provided below.

Next steps: The project will proceed as outlined in the paper subject to approved amendments.

Amendment to paragraph 27:

27. The Review also recommended a more standardised approach to Teaching Quality Enhancement and the design of the course mark ratification process allows for more automated data collection on each course to provide information for these meetings. The intention is that where feedback and learnings from piloting this area of work result in change to policy, this would be discussed at Senate Quality Assurance Committee which would then make a **recommendation ~~for approval to Senate~~ *to the May meeting of Senate.***

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	122
Not approve	18
Abstain	10
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	2

Senate **approved** paragraphs 26-27, including amendments:

26. The proposed Course mark ratification process will change the way External Examiners assure the quality of marks/results for a particular course instance. If necessary, data gathered during the piloting of this process will feed into revisions to the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy. The intention is to take a paper outlining the policy revision to Senate Quality Assurance Committee in March 2026, with a view to making a **recommendation for approval at the May 2026 meeting of Senate**.
27. The Review also recommended a more standardised approach to Teaching Quality Enhancement and the design of the course mark ratification process allows for more automated data collection on each course to provide information for these meetings. The intention is that where feedback and learnings from piloting this area of work result in change to policy, this would be discussed at Senate Quality Assurance Committee which would then make a **recommendation to the May meeting of Senate.**

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	128
Not approve	4
Abstain	11
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	4

Amendment to add new paragraph 28:

28. Boards shall have autonomy to adapt aspects of their process and operation where these remain compliant with senate approved regulations and policies. They shall not have the ability to adopt processes which have been developed through the Board of Examiner process without senate approval.

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	117
Not approve	21
Abstain	9
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	5

6. Academic Contribution Framework - S 25/26 2 G

To *approve*

The paper was approved via a vote. A breakdown of the voting results are provided below.

Next steps: The outcome of voting will be relayed to University Court via routine reporting. The outcome of voting will be relayed to University Executive.

3.1. Senate **approved** the following motion:

M1: The version of the ACF approved by the University Executive constitutes a material change in the University's strategy related to research and teaching, which has been taken forward without the approval of Senate. Senate disapproves of this course of action by the University Executive and reiterates that matters of strategy related to research and teaching are the responsibility of Senate.

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	106
Not approve	20
Abstain	8
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	2

AMENDMENT – NOT APPROVED

An amendment to strike *(c) Total student contact hours in a given year (ACF 2.1)* from Motion M2 was considered and not approved.

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	40
Not approve	57
Abstain	23
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	11

3.2. Senate **approved** the following motion:

M2: The ACF approved by the University Executive has serious flaws that make it inappropriate for evaluating academic contribution. In particular, Senate rejects the use of the following metrics for evaluating academic contribution:

(a) Total number of published outputs in a given year (ACF 1.1)
(b) Total number of funding applications submitted in a given year (ACF 1.2)
(c) Total student contact hours in a given year (ACF 2.1)

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	107
Not approve	30
Abstain	18
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	0

3.3. Senate **approved** the following motion:

M3: The ACF approved by the University Executive risks damaging the academic culture of the University by failing to acknowledge the value of collaborative and collegial working.

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	125
Not approve	22
Abstain	9
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	2

7. **Senate and Senate Standing Committee Elections - S 25/26 2 H**
   To *approve*

Approved without requiring a vote. Amendment agreed with authors and no vote required.

Next steps: The Senate Support team will carry out the Senate and Senate Standing Committee elections in line with the decisions approved by Senate.

Senate **approved** the following arrangements for the elections to Senate and the Senate Standing Committees:

- The dates for opening the call for nominations and for submission of nominations.
- The periods for voting.
- The appointment of the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer.

Amendment:

The Standing Committee election arrangements are tentative and may be revised by Senate at a future meeting.

8. **Senate Committee Membership updates**
   To *approve*
   - **Senate Standing Committees - S 25/26 2 I**

The paper was not approved, however amendments to the paper were approved, the wording and a breakdown of the voting results are provided below.

Next steps: The membership will be updated to reflect decisions. The Senate Support team will support an election process and the Deputy Convener will continue to chair the Committee in the interim.

Amendment

Senate agreed to **amend** paragraph 3 as follows:
Senate is invited to approve ~~the addition of the Associate Principal and Deputy Secretary, Students and~~ the removal of the Vice-Principal, Students from the ex-officio membership of the Senate Education Committee. ~~The Associate Principal will replace the current Vice-Principal, Students on the Committee as the Vice-Principal, Students leaves the University.~~

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	98
Not approve	23
Abstain	10
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	11

Amendment

Senate **agreed** that an election by Single Transferable Vote (ranked choice) shall be held in a timely manner, process details to be decided by the Senate Clerk, to decide a convener for SEC for the remainder of the academic year. All members of the Senate Education Committee shall be eligible to stand by self-nomination, and all members of Senate shall be eligible to vote.

Choice	Number of votes

Approve	113
Not approve	24
Abstain	8
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	2

- **Senate Business Committee - S 25/26 2 J**

The paper was approved without a vote.

Next steps: The membership will be updated to reflect decisions.

Senate **approved** the addition of the Associate Principal and Deputy Secretary, Students and the removal of the Vice-Principal, Students from the ex-officio membership of Senate Business Committee. The Associate Principal will replace the current Vice-Principal Students on the Committee as the Vice-Principal, Students leaves the University.

- **Senate Exception Committee - S 25/26 2 K**

The paper was approved, subject to amendments. A breakdown of the voting results and amendments are provided below.

Next steps: The membership will be updated to reflect decisions.

Amendment:

Senate agreed to **amend** paragraph 4 as follows:
Senate is invited to approve ~~the addition of the Associate Principal and Deputy Secretary, Students and~~ the removal of the Vice-Principal, Students from the ex-officio membership of Senate Business Committee. ~~The Associate Principal will replace the current Vice-Principal Students on the Committee as the Vice-Principal, Students leaves the University.~~

Choice	**Number of votes**
Approve	95
Not approve	23
Abstain	16
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	5

Senate **approved** the remaining changes to the terms of reference and composition of the Committee, notably the change of the Vice-Convener of the Senate Exception Committee.

9. **Developing a General Framework for Delegation of Senate Authority - S 25/26 2 L**
   For approval

The paper was approved without a vote.

Next steps: The formation of the Group will be relayed to Court via routine reporting.

Senate **approved** the creation of a short-life working group tasked with formulating a statement setting out the general principles surrounding the delegation of Senate authority. In doing so:

a. It should build on the work already done by the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group, which culminated in a report presented to Senate in October 2025 and is reproduced in Appendix 1 to this paper.

b. It should engage with members of Senate, including student members, to understand the nature of matters that require approval at formal meetings of full Senate.
c. It should engage with Senate Standing Committee convenors and members to understand the nature of 'business-as-usual' activities over which autonomy should be maintained.
d. It should engage with colleagues supporting Senate's operations to ensure its recommendations can be implemented within reasonable resource constraints.
e. It will operate on a consultative and collaborative basis to ensure as broad a buy-in as possible. The short-life working group will present its recommendation to Senate for approval by May 2026 at the latest.

10. Academic Development within The Academic Mission of The University - S 25/26 2 M

For approval

The paper was approved via a vote. A breakdown of the voting results are provided below.

Next steps: The outcome of voting will be relayed to University Court via routine reporting. The outcome of voting will be relayed to University Executive.

Senate **approved** the following motions:

(M1) Material changes to the University's strategies for academic development require Senate oversight. This includes any changes to the outcomes of the 2009 review approved by Senate that mandated the formation of an Institute for Academic Development (IAD) and the appointment of its Director.

(M2) The formation of a formal Review Panel, of similar structure to that convened in 2009, tasked with reviewing existing provision for academic development, at institutional level, to include the structure and remit of the IAD. This task may be delegated to an appropriate committee such as Senate Education Committee. This review should include consultation with all Schools, all Deaneries, and institutional experts on academic development.

Choice	Number of votes
Approve	101
Not approve	15
Abstain	7
I don't have enough information to reach a decision	2

Items for information

To *note* the following:

11. Senate Statement of Primary Responsibilities - S 25/26 2 N

To *note*

12. Senate, Culture and Inclusion - S 25/26 2 O

To note

13. Teaching Timetabling and Course Selection Project – Update - S 25/26 2 P

To *note*

14. Court Communications - S 25/26 2 Q

To *note*

15. Senate Standing Committee business:

a. Senate Standing Committees Upcoming Business - S 25/26 2 R

To *note*

16. Research Strategy Group Report - S 25/26 2 S

To *note*

Date of next meeting: 4 March 2026

Deadline for papers: 26 January 2026