



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Senate

Wednesday 21 October 2026, 1:10-4pm
Lecture Theatre G.03, 50 George Square / Microsoft Teams

Agenda

1. Welcome and Apologies – 13:10-13:30 (20 minutes - items 1 & 2)	
2. Minutes and e-Senate Reports To <u>approve</u> the minutes of the meetings held on: • 26 April 2026 • 19 May 2026 • 25 May 2026 • e-Senate meeting held 16 - 30 September 2026	S 26/27 1 A CLOSED S 26/27 1 B S 26/27 1 C S 26/27 1 D
2.1 Matters arising Senate Action Log To note updates to the Senate Action Log	S 26/27 1 E
2.2 Report of the Senate Business Committee To note	S 26/27 1 F
3. Convener's Communications – 13:30-13:40 (10 minutes)	Verbal Update
Substantive items	
Time-sensitive items	
4. Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for 2026/27 – 13:40-14:00 (20 minutes) For discussion	S 26/27 1 G
5. Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of Decision Trees for Exceptional Circumstances – 14:00 – 14:30 (30 minutes) For approval	S 26/27 1 H
Break – 14:30-14:40 (10 minutes)	

6. Report of the Honorary Degrees Committee - 14:40 – 14:50 (10 minutes) For approval	S 26/27 1 I CLOSED
7. Senate College Professional Services Election Regulations – 14:50 – 15:00 (10 minutes) For approval	S 26/27 1 J
Other agenda items	
Academic Size & Shape – 15:00 – 16:00 (60 minutes)	
8. Lack of Updates from the University Initiatives Portfolio Board To note	S 26/27 1 K
9. Academic Size and Shape Project: Update To note	S 26/27 1 L CLOSED
10. Programme closures and Academic Size and Shape For approval	S 26/27 1 M
The meeting will conclude at 4pm. The full meeting duration (2 hours 50 minutes) is allocated to agenda items above. It is unlikely that the papers listed below will be considered by Senate on 21 October. Any papers marked ‘For Approval’ or ‘For Discussion’ that are not reached at the meeting will be carried forward.	
11. Invitation to Dialogue on Senate’s and Court’s Roles and Responsibilities: 20 minutes For approval	S 26/27 1 N
12. Implementation of Senate Decisions: 20 minutes For approval	S 26/27 1 O
13. Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate and its Committees: 10 minutes For discussion	S 26/27 1 P
14. Interim Arrangements for Standing Committees: 15 minutes For approval	S 26/27 1 Q
15. Annual Report of Senate and its Standing Committees To note	S 26/27 1 R
16. Senate and Senate Standing Committees: Planned Essential Business in 2026/27 To note	S 26/27 1 S
17. Senate Standing Committee Membership To note	S 26/27 1 T

18. Senate Standing Committee Upcoming Business To note	S 26/27 1 U
19. University Policy and Approaches to Antisemitism: 45 minutes For approval	S 26/27 1 V
20. Court Resolution: Boards of Studies For comment	S 26/27 1 W
2027-28 tentative Senate meetings dates, to be confirmed by May 2027 • Wednesday 13 October 2027 • Wednesday 8 December 2027 • Wednesday 8 March 2028 • Tuesday 16 May 2028	

Senate

21 October 2026

Senate Minutes and e-Senate Reports

Description of paper

1. The paper provides the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held 19 May 2026 and the Special meetings held 26 April and 25 May 2026. The paper also provides the report of electronic business conducted between 16-30 September 2026.

Action requested / recommendation

2. For approval.

Discussion

2. The unconfirmed minutes of the special meeting held 26 April 2026 is a closed paper which is restricted to Senate Member access only. Members of Senate can access the minute via the [Senate Members Portal](#).
3. The unconfirmed minute of the 19 May, 25 May and e-Senate meeting held 16-30 September are provided in Appendix 1.

Resource implications

5. None.

Risk management

6. Not applicable.

Equality & diversity

7. Not applicable.

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

8. The open minutes of Senate meetings are published on the Senate website: [Senate agendas, papers and minutes](#). Closed minutes of Senate meetings are published on the [Senate Members' Portal](#) only.
9. Papers and minutes related to meetings of Senate Standing Committees have been circulated via email to Senate members.

Author

Senate Secretariat
September 2026

Freedom of Information

Open paper, items of closed business are provided as links to closed SharePoint sites.



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Senatus Academicus

Tuesday 19 May 2026, 1:10-4pm

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

Unconfirmed Minutes

Attendees: Catherine Abbott, Thomas Ahnert, Gill Aitken, Andrew Alexander, Katya Amott, Jonathan Ansell, David Argyle, Kate Ash-Irisarri, Andy Aydin-Aitchison, Liz Baggs, Richard Ball, Dario Banegas, Michael Barany, Jacob Bard-Rosenberg, Frances Barnett, Richard Baxstrom, Sian Bayne, Matt Bell, Philip Best, Richard Blythe, Lisa Boden, Tamanna Bostani, Nicola Boydell, Julian Bradfield, Barry Bradford, Laura Bradley, Paul Brennan, Aidan Brown, Emily Brownell, Karl Burgess, Mette Cameron, Philip Camp, Celine Caquineau, Jeremy Carrette, Mizeck Chagunda, Leigh Chalmers, Sue Chapman-Kelly, Jianyi Cheng, Matthew Chrisman, Neil Chue Hong, Aurora Constantin, Sam Coombes, Martin Corley, Miguel Costa-Gomes, Sharon Cowan, Elliot Crowley, Juan Cruz, Jo Danbolt, Kirsty Day, Giulia De Togni, Luigi Del Debbio, Jean-Christophe Denis, Chris Dent, Charlotte Desvages, John Devaney, Kevin Donovan, Julia Dorin, Lawrence Dritsas, Donald Dunbar, Claire Duncanson, Susan Dunnett, Constantinos Eleftheriou, Omolabake Fakunle, David Farrier, Tonks Fawcett, Valentina Ferlito, Ross Galloway, Vashti Galpin, Einan Gardi, James Garforth, Akrit Ghimire, Antonis Giannopoulos, Stuart Gilfillan, Laura Glendinning, Benjamin Goddard, Iain Gordon, Kim Graham, Liz Grant, Karen Gregory, Rachel Happer, Jeni Harden, Tina Harrison, Helen Hastie, David Hay, Thorunn Helgason, Ailsa Henderson, Chris Heunen, Jane Hislop, Willem Hollmann, James Hopgood, Jenny Hoy, Emma Hunter, Gavin Jack, Julia Jodlowska, Crispin Jordan, Hamish Kallin, Itamar Kastner, Meryl Kenny, George Kinnear, David Kluth, Dave Laurenson, Andy Law, Tom Leinster, Dawn Livingstone, Jason Love, Ewa Luger, Karen Luo, Antony Maciocia, Jill MacKay, Malcolm MacLeod, Cait MacPhee, Joao Magalhaes, Cristina Martinez Gonzalez, Peter Mathieson, Sarah McAllister, Mike McGrew, Gavin McLachlan, Encarni Medina-Lopez, Avery Meiksin, Mihaela Mihai, James Mittra, James Mooney, Ben Morse, Simon Mudd, Rachel Muers, Harish Nair, Rupert Nash, Pau Navarro, Bryne Ngwenya, Killian O' Dochartaigh, Olga Oikonomidou, Richard Oosterhoff, Ugur Ozdemir, Diana Paton, Jamie Pearce, Josephine Pemberton, Sari Pennings, Nick Polydorides, Sarah Prescott, Cip Pruteanu, Colin Pulham, Ajitha Rajan, Syjil Ramjuthan, John Rappa, Carol Richardson, Aryelly Rodriguez Carbonell, Dave Rush, Enrique Sanchez Molano, Giulio Santori, Eberhard Sauer, Ash Scholz, Bernd Schroers, Matthias Schwannauer, Stewart Smith, David Smith, Courtney Stafford-Walter, Wilfried Swenden, Emily Taylor, Alex Thomson, Sally Till, Suzanne Trill, Tamara Trodd, Niki Vermeulen, Patrick Walsh, Lena Wanggren, Helsi Wilson, Iain Woodhouse, Iain Wright, Ben Wynne

In attendance: Meg Batty, Nina Bremner, Adam Bunni, Lisa Dawson, Olivia Hayes (Clerk), Patrick Jack, Nichola Kett

Apologies: Kasia Banas, Kelly Blacklock, Mary Brennan, Christopher Campbell, Jeremy Crang, Kevin Dhaliwal, Paul Du Plessis, Shannon Vallor

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Convener, Professor Sir Peter Mathieson, opened the meeting and confirmed Senate had reached quorum with 169 members in attendance.

The Convener extended his thanks to student members for their contributions during their term of office.

The Academic Registrar, Ms Lisa Dawson, confirmed that four amendments had been received for Paper K: Senate Standing Committee Membership, and one motion received for Paper O: Senate Statement of Primary Responsibilities. A motion had been carried forward from the March meeting, this would be considered under item 2.2: Report of the Senate Business Committee.

2. Minutes and e-Senate Reports

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on:

- 4 March 2026 - S 25/26 5 A (CLOSED)
- e-Senate meeting held 15 – 29 April 2026 - S 25/26 5 B (CLOSED)

Senate approved the transcript of the 4 March 2026 meeting and the report of the e-Senate meeting held 15-29 April.

Senate were informed that the transcript of the 28 April meeting would be circulated in the week commencing 25 May 2026 and consideration of this item carried forward to the next Ordinary meeting of Senate.

2.1 Matters arising

Senate Action Log - S 25/26 5 D

Senate noted the updates to the Action Log.

2.2 Report of the Senate Business Committee - S 25/26 5 E

To note

Senate received the Report of the Business Committee which outlines the key activities and decisions. The full minutes of meetings are on the Senate Members' Portal. Senate noted that the Committee is planning a further meeting on 18 June to discuss the redirection of papers and is preparing a proposal on e-Senate to be considered at a future meeting.

The following point was raised:

- The response provided to the authors of a paper requesting information on the activities of the University Initiatives Portfolio Board (UIPB) was considered to be inadequate. Senate has not been provided with the requested information, and this is necessary for Senate to perform its statutory duty.
The Academic Registrar acknowledged that a further response would be provided.

Senate noted the Report of the Senate Business Committee.

2.3 Motion on the Senate Business Committee - S 25/26 5 F

For approval

Senate received two motions on the Senate Business Committee. Senate was informed that the motions were originally raised in March 2026, however the proposers agreed to delay consideration to May 2026 to allow the Business Committee an opportunity to conclude their ongoing discussions on redirection. Senate was informed that these discussions had not taken place, though a meeting is scheduled for 18 June.

Senate was invited to consider the following clarification to the Business Committee terms of reference:

In keeping with the original recommendation that the Business Committee "should not be a gatekeeper" (S24/25 2J), affirmed in Senate's decision to amend the draft Business Committee terms of reference to remove language about "referring" or "redirecting" or "deeming ineligible" submitted items, it is hereby clarified that all timely submitted papers and motions as well as urgent papers and motions notified ahead of the meeting shall be included on the Billet. The role of the Business Committee is to invite relevant parties to contribute information and to invite improvements to papers, and to recommend sequencing and timings of papers (including the recommendation to deprioritise motions for consideration only if time allows), not to prevent papers and motions from appearing on the agenda by referral, redirection, adjudicating remit, or other means. If the Business Committee feels a delay to consideration of a paper or motion is advisable to allow further input or action from other parties, it may communicate this recommendation to the submitters and to Senate, but the decision to withhold a paper prior to the meeting remains with the submitters, with Senate retaining the prerogative to defer a decision on a motion at its meetings by agreement or vote.

Proposer: Michael Barany

Secunder: Jacob Bard-Rosenberg

Senate was informed of the rationale for the motion, with the following points raised:

- The motion intends to confirm Senate's position on the redirection or referral of papers to other areas and to clarify Senate's expectation on whether the Committee act as a gatekeeper for papers submitted for inclusion on the Senate agenda or whether those be available for all members to access.
- The interpretation of point 5 of the Committee's terms of reference did not align with the proposer's view, as they drafted the substituted language for this item when the Committee's terms of reference were considered in December 2024.

In discussion on the motion, the following points were raised:

- The Convener of the Business Committee outlined the steps taken by the Committee to date to reach an agreed position on redirection. She also noted that there is a majority view within the Committee that they may redirect papers in-part, with reference to point 5 of the Committee's terms of reference.
- Members sought reassurance that discussions at the meeting of the Business Committee on 18 June would not supersede the decision taken by Senate on the motions being considered.
- The Convener of the Business Committee noted that the Committee's activities on redirection have been motivated by a desire to provide information to paper authors and Senate in a timely manner and that it was not possible to allocate all items time on the agenda.
- The Committee does not have to allocate time on the agenda to all items of business, however members expressed a desire for the wider membership to access to papers

submitted for each meeting of Senate. The Convener of the Business Committee responded to confirm that where papers are redirected these are published on the Senate Members Portal, alongside a response from the relevant area.

- A member of the Business Committee expressed their support for the motion and the guidance from Senate on how the Committee should approach redirection and expressed their discomfort with advice provided to the Committee on specific matters.
- The Convener of Senate highlighted that the formation of the Business Committee was a recommendation of the External Review of Senate, and stated that, in his view, the Committee has been beneficial to the efficiency of meetings and enabling more members to input into the recommendations for items to be included on the Senate agenda.

Senate approved the motion by a majority vote of 92. 24 members did not approve and 9 members abstained.

Senate was invited to consider a further clarification to the Business Committee terms of reference:

Senate is asked further to agree to the clarification that the creation of the Business Committee made no reference to and in no way removed the process adopted by Senate in S23/24 2J for communication regarding submitted items not included on the Billet by decision of the Convener.

Proposer: Michael Barany

Seconder: Jacob Bard-Rosenberg

Senate was informed of the rationale for the motion, with the following points raised:

- The motion intends to clarify that previous decisions (see [Minutes of the 7 February 2024](#)) made in relation to the transparency of agenda items is not superseded by the creation of the Senate Business Committee.

In discussion of the motion, the following points were raised:

- The Senate Business Committee is advisory and the Senate Convener has final responsibility for approving the Senate agenda.
- There are papers submitted that have not been included on the Senate agenda and not made available on the Senate Members Portal.
- The Convener of the Business Committee explained that papers are not published on the Portal where the Committee agree that further work is required and those comments are returned to the paper authors. Or, where there are matters referenced within papers which cannot be made publicly available, for example, legal issues.

Senate approved the motion by a majority vote of 96. 23 members did not approve and 14 members abstained.

3. Convener's Communications

The Convener reiterated his thanks to members concluding their term on Senate, including student senators.

The governance of Academic Size and Shape was raised. The following points were made:

- Members queried the timeline for Senate receiving an update on the governance plan, as approved at the special meeting of Senate held on 28 April. The Convener confirmed that Senate would be updated when there was information to report and that work on Academic Size and Shape is progressing across the three Colleges.

- The possibility of compulsory redundancies was raised, with members clarifying if a discussion on compulsory redundancies would take place at Senate prior to those being implemented. The Convener explained that decisions regarding compulsory redundancies would be consulted on in the usual way, with Senate informed on matters within its remit.
- Senate members sought reassurance on the decision-making of Academic Size and Shape, and specifically the closure of courses and programmes and that decision-making is based on a robust analysis of financial and non-financial impact. Members expressed concern that decision-making is being undertaken by consultants who are not academic staff, and therefore the academic impact of decisions is not considered. Members sought reassurance that academic input is sought on resource-related decisions.
- The Convener of the Academic Size and Shape Board, Professor Kim Graham, thanked members for the feedback on the disconnect between the information that members felt was lacking and the information provided and would consider how this disconnect could be addressed. She noted that aspects of projects will be brought to Senate for input at appropriate points as raised at the Special Meeting held on 28 April, and reiterated that the University Court has responsibility for the work of Academic Size and Shape. She explained that information would be provided to Senate on specific projects and the timeline for these coming to Senate, however this work is still to take place and therefore detail cannot be provided at this time.

Substantive items

Academic Quality and Standards

4. Board of Examiners Review – Thresholds for excluding course results in Exceptional Circumstances - S 25/26 5 G For approval

The Academic Registrar, Ms Lisa Dawson, and Head of Academic Policy and Regulations, Dr Adam Bunni introduced the item. The paper is seeking Senate approval to implement uniform thresholds for excluding course results from individual students' degree classification decisions, where Exceptional Circumstances apply. The absence of an agreed threshold for the exclusion of course results presents a considerable risk for consistency across the University. The proposed threshold is as outlined in the paper and intends to clarify that Boards must exclude up to 40 credits of courses impacted by Exceptional Circumstances, where doing so would be to the benefit of the student in terms of improving their average for the purposes of progression or classification. The proposal is that the threshold would come into effect for the 2026/27 academic year, for students entering the Honours stage of an Undergraduate programme, or students commencing a new Postgraduate Taught programme.

The following points were raised in discussion of the item:

- There is a lack of clarity on what Senate is being asked to approve, and specifically whether Boards are required to exclude 40 credits as a minimum or a maximum threshold. Members sought clarity on the paper ahead of reaching a decision on the item.
- Section 10.6.2 of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy states that decisions are based on the principle of the "best academic interest" of the student and that Boards must be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of performance to exclude credits. Should the proposal be approved by Senate, this section of the policy would be revised to align with the paper and remove the discretion from Boards to determine that a different volume of credits is required as sufficient evidence for the exclusion of credits.

- The impact of the proposal on joint degree programmes was raised, with a concern about the impact of discounting aspects from each half of the programme and impact on students meeting learning outcomes. The proposal would not undermine the 'must pass' requirement and this mechanism can be used to ensure that learning outcomes are met across joint programmes.
- The risks of not approving the paper were discussed, with members seeking to understand the timeline for approving a revised version, noting that approval of policy is required before the start of the academic year and a further year of inconsistent application is a significant risk in the context of a National Review of Awarding Arrangements. The proposal seeks to ensure the consistent application of regulations across the University, which was highlighted as a concern in a recent report on the University of Glasgow.
- Student members sought to reiterate that consistency across the student experience is valued, and noted that a single consistent position is easier for students to understand.

Senate considered the paper subject to the following clarification:

The paper proposes to remove the existing approach to thresholds regarding exclusion of course results where Exceptional Circumstances (EC) are accepted, as currently defined in section 10.6.2 of the EC Policy.

This will be replaced with the approach set out in section 13 of the paper, namely that:

- *(On undergraduate Honours programmes) Boards of Examiners will discount up to one third of credits per year used for classification purposes, and up to one third of credits in total;*

For example, Boards of Examiners which classify based on 240 credits (120 credits in each of Y3 and Y4), will discount up to 40 credits per year, and up to 80 credits in total.

- *(On postgraduate taught programmes) Boards of Examiners will discount up to one third of the taught credits on a programme, up to a maximum of 40 credits.*

This approach would retain the "best academic interest" principle set out in 10.4 of the EC policy. As such, the proposed threshold would mean that, where courses are referred to a programme Board for exclusion, the Board must exclude those courses, provided that:

- 1. the credit volume of the courses is not more than 40 credits per year under consideration (i.e. 80 credits in total, where two UG Honours years are being considered); and*
- 2. excluding the course result would lead to a better programme average for the student (for the purposes of progression or classification).*

The only courses which would be exempt from the requirement for exclusion (under the above criteria) would be:

- *All dissertation courses on postgraduate taught programmes;*
- *Dissertation courses on undergraduate Honours programme where the Board of Examiners has specified in advance that they will not be excluded for any students.*

The following points were raised in discussion of the clarification:

- The Degree Programme Table (DPT) and Degree Regulations for Programmes of Study (DRPS) for 2026/27 have already been published and it is not possible to specify 'must pass' courses at this stage for the next academic year. Members felt it was not good practice to have information that differed between the Programme Handbook and DPTs. In response, Dr Bunni confirmed that 'must be passed' detail can be specified in the Programme Handbook until these can be reflected in the DPT.

- Senate were encouraged to trust those involved in drafting the paper and it was outlined that substantial consultation had taken place across the Colleges, including Deans of Education, Directors of Learning and Teaching and College Committees. Such proposals are subject to substantial scrutiny and input from across the University which takes place across learning and teaching policies and processes.

Senate approved the revised paper by a majority vote of 64. 58 members did not approve, 6 members abstained and 12 members do not have enough information.

5. Maintaining Academic Standards: Senate Oversight of Exceptional Variations to Regulations - S 25/26 5 H For approval

Dr George Kinnear introduced the item. The paper aims to promote Senate oversight of teaching by emphasising the importance of maintaining academic standards in the event of disruption to normal processes. Dr Kinnear noted that during previous disruption due to the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) that took place during 2023, variations to the University's ordinary academic policies and regulations were implemented by the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) under delegated authority, and many members were not satisfied that academic standards were maintained. The intent of the paper is to ensure that full Senate has oversight of any variations proposed, and that monitoring of the impact of those variations takes place. Dr Kinnear noted that the paper is independent of the motion approved by Senate in October, which state that any changes to exam board regulations or operations in 2025/26 Academic Year require the approval of full Senate.

The Academic Registrar, Ms Lisa Dawson, referenced the two motions approved by Senate in October 2025 relating to the operation of Boards of Examiners. In this context, Senate Academic Policy and Regulation Committee (APRC) will meet to consider a paper on variations to Boards of Examiners on Thursday and, should the Committee agree to recommend this paper for approval, a Special Meeting of Senate will be called and is expected to take place in the week commencing 25 May.

The following points were raised in discussion of the item:

- The ability to meet the timeframe for the requested report on data as given in Motion 2 was queried. It was acknowledged that an interim report providing the data that is available at the time of the next meeting would be in keeping with the spirit of the motion, with full analysis to follow.
- The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has a specific view of maintaining standards and what they expect the University to do to uphold academic standards. Universities set their own academic standards through their degree awarding regulations, and universities may make variations to these regulations. The QAA set out specific guidance on how adjustments can be made in circumstances such as a MAB and industrial action. During the previous MAB in 2023, the University's variations to regulations were scrutinised by the QAA as a concern was raised via the Scottish concern scheme regarding the University's academic standards. The QAA found that there was no case to answer, that the University's approach was proportionate to the circumstances, and there was no evidence of risk to academic standards through the variations put in place during the MAB in 2023.
- The risk to academic standards is increased where there is a different application of the variations, leading to a variation in outcomes for students across different programmes.

Senate approved Motion 1 as presented in the paper by a majority vote of 121. 15 members did not approve, 4 members abstained and 1 member did not have enough information.

Senate approved Motion 2 as presented in the paper by a majority vote of 121. 16 members did not approve, 4 members abstained and no members did not have enough information.

Action: Senate's decision will be communicated to APRC and Senate will be notified if a Special Meeting is required as soon as practicable.

Action: Instructions for Boards of Examiners will be developed to include the information specified in Motion 2.

Action: A report be presented to the next Ordinary meeting of Senate as detailed in Motion 2.

6. Court Resolutions: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations - S 25/26 5 I

For comment

The Academic Registrar, Ms Lisa Dawson, introduced the item. The Court Resolutions containing the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations are presented to Senate for consultation.

Members were invited to comment on the Resolutions and no comments were raised. The University Court would be informed that Senate did not raise any comments on this item.

Senate Standing Committees

7. Framework for Delegation of Senate Authority - S 25/26 5 J

For approval

Dr Andy Law and Julia Jodlowska introduced the item and explained the three-step process as set out in the paper. The paper sets out a framework for the delegation of Senate's authority to its Standing Committees, developed by a Short-Life Working Group (SLWG) in accordance with terms approved by Senate in December 2025. There are substantial challenges for new members joining Senate in understanding the business and context of items that Senate are invited to consider and approve. This is particularly the case for student members who serve on Senate for one academic year. The framework intends to support greater understanding and awareness of the rationale, consultation and process that has taken place before Senate is invited to approve an item of business. This will enable members to engage with business in a meaningful and informed way and build trust and confidence ahead of decision-making. The framework is not intended to apply retrospectively and is intended to include business under delegated authority only.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Members queried if the framework is intended to include member-drafted papers, stating that this may include papers on strategic matters which members wish to discuss and which are not brought to Senate for them to contribute to. The proposers of the framework suggested that members may be able to bring forward a paper to Senate proposing that a Standing Committee undertake further work in a specific area.
- The collaborative work undertaken between student members and staff was highlighted as an achievement, noting the wider comments made regarding trust and the positive benefits of collaborative work between student and staff members on Senate.
- A broader approach to consultation and engagement was encouraged across the University.

Senate approved the paper without requiring a vote.

8. Senate Standing Committee business

For approval

a. Senate Standing Committee Membership 2026/27 - S 25/26 5 K

The Senate Clerk, Olivia Hayes, introduced the item. The paper provides Senate with the updated membership of the Senate Standing Committees for 2026/27, sets out points relating to the election of a Senate Education Committee Convener, and invites Senate to confirm it still wishes to carry out an election by approving the proposed arrangements.

Senate received six amendments to the paper.

Amendment 1:

Senate considered the following Amendment to the Standing Committee convener role description:

The role of Standing Committee convener is to chair committee meetings, manage the committee's agenda, and represent the committee where appropriate. They do so with the support of Senate colleagues, committee members, and AQS staff. The convener works in partnership with those in relevant management roles to support effective execution of Senate's role on matters within Senate's remit. Committee conveners should have the confidence of Senate and be committed to supporting Senate's performance of its role in the university, including through the committee's exercise of delegated authority where appropriate.

Amendment 2:

Senate considered the following Amendment:

The conveners of each Standing Committee shall be elected, with the electorate to consist of all current members of Senate as of 19 May 2026. Any member of Senate who expects to remain in the 2026-27 academic year may stand. The election shall take place online by Single Transferrable Vote (ranked choice) according to the timeline in paragraph 21 of this paper (5K).

Amendment 3.1:

Senate considered the following Amendment to appendix 4A:

The members of ~~the Senate Education Committee~~ will have the opportunity to nominate themselves for the position of Convener. ~~Members should have held a position on the Committee for at least one academic year prior to nomination.~~

Amendment 3.2:

Senate considered the following Amendment to appendix 4B:

*Members **shall submit a nomination statement of up to two pages addressing: who wish to nominate themselves for the Convener position should demonstrate their knowledge and experience in chairing University or other committees and the wider external regulatory framework to which the committee is subject to and the Convener has accountabilities to. Additionally, the individual should have a deep understanding of the connections required to drive forward work of strategic importance that falls within the Committees remit, and have an awareness of internal and external projects, works and developments interest in and familiarity with projects and requirements relevant to the remit of the Committee; and experience and excellence in teaching, student***

support, programme oversight, or other matters related to the Committee remit. If the nominee has been subject to an approved vote of no confidence from Senate, the statement must address the actions taken since then to address the reasons for the lack of confidence and demonstrate that the nominee has the confidence required to lead a Senate committee.

Amendment 3.3:

Senate considered the following Amendment to appendix 4D:

In the event that there is only one eligible nomination for the position, ~~the candidate will be assigned to the Convenorship of the Committee~~ a vote will take place to confirm whether Senate has confidence in the nominee or wishes to re-open nominations.

Amendment 4:

Senate considered the following Amendment:

In view of par. 18d, Senate recommends that resourcing equivalent to a 0.2 FTE internal buyout be allocated from an appropriate central budget to the budget unit otherwise responsible for the elected convener's salary.

Proposer: Michael Barany

Seconded: Ben Wynne and Richard Ball

Senate was informed of the rationale for the amendments, with the following points raised:

- Several points within the paper have not been formally approved by Senate, including the role descriptor for a Committee Convener and the suitability of individuals to act as Convener of a Standing Committee.
- Senate approved by a majority vote to elect the convener of the Senate Education Committee and the proposers suggest this be expanded to all Standing Committees to establish Senate's confidence in the individuals who are tasked with convening Standing Committees.
- Senate members have a role in taking ownership of the business of Standing Committees and that confidence in the Standing Committee Conveners can be achieved by electing individuals to the role of Convener.

In discussion of the amendments, the following points were raised:

- The proposed amendments present a significant risk to academic governance if Conveners do not hold the appropriate expertise for the relevant Committee. Across the sector, comparable committees are chaired by senior staff with a defined role and with substantial high-level expertise and connections internally and with appropriate external bodies. The forthcoming National Review of Awarding Arrangements was highlighted as a particular concern and the potential wider impact of an inexperienced Convener without the appropriate authority undertaking complex business, with the worst case scenario resulting in a potential impact on the university's degree awarding powers.
- The amendments remove reference to some of the key responsibilities of Standing Committee Conveners, and members of current committees are best placed to understand the current business and challenges which the Committee has navigated.
- The original proposal to elect the Convener of the Senate Education Committee was proposed as members felt that business being undertaken at this Committee was not reflective of the key learning and teaching matters taking place at the University. Members may have greater confidence in the Convener if Senate and Standing

Committee business was aligned with the policies and strategy affecting learning and teaching activities taking place within the institution.

- Sabbatical members are elected to their position without experience or expertise and are provided with support and guidance to learn their role during their term of office.
- Members expressed discomfort with comments of a personal nature made regarding a members' contribution to the discussion.

A procedural query regarding the 'I do not have enough information' option was raised. Members sought clarification on the use of this option and requested that the intent of this option be clarified. The Senate Convener agreed that this would be investigated and Senate would receive an update.

Senate approved Amendment 1 as presented by a majority vote of 75. 39 members did not approve, 12 members abstained and 2 members did not have enough information.

Senate approved Amendment 2 as presented by a majority vote of 64. 49 members did not approve, 9 members abstained and 3 members did not have enough information.

Senate approved Amendment 3.1 as presented by a majority vote of 69. 49 members did not approve, 6 members abstained and 3 members did not have enough information.

Senate approved Amendment 3.2 as presented by a majority vote of 73. 49 members did not approve, 6 members abstained and 3 members did not have enough information.

Senate approved Amendment 3.3 as presented by a majority vote of 82. 39 members did not approve, 7 members abstained and 2 members did not have enough information.

Senate noted that Amendment 4 was included as a recommendation, however Senate does not have authority to approve resourcing matters. The proposers agreed in the interest of time not to take a vote on the amendment.

The Academic Registrar confirmed that the implications of Senate's decisions would be considered and the University Court informed via routine reporting.

Action: The 'I do not have enough information' voting option to be clarified and Senate to be updated on this.

Action: The implications of Senate's decisions would be considered and the University Court informed via routine reporting.

b. Senate Standing Committees: Proposal to Disband the Standing Committee Priorities Process - S 25/26 5 L

The Convener of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee, and Deputy Convener of the Senate Education Committee, Professor Tina Harrison, and Convener of the Academic Policy and Regulation Committee, Dr Emily Taylor introduced the item. The paper recommends that Senate disband the Standing Committee priorities process moving forward. The Convener's outlined how Senate will continue to have oversight of Committee business, as detailed in the paper.

No comments were raised in discussion of the item.

Senate did not approve the paper by a majority vote of 62. 51 members voted to approve the paper, 8 members abstained and 2 members did not have enough information.

Senate Effectiveness

9. Proposal on the conduct of Senate business: Senate minutes - S 25/26 5 M

For approval

The Senate Clerk, Olivia Hayes, introduced the item. The paper sets out two proposals for the production of the Senate Minutes and Senate Support recommends Senate approve option A with the rationale for this recommendation provided in the paper.

The following point was raised in discussion of the item:

- A member raised concern regarding the brevity referred to under Option A and the potential this approach may leave out critical comments made by individuals during the course of the meeting.

Senate approved Option A as set out in the paper by a majority vote of 92. 24 members selected Option B, 6 members abstained and 1 member does not have enough information.

10. Senate and Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review and Review of progress toward External Effectiveness Review Recommendations - S 25/26 5 N

For approval

The Senate Clerk, Olivia Hayes, introduced the item. The paper invites Senate to approve the plans for the internal review of Senate and its Standing Committees' effectiveness for 2025/26 and provides Senate with detail on the plans to review the progress towards the recommendations of the External Effectiveness Review undertaken in 2022/23, and will include specific questions on the Senate Business Committee.

Senate approved the paper without a vote.

Senate members were encouraged to engage with the Internal Effectiveness Review process.

11. Update on the Statement of Primary Responsibilities for Senate - S 25/26 5 O

To note

The Senate Clerk, Olivia Hayes, introduced the item. 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. The Governance and Nominations Committee, which is a standing committee of the University Court, received a copy of the SOPR and provided comments. These would be considered alongside the feedback from Senate ahead of the final statement being presented to the 17 June meeting of the University Court.

Senate considered the following motion:

*Senate **notes** the commitment in paragraphs 8-9 for consultation with Senate including formal consultation and allocated time for discussion, that members have had less than a week to consider the current draft and reply to the "critical friends" feedback, and that there is no time allocated before June's meeting of Court for Senate member consideration and discussion of further revisions and responses arising from the just-opened consultation on this new draft.*

*Senate **notes** the significant benefits of consultation for the effectiveness of any statement, reflected for example in the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance reference to encouraging a high level of mutual understanding between Court and Senate.*

*Senate **recommends** that Court allow for meaningful consultation with the full Senate (including the opportunity to comment on any revised versions proposed for adoption) before approving any proposed Statement of Primary Responsibilities.*

Proposer: Michael Barany

Seconder: Vashti Galpin

Senate was informed of the rationale for the motion, with the following points raised:

- The final stages of the SOPR are occurring at pace and is behind the schedule that was originally provided to Senate at the beginning of the process.
- The importance of the SOPR was highlighted, particularly for promoting good relationships and understanding between the University Court and Senate.
- Senate members have not had sufficient time to consult, discuss and form an understanding of the SOPR as presented.

In discussion of the motion, the following points were raised:

- Members queried whether the Senate member responses to the survey would be shared with the University Court, with members suggesting that maximum transparency would be appreciated. The Clerk agreed to confirm a position as soon as practicable and prior to the survey closing.
- Members expressed concern regarding the draft SOPR, with specific concern regarding the boundaries of Senate's responsibilities as set out in the SOPR and the application of the 2016 Higher Education Governance Act.
- Members queried whether the University would publish or share the legal advice received on how the 2016 Higher Education Governance Act applies to the University Senate. The Academic Registrar outlined that work is taking place to review the legal advice provided to Senate in 2023, and a further update would be shared in due course.

Senate noted the Update on the Statement of Primary Responsibilities for Senate and approved the motion without requiring a vote. Senate's position would be conveyed to the June meeting of the University Court and Senate informed of the outcome of Court's consideration of the SOPR.

Action: Senate Clerk to confirm how Senate members feedback would be shared with the University Court and provide an update to members as soon as possible.

Action: Senate to receive an update on the legal advice provided in 2023.

Clerk's note: A post-meeting update was circulated to Senate on 21 May 2026 to confirm that Senate members feedback would be shared in full with the University Court alongside the SOPR.

Items for information

12. Research Strategy Group Report - S 25/26 5 P

To note

Senate noted the report of the Research Strategy Group.

13. Outcome of the Senate Elections - S 25/26 5 Q

To note

Senate noted the outcome of the 2026 Senate elections.



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Senatus Academicus Special Meeting

Monday 25 May, 12:30-1:30pm

Microsoft Teams

Voting will be undertaken using Wooclap.

Unconfirmed Minute

Attendees: Catherine Abbott, Samer Abdelnour, Thomas Ahnert, Gill Aitken, Ruth Andrew, Jonathan Ansell, Katya Arnott, Kate Ash-Irisarri, Richard Ball, Michael Barany, Jacob Bard-Rosenberg, Richard Baxstrom, Richard Blythe, Julian Bradfield, Laura Bradley, Aidan Brown, Emily Brownell, Tom Bruce, Mette Cameron, Carol Campbell, Christopher Campbell, Mirko Canevaro, Celine Caqueneau, Jeremy Carrette, Bailey Carthouser, Mizeck Chagunda, Sue Chapman-Kelly, Matthew Chrisman, Neil Chue Hong, Sam Coombes, Miguel Costa-Gomes, Chris Cox, Elliot Crowley, Juan Cruz, Caspar Cubitt, Jo Danbolt, Kirsty Day, Jean-Christophe Denis, Chris Dent, Charlotte Desvages, John Devaney, Kevin Donovan, Leonidas Doumas, Lawrence Dritsas, Susan Dunnett, Mark Evans, Lucy Evans, David Farrier, Sue Fletcher-Watson, Emily Ford-Halliday, Ross Galloway, Vashti Galpin, Einan Gardi, Akrit Ghimire, Antonis Giannopoulos, Benjamin Goddard, Iain Gordon, Kim Graham, Richard Gratwick, Lucy Grig, Rachel Happer, Thorunn Helgason, Jane Hislop, Willem Hollmann, James Hopgood, Jenny Hoy, Emma Hunter, Gavin Jack, Jakov Jandric, An Jiang, Julia Jodlowska, Crispin Jordan, Tobias Kelly, George Kinnear, Linda Kirstein, David Kluth, Siddhant Kumar, Dave Laurenson, Andy Law, Tom Leinster, Dawn Livingstone, Jason Love, Karen Luo, Antony Maciocia, Malcolm MacLeod, Cait MacPhee, Cristina Martinez Gonzalez, Peter Mathieson, Sarah McAllister, Gavin McLachlan, Marc J Metzger, Mihaela Mihai, James Mittra, James Mooney, Ben Morse, Chris Mowat, Rupert Nash, Pau Navarro, Bryne Ngwenya, Diana Paton, Sari Pennings, Cip Pruteanu, Andrew Rambaut, Syjil Ramjuthan, John Rappa, Carol Richardson, Aryelly Rodriguez Carbonell, Liam Ross, Dave Rush, Enrique Sanchez Molano, Eberhard Sauer, Ash Scholz, Bernd Schroers, Matthias Schwannauer, Jo Shaw, David Smith, Emily Taylor, Alex Thomson, Tamara Trodd, Patrick Walsh, Lena Wanggren, Charles West, Helsi Wilson, Iain Wright, Ben Wynne

In attendance: Lisa Dawson, Olivia Hayes, Paul Norris

Apologies: Leigh Chalmers, Jianyi Cheng, Kevin Dhaliwal, Nick Polydorides, Wilfried Swenden, Ingrid Young

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Convener, Professor Sir Peter Mathieson, opened the meeting and confirmed it was quorate with 125 members in attendance.

2. Industrial Action: Variations to Academic Regulations and Policies – S 25/26 6A

For approval

Dr Emily Taylor, Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Convener of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC), introduced the item.

Dr Taylor explained that APRC considered each of the proposed variations individually to establish if the proposed regulatory framework upholds the academic standards of the University. She outlined the factors considered by APRC in making a recommendation to Senate, that is to establish if disruption to assessment practices has taken place, and the practicalities of implementing the variations and ensuring these align with the University's wider regulatory framework.

Dr Taylor outlined the variations to regulations and explained that extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders has taken place. She stated that learnings from the previous Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) have been considered to ensure these are reflected in the proposed variations. She noted that APRC approved the paper in full and that the variations will enable Boards of Examiners to have a consistent and limited set of actions available if industrial action has impacted on the conduct of assessment, thus removing the need for ad hoc decision making. She noted that the variations are to be operationalised where disruption has occurred, and do not override the business as usual approach to be taken where a course or programme has not been impacted by industrial action.

Senate members made the following points in discussion:

- Two members, who are also on the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee, expressed their support that Senate approve the paper and highlighted that the Committee agreed to recommend a very limited use of no-detriment in response to lessons learnt from the previous MAB. Members noted that the variations presented are more conservative than those applied during previous periods of disruption.
- The past-tense phrasing of Taught Assessment Regulation 70 and 71 was raised. The member queried the disruption that is expected to take place to external examiners to justify these variations being approved prior to there being evidence of disruption in this area. The process for ensuring academic standards are maintained in the absence of external examiners was also queried.

In response, the Convener of APRC confirmed that the variations are provided to cover areas of impact which are anticipated, and those are identified based on experience in previous periods of disruption.

The regulation on external examiners specifies the review of exam papers and does not refer to other types of assessment. It is anticipated that there will be limited requirement to use this variation, as the exam papers for the May exam diet will already be approved, however this variation may be utilised for exam papers for the August resit diet, or alternative assessments. In those circumstances, additional internal scrutiny will be required, by at least one academic staff member with relevant expertise, with the Head of School having a role where the Board of Examiners Convener was unable to approve those arrangements.

- The primacy of the Boards of Examiners judgement was raised, with a query on whether Boards of Examiners are required or expected to apply the variations, or whether the Board will retain academic judgement on applying the variations and latitude to interpret the meaning of these.

In response, the Convener confirmed that the expectation is that Boards of Examiners will apply the variations, and guidance will be provided on the application of the variations. Where Boards of Examiners do not apply the variations, and this is within their remit, then this should be recorded in the Board minutes.

- A query was raised regarding the evidence of 'considerable impact' as referenced in the paper.

In response, the Convener of the Academic Contingency Group (ACG), Ms Lucy Evans, confirmed that Schools, College and The Advice Place provide feedback to ACG on the impact of disruption and that there is current evidence of disruption in some areas.

- Significant concerns regarding the reallocation of marking were raised. Members stated this is not in the best interests of students as alternative markers may not have the requisite expertise that is comparable to the original marker. The alternative markers are also not those staff who taught the course and therefore are not aware of the nuance of the delivery of the specific course.

In response, a Head of School explained that marking is only reallocated to those who have the appropriate expertise to carry out this duty.

The Convener of APRC, Dr Taylor also confirmed that the reallocation of marking does not fall within APRC's remit and this paper does not ask Senate to approve the reallocation of marking.

- The impact of reallocating marking on collegiality was also raised, with the view that this activity undermines the action of staff participating in the MAB, and the proposal to reallocate marking mandates strike breaking which is damaging for collegiality.

A Head of School stated that usually the intended aim of industrial action is to cause disruption, though does not anticipate the intended aim is to prevent students from graduating, therefore action should be taken to safeguard the outcomes of students as much as possible.

- Senate had a very short timeframe for review and approval of the variations and some members expressed a view that the approval of the variations alleviates pressure on the University's senior management to negotiate on the dispute. Other members queried why there is limited time for Senate review.

The Convener stated that negotiations are ongoing with the University and College Union Edinburgh branch (UCUE).

- The classification of industrial action as significant disruption was raised, with industrial action not necessarily considered to be outside an organisations control in other industries. Impact from industrial action is not explicitly stated as significant disruption under Regulation 70 and members expressed discontent with the interpretation of this Regulation as currently written.
- Student members stated a desire for a consistent, fair process that does not penalise students for an industrial-relations matter that is out of their control. This is expected to impact on students who are planning to study abroad, undertake further study, who have received job offers in a competitive job market, and, for sponsored students who may be excluded from the opportunity for a graduate route visa if they do not receive their grades. Student members noted that the paper is robust enough to mitigate impact on students who are expected to be impacted and they supported the approval of the paper to enable progression and award decisions to be made in a timely manner. Student members noted their support for staff participating in industrial action and the MAB, though stated that the action is having greatest impact on students.
- At alumni events locally and internationally, graduates have raised the significant challenges they experienced in the job market following the previous marking and assessment boycott. The job market remains fragile and is increasingly challenging for current graduates.
- The voting option 'I do not have enough information' was raised, with members querying what happens if the majority of members select this option.

A member sought to raise a motion to remove the 'I do not have enough information' from the voting options, stating that there was a lack of clarity on the option and understanding of the impact of selecting this option.

Another member made a recommendation on how to interpret this option, and suggested that members who do not support the paper indicate this by voting 'Do not approve', rather than selecting the 'I do not have enough information' option.

In response, the Convener confirmed that by selecting that option, Senate would be expressing its opinion that it does not have enough information. He confirmed that the option already exists and were the majority to select this option, then the implications of this would be considered. The Convener noted that the abstain and I do not have enough information options were previously added at the request of Senate members, and advice on interpreting these categories will be sought.

Action: Senate Support to obtain advice on the voting categories.

Senate approved the paper by a majority vote of 64. 51 members did not approve, 3 members abstained and 4 members stated there was not enough information.

A student member extended their thanks to Senate for voting to approve the paper.

The Academic Registrar stated that instructions to support the application of the variations are being finalised as a priority and will be shared with Colleges and Schools this week. Senate's decision on this item will be reported to the University Court via routine reporting.



Electronic Senate Unconfirmed Report of e-Senate held 16-30 September 2026

Comments raised via e-Senate can be accessed on the Senate Members Portal. A total of four members commented on e-Senate business.

1 Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita - eS 26/27 1A For approval

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

Professor Christine Bell, School of Law
Professor Adrian Bird, School of Biological Sciences
Professor Ian Chambers, School of Biological Sciences
Professor Do Coyle, Moray House School of Education and Sport
Professor Martin Denvir, School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences
Professor Andrew Dugmore, School of GeoSciences
Professor Colin Duncan, School of Regeneration and Repair
Professor Godfrey Fitton, School of GeoSciences
Professor Vernon Gayle, School of Social and Political Science
Professor Simon Herrington, School of Genetics and Cancer
Professor Edward Hollis, Edinburgh College of Art
Professor Candace Jones, Business School
Professor Stephanie O'Donohoe, Business School
Professor Pankaj Pankaj, School of Engineering
Professor James Roy Robertson, School of Population Health Sciences
Professor Lara Ryazanova-Clarke, School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures
Professor Steve Sturdy, School of Social and Political Science
Professor Suzanne Trill, School of Literatures, Language and Cultures
Professor Jonathan Thomas, School of Economics
Professor Henry Thompson, School of Informatics
Professor David Tollervey, School of Biological Sciences
Professor Michael Thrusfield, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
Professor Edwin J R van Beek, School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences

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

Three members commented on this item. One member expressed they had no concerns and another member confirmed their approval of the item.

One member did not approve the conferral of Emeritus/Emerita status on the basis that they consider it disrespectful for Senate to approve the conferral of the title via electronic business.

The member also noted that Senate has not received further information on the link between departing senior colleagues and voluntary severance or redundancy schemes. The member stated that full and ongoing reporting is necessary for Senate to understand the ramifications and risks to programmes from departing senior colleagues. The member requested that a report be provided on information not provided to date.

2 Court Communications - eS 26/27 1B For comment



Senate noted the Court Communications and one member commented on this item. The member observed that the report did not refer to an approved Senate motion opposing the approval of the Senate Statement of Primary Responsibilities without meaningful consultation with the full Senate. The member suggested that any oversight to the minuting should be corrected, though if the motion was not considered by the University Court then the member considers that Senate colleagues should receive an apology.

The comments were passed to the paper author.

3 Report from the Central Academic Promotions Committee - eS 26/27 1C For information

Three members commented on this item.

One member queried how a promotion took place whilst the academic promotions process is not current active.

One member acknowledged that the promotion was likely an exceptional out-of-cycle case, however sought reassurance on the Equality and Diversity considerations and the transparency of the process, with specific reference to the University's Equality Outcomes 2025–2029, Outcome 3 'Increase the diversity of staff, including at senior grades, in leadership roles and on key decision-making bodies'.

One member also acknowledged that the promotion was likely an exceptional out-of-cycle case, and stated that the report did not provide justification of the process within the report for the exception, and the due diligence undertaken by the promotions committee.

The comments were passed to the paper author.

4 Rector Election Date 2027 – eS 26/27 1D For information

Two members comments on this item. One member queried the mechanism for carrying out the election, observing that voter turnout has been poor in previous years. Another member commented to state they have no considerations to add.

The comments were passed to the paper author.

5 Senate Election Dates – e-S 26/27 1E For information

One member commented on the item to state they have no considerations to add. The comments were passed to the paper author.

2026-27 Senate Action Log

Complete									
Meeting date	Committee	Paper	Paper status	Action	Responsible	Target date	Action status	Update/Outcome	Meeting reported to
28-Apr-26	Senate	S25264A	OPEN	The Board overseeing Academic Size and Shape will provide Senate with a timeline of items within Senate's remit. This will provide details on matters to be presented to Senate, including the action requested and the indicative timeline for these items coming forward.	Academic Size and Shape	As soon as practicable	Complete	A Senate Engagement Tracker is provided on the Senate Members' Portal. The tracker provides a forward view of the projects and type of engagement that is planned for Senate and its Standing Committees. It is intended to better set expectations regarding engagement activity, including the purpose of the engagement and type of engagement. The tracker is a live document and will be updated on the Senate Members' Portal on a monthly basis. The tracker is intended as a planning and visibility tool. The information it contains may change as projects progress and timelines evolve.	21-Oct-26
28-Apr-26	Senate	S25264A	OPEN	Senate to receive a direct link to the governance details published on the SharePoint site for Academic Size and Shape.	Senate Support to facilitate	21-Oct-26	Complete	A link to the Academic Projects Board is provided: https://uoee.sharepoint.com/:u/r/sites/SupportingStrategicInitiatives/SharedPages/Academi-project-board.aspx?d=wd9401350201c445cb930d74763280dccc&csf=1&web=1&e=zaho4a	21-Oct-26
28-Apr-26	Senate	S25264A	OPEN	Senate Convener and Academic Size and Shape Project Sponsors and Lead to consider whether a dedicated workshop be held on matters within Senate's remit.	Senate Support to facilitate	21-Oct-26	Complete	Senate will be informed if a dedicated workshop is to take place.	21-Oct-26
28-Apr-26	Senate	S25264A	OPEN	In response to Motion 3.3, Senate to receive an update on the provision of legal advice to Senate on its powers in relation to the University Court.	Senate Support	21-Oct-26	Complete	The changes introduced by the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) 2016 Act relate solely to the composition of Senate. The 2016 Act does not apply to Senate's powers, this position was set out to Senate in a Senate Paper C, presented to the 1 February 2017 meeting, when the 2016 Act was introduced. This paper makes clear that the 2016 Act did not amend Senate's powers and the Act related to composition only: <i>Previous Acts have determined that the Senate will be the academic body within the University that has the power to regulate and superintend the teaching and discipline and to promote research. While the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 (hereafter "the Act") does not amend the powers or role of Senate, the principal objective of the Act is to enable Senate to exercise them within a 'more modern, inclusive and accountable' framework.</i> Please see a link to the minutes (page 4) from this meeting (1 February 2017), this position was accepted by Senate. The University is comfortable with its position that the 2016 Act does not apply to Senate's powers and as such, it should not be referred to in papers as having any relevance to the powers of Senate.	21-Oct-26
19-May-26	Senate	S25/26 5H	OPEN	Senate's decision will be communicated to APRC and Senate will be notified if a Special Meeting is required as soon as practicable.	Senate Support	As soon as practicable	Complete	Senate's decision was reported to APRC at its meeting held 21 May 2026. A Special Meeting of Senate was held 26 May 2026.	21-Oct-26

[illegible]

Ongoing Actions									
10-Dec-25	Senate	S 25/26 2I	OPEN	Senate Support to support an election process to elect the Convener of the Senate Education Committee	Senate Clerk	As soon as practicable	Ongoing	A paper outlining the arrangements for the election of the Senate Education Committee Convener is presented to the 19 May meeting of Senate. Update: A holding position regarding Senate Standing Committee Conveners was circulated to Senate on 30 June 2026. Following the NRAA Deep-dive visit in September, the work to progress this action has commenced and a response in December is on track.	21-Oct-26

Senate
21 October 2026
Report of the Senate Business Committee

Senate agenda setting: 25 September 2026

The Business Committee met on 25 September 2026 to consider the agenda for the 21 October meeting of Senate. The Committee noted that motions relating to its operation were approved at the 19 May meeting of Senate. Aligned to the motions, the role of the Committee is to recommend to the Senate Convener the priority order for all submitted agenda items and identify timings that enable appropriate discussion aligned to the content of papers.

The Business Committee noted that seventeen papers had been received for the 21 October meeting and agreed that time-sensitive items that require consideration be prioritised early on the agenda. The Committee agreed to continue its previous approach to identifying timings, by recommending timings appropriate to an item of business. The Committee recognised this would mean that there were more items than could be accommodated in the available meeting time.

The Committee agreed to recommend time-sensitive items be prioritised. A rationale for time-sensitivity is provided:

- **Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for 2026/27:** this is an established opportunity for student representatives to present their priorities to Senate for the 2026/27 academic year.
- **Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of Decision Trees for Exceptional Circumstances:** the paper has been endorsed by APRC and proposes a process change for Boards of Examiners from January 2027.
- **Report of the Honorary Degrees Committee:** adequate time is required for recipients of Honorary Degrees to be invited to June graduation ceremonies, and for scheduling and travel arrangements to be made for recipients.
- **Senate College Professional Services Election Regulations:** the University Court are required to approve revisions to the Senate College Professional Services Election Regulations. The Committee were informed that due to the timing of Senate and University Court meetings and the proposed start date of the elections (3 February), the proposed revisions need to be considered at the 21 October meeting.

The Committee agreed that papers relating to Academic Size and Shape should follow the time-sensitive items, acknowledging the importance of this topic to Senate. The Committee agreed that the three papers relevant to this topic be grouped together and allocated a total of 60 minutes with 10 minutes for a presentation from the authors of the paper to 'To Approve'. The Committees acknowledged that two of

the items were provided to Senate 'To Note': authors of those papers would answer questions as needed during the 60-minute discussion.

The Committee acknowledged that the total meeting time was exhausted following Academic Size and Shape items, however agreed to prioritise the remainder of items according to the actions set out in the papers. Further detail on the Committee's deliberations and rationale for prioritisation is set out in the [25 September Business Committee minutes](#). The Committee acknowledged that it was unlikely that the remaining agenda items could be covered during the 21 October meeting and those items marked 'For Approval' or 'For Discussion' and not considered will be carried forward to the next Ordinary meeting on 2 December.

The Committee agreed to repeat its previous 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 Committee also received a revised proposal on the use and timing of e-Senate. The Committee agreed that the proposal is not urgent and does not require consideration at the 21 October meeting and there is not time available to receive the item at the October meeting. The Committee agreed that it would review the item for a future meeting of Senate.

The Convener accepted the agenda recommended by the Business Committee for the 21 October meeting of Senate.

The unconfirmed minute of the 25 September meeting is available on the [Senate Members Portal](#).

Senate

21 October 2026

Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for 2026/27

Description of paper

1. This paper articulates the priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education and the Sabbatical Officer team for 2026/27.

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

2. D22: To note the key activities and priorities of student representatives via annual reports.

Action requested / recommendation

3. To note and comment

Background and context

4. Each year a paper is presented to Senate and its standing committees, summarising the Sabbatical Officers' priorities for the coming year, enabling Senate and its member to identify areas of common interest and collaboration. These priorities are based on the manifestos the Officers were elected on – this year's Officers received a combined 9,216 votes – and were further refined during the Officers' inducted, based on data from the various national student experience surveys and feedback from outgoing student representatives.

Discussion

5. See attached paper.

Resource implications

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

Risk management

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

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

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

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

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

Author

Heather Innes

Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator

Edinburgh University Students' Association

10/09/2026

Presenter

Joana Mends

Vice President Education

Edinburgh University Students' Association

Freedom of Information: Open

Students' Association Vice President Education priorities for 2026/27:

- Hold the University accountable for delivering the quality of education it promises, including challenging cuts to teaching, course and learning opportunities.
- Champion an inclusive, decolonised and globally relevant curriculum, with better support for inclusive teaching.
- Develop a fair, student-centred approach to AI in teaching and assessment that prioritises critical thinking, creativity and independent learning.
- Protect students' learning and wellbeing during disruption, while improving academic adjustments, support and access to essential wellbeing provision.
- Strengthen the student voice by ensuring students are meaningfully involved in decisions about their education.

Sabbatical Officer team priorities for 2026/27:

- Strengthen student voice and accountability, ensuring students are meaningfully involved in University decision-making and receive clear, transparent updates on issues affecting them.
- Tackle the cost-of-living crisis, including affordable housing and food, free or cheaper travel, financial support and access to essential services.
- Build a more inclusive and accessible student community, with better support for marginalised students, commuters, international students, postgraduates and students across different campuses.
- Improve student wellbeing, safety and support, including mental health provision, consent and sexual violence prevention, academic and welfare support and safer, more accessible spaces.
- Protect and enhance student life, through stronger societies, peer support, volunteering, employability opportunities and a more diverse range of social and cultural activities.
- Challenge University cuts and protect student services, scrutinising financial decisions and their impact on teaching, support and the wider student experience.
- Push for a more sustainable and responsible University, particularly around divestment, sustainable food and products, ethical investment and environmental responsibility.

Senate

21 October 2026

**Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of Decision Trees for
Exceptional Circumstances**

Description of paper

1. The paper seeks approval of University-level decision trees for use across Schools in determining outcomes in cases where Exceptional Circumstances (EC) have been accepted for individual students.

Fit with primary responsibilities

2. A3: To approve changes to existing policy and the adoption of new policy relating to teaching, learning and teaching quality assurance, including research undertaken by students as part of a programme of study.

Action requested / recommendation

3. The paper asks Senate to approve the proposed decision trees for use by Boards of Examiners from January 2027 onwards.

Background and context

4. The Board of Examiners Review identified a number of recommendations for changes to simplify and bring consistency to our Board of Examiners processes. These were approved by the University Executive in May 2025.
Current project areas of work are:

- Exceptional Circumstances (EC) – developing standard decision trees for application of policy in Schools; aligning processes around late EC applications; institution wide agreement on levels for discounting elements of assessment.
- Results Ratification – clarification of Board Roles and responsibilities; streamlining of all Board processes; pre-results ratification, results ratification and post ratification; with updates to policies to follow accordingly.
- Quality – Ensuring changes do not impact the quality of our courses and programmes by recommending clear processes for Teaching Quality Review and updating policy and guidance for External Examiners.

5. 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.

6. Decisions regarding outcomes under the EC policy are made based on the principle of the "best academic interest" of the student. This is defined in the policy as follows:

"Boards will apply whichever outcome(s) leads to a student achieving the best possible course or programme result, provided that this is consistent with the Board being satisfied that it has sufficient evidence of attainment of relevant learning outcomes (see 10.5), or of performance at the required level in the programme (see 10.6.2)."

The outcomes available to Boards of Examiners include the ability to disregard marks for EC-affected components of assessment when determining final course results (10.5d), and to exclude ratified course results for EC-affected courses when calculating programme-level averages for classification and award (10.6b).

7. The Board of Examiners review found that Boards across Schools were taking a variety of different approaches to arriving at outcome decisions in EC cases (all within the bounds of the EC policy). This was leading to inconsistency of outcome for students based upon the same academic circumstances, and to inefficiency of process, with staff in different areas being required to develop and implement a variety of approaches to reach outcome decisions. As such, the Board of Examiners project is seeking to implement University-wide decision trees in order to achieve the following benefits:
 - Enable consistent and equitable outcomes for students;
 - Enable consistent messaging to students;
 - Increased provision of central training for EC processes;
 - Reduce staff time spent working out EC outcomes;
 - Enable a wider pool of staff skilled in processing EC outcomes, removing bottlenecks in processing;
 - Consistency in the application of regulations.

Development of Decision Trees

8. An initial design for a set of course decision trees was developed based on examples from the eight Schools already using their own decision trees. A number of in-person and online sessions were held across summer 2025 to present the initial course decision tree designs to colleagues. These sessions were well attended with good levels of engagement. The feedback gained was used to further develop the designs, which were then used in pilot Schools during the January/February 2026 Board of Examiners period. Based on feedback from pilot Schools following this period, the design was subject to further development, ahead of its use in the June 2026 Board of Examiners period. One or both of the course decision trees have been piloted by 10 Schools across the three Colleges. The current design of the decision trees takes account of further feedback provided by pilot Schools following June 2026 Boards of Examiners.

Endorsement by Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

9. The proposed decision trees were presented to APRC at their September 2026 meeting, seeking their endorsement. APRC members held a detailed and constructive discussion of the decision trees. **APRC endorsed the decision trees and recommended them to Senate for approval.** A summary of points raised at the meeting is provided below, including where members made recommendations for minor amendments to the decision trees or User Guide, which have been incorporated into the final version presented to Senate. Responses have been provided to the comments raised, where relevant.

- A member recommended that the decision trees clarify that the thresholds for excluding courses do not apply to students who entered Honours or a PGT programme before 2026/27.
 - The decision trees have been amended to clarify this point.
- Some members queried the resource impact of the proposed approach of not offering null sits where a course result was eligible for exclusion at programme level, highlighting the sometimes protracted dialogue with students who would prefer a null sit currently.
 - While this challenge is recognised, the expectation is that having a formal and consistent position across all Schools that null sits will not be offered where a course is eligible for exclusion will simplify the communication to students.
- Members noted that some students will currently feel able to request a null sit, while others may feel less able to do so for a variety of reasons, and this leads to inequitable access to these.
- Members noted that the approach to excluding courses starting with the lowest mark may not in some cases lead to the most overall benefit to the student's average. It was also noted that taking a different approach to this may involve more complex modelling of outcomes for individual students.
 - The approach to excluding courses prescribed by the decision trees has been amended to take account of this feedback.
- Members noted the fact that, where courses are flagged for exclusion at the end of Year 3 of an Honours degree, it is not known until the end of Year 4 whether they will ultimately be excluded for classification purposes. In relation to this, a member highlighted an error in the wording on the programme-level decision tree.
 - The error in the wording of the decision tree has been corrected. The wording for students of outcome decisions in the EC system relating to exclusion of courses will be amended to ensure that students understand that a course being flagged for exclusion may not result in the course being excluded, in the event that exclusion would not ultimately benefit the student's average mark.

- A member noted that improvements to Board reports for Schools would be very helpful, especially in tracking courses flagged for exclusion from e.g. Year 3 to Year 4 of an Honours degree.
 - The Board of Examiners project is working on improvements to Board reports to support Schools in processing ECs which are passed from Course to Programme Boards.
- A member requested that reference to PGT students being offered null sits for courses passed at 40-49 in order to reach Masters level be added to the decision trees.
 - This point is covered in section 6c of the User Guide on the decision trees. The team considered adding it to the decision trees themselves, but due to the volume of information already included, they became too cluttered to present the information clearly.
- A member queried whether it was still necessary for Schools to operate Exceptional Circumstances Committees (ECCs), given that the decision trees make determining outcomes more algorithmic.
 - The EC Policy states that ECCs must consist of a minimum of an academic Convener, and one member of professional services staff. Although the decision trees simplify the process of decision-making, there will still be cases where careful consideration needs to be given to what outcome(s) will lead to the most academic benefit to the student. As such, it is likely that there will always need to be a minimum of two people involved in checking that the decisions are appropriate, at least one of whom must be an academic. The role of ECCs is something that will be reviewed when the EC Policy is due for review in the 2027/28 academic year.
- A member highlighted the discrepancy between requiring students with ECs to demonstrate that they have met learning outcomes, when this is not otherwise required on many courses where credit on aggregate can be awarded, or no “force fail” components are used.
 - This issue is recognised but is a result of the University’s use of credit on aggregate at Honours and PGT-level, rather than the proposed decision trees. It may be appropriate to consider the interaction between the use of credit on aggregate and the function of course learning outcomes in the future.
- A member suggested that the font size used in the decision trees should be increased to make them more readable.
 - The course decision trees include a lot of content, so it is difficult to increase the font size, but users can zoom in and out as needed. The team will consider ways to improve the readability of the decision trees.
- A member suggested that the use of decision trees could undermine the academic judgement of Boards, and the expectation that they have “an overview of each student’s performance”.
 - This issue is covered below, in sections 16-19.

Thresholds for excluding course results

10. At its May 2026 meeting ([S 25/26 5G](#)), Senate approved the introduction of standard thresholds for excluding course results where ECs have been accepted and referred for consideration by Boards of Examiners making decisions at programme level (e.g. award of degree, classification). In order for the thresholds to operate most effectively, these must be complemented by a consistent approach to determining which EC cases should be referred for consideration by Programme Boards, which is one of the goals of the decision trees.
11. The programme level decision trees incorporate the approved thresholds for excluding courses. Where students have a larger credit volume of courses affected by ECs than can be excluded under the thresholds, the decision trees instruct Boards to take the following actions:
- Exclude results for EC-affected courses up to the threshold, where this will improve the student's average course mark;
 - Boards will exclude the 40 credits' worth of EC-affected courses which will provide the most benefit to the student's average for the purposes of the relevant calculation (e.g. for classification);¹
 - Offer the student null sits and the option to be reassessed for any EC-affected courses which cannot have their marks excluded in line with the threshold;
 - If the student wishes to pursue the null sits this will delay the confirmation of their final award, if they are in the final year of their degree;
 - If the student declines the null sits, the Board will finalise the award outcome based on the exclusion of courses within the threshold.

Discussion*Underlying Principles of Decision Trees*

12. The decision trees developed and piloted as part of the Board of Examiners Project have been designed to be compliant with the principle of "best academic interest", as it is defined in the EC policy (see section 6, above). In supporting this principle, the decision trees have also been designed to:
- Apply mitigation at the component or course level wherever possible, as opposed to simply deferring action up to the programme level;
 - Avoid the use of "null sits" and reassessment, where this is possible, and compatible with the achievement of required learning outcomes.

¹ In some cases, this may involve not excluding a course which has the lowest overall mark. For example, where an EC-affected 10-credit course has a mark of 45, but an EC-affected 40-credit course has a mark of 46, the 40-credit course will be excluded and the 10-credit course with the lower mark retained.

13. With regard to applying mitigation at the course level wherever possible, this is based on the understanding that mitigation at course level, e.g. by the disregarding of component marks when calculating course results, has less of an inflationary impact upon final degree outcomes than excluding course results for classification purposes. It is also beneficial to students insofar as it allows them to retain a transcript of course results that better reflect their performance, had they been unaffected by ECs, rather than having several course results on their record which are known to be unreliable. Students also receive confirmation of their EC outcomes earlier when they are resolved at course level than when they are resolved at programme level.
14. The desire to minimise the use of null sits relates to several factors. First, that it may not be desirable to overload students already known to be struggling with ECs with additional assessment, where it can be demonstrated that they have met required learning outcomes. Second, that attendance data indicates that a very high proportion of students granted resit attempts due to null sits for ECs do not attend these. This suggests that students often do not consider it necessary or desirable to reattempt their assessments. In addition to this, offering null sits at Honours and postgraduate taught level requires staff to set and mark additional assessment (including new exam papers) where this would not otherwise be necessary. The administrative burden involved in offering such reassessments is also considerable – both within Schools and in Registry Services, even where they are not taken up by students.
15. It is also noted, however, that some students would prefer the opportunity to undertake reassessment where their original attempt has been affected by ECs, in order to demonstrate their best performance and to have this recorded on their transcript. APRC considered this issue in detail and agreed that the decision trees proposed for approval would not offer students a null sit, where a course mark was referred to a programme Board, and would be eligible for exclusion in line with the approved threshold.²

Exercise of academic judgement

16. One of the issues raised at APRC was the interaction between the decision trees and the exercise of academic judgement. In our current processes, academic judgement is primarily exercised in the setting, marking, and moderation of assessment (including application of scaling). Academic staff determine the learning outcomes for individual courses; how students' achievement of those learning outcomes will be assessed; how individual components of assessment will contribute towards course marks; what contribution each course mark will make towards a student's final programme outcome (through the credit weighting apportioned to a course). Academic judgement is then further exercised in

² More information about this issue, and the alternative options considered, is in sections 15-20 of the paper considered by APRC ([APRC 26/27 1C](#)).

determining the final marks for those assessments through the marking and moderation process. Boards of Examiners have a responsibility for ensuring that the process of marking and moderation produces marks for components of assessment which are appropriately reflective of students' levels of performance.

17. The decision trees retain the academic judgement to determine (in 10.5.1 of the EC policy) which component marks must not be disregarded, where the component has been failed and is required in order to demonstrate that the learning outcomes for the course have been met. The decision trees also retain Boards' discretion to determine what proportion of components of assessment can be disregarded when deriving a course result, and the ability of Boards to designate specific courses as core, i.e. "must pass" courses.
18. Once marks for assessment have been agreed as being a fair reflection of students' performance, the process of deriving course and programme outcomes follows existing Policy and regulations and is therefore algorithmic, i.e. by aggregation of component marks to produce course marks, and of course marks to produce programme outcomes, based on the agreed weightings. As is noted in section 6, above, through its principle of "best academic interest", the EC policy already prescribes the approach Boards of Examiners are expected to take towards determining outcomes. The decision trees clarify the application of this principle to ensure a consistent approach is taken as to when component marks should be regarded as not being indicative of a student's potential and therefore removed from the process of aggregation at course level, and when course marks should be removed from the process of aggregation at programme level for the same reason. As noted in section 10, the decision trees also incorporate the thresholds for excluding courses, which were approved by Senate in May 2026.
19. As such, the decision trees reflect the existing EC policy and the previous decision of Senate regarding thresholds for excluding courses. They are designed to take a proportionate approach to balancing the need for consistent decision making with the exercise of academic judgement.

Structure of decision trees

20. There are four versions of Course Level EC Decision Trees to support Schools in achieving consistent outcomes for students whose EC applications have been accepted:
 - Pre-Honours - course with a single component of assessment e.g., 100% exam
 - Pre-Honours - course with multiple components of assessment e.g., 80% exam and 20% single piece of coursework
 - Honours/PGT - course with a single component of assessment e.g., 100% exam
 - Honours/PGT - course with multiple components of assessment e.g., 80% exam and 20% single piece of coursework

The decision trees walk colleagues through possible EC scenarios leading them to appropriate outcomes as outlined in the EC policy (sections 10.5 and 10.6).

21. For more complicated cases where a course has multiple components of assessment the decision trees direct colleagues to review each component affected by ECs in the first instance, to arrive at a provisional decision for each. This may include applying removal of late penalties or a null sit where a component was failed. After reviewing each component, the decision trees instruct colleagues to consider the course as a whole, across all components, in order to reach final course level outcomes. The decision trees guide colleagues to the relevant outcome(s) that should be considered depending on the scenario under review. It should be noted that the initial component outcome may change when the course is reviewed as a whole. For example, a component which is failed and awarded a null sit may be disregarded at course level outcome stage if this is compatible with meeting the learning outcomes, and any thresholds for disregarding components.
22. The Course Level decision trees lead in some situations to referral of cases for consideration by Programme Boards (under outcome 10.5b). To support these cases, there are two versions of Programme Level EC Decision Trees, which outline the application of thresholds where required:
- Undergraduate Programme Level (Progression & Award)
 - PGT Programme Level (Progression & Award)

These decision trees operationalise the approach to thresholds for excluding courses approved by Senate in May 2026.

23. The decision trees are supported by a short User Guide, which clarifies expectations regarding their use in particular scenarios. The decision trees and the User Guide are published for review by Senate members on the [Board of Examiners Project SharePoint pages](#). **Senate is asked to approve the introduction of the decision trees, for use by Boards of Examiners from January 2027.**
24. In the event that the decision trees are approved and implemented in all Schools, it is anticipated that their greater use will prompt recommendations for minor clarifications or updates. **Senate is asked to agree that minor updates to the decision trees and user guide, which fall within the principles of those proposed at this stage, can be approved by APRC, as needed.**

Resource implications

25. The implementation of the proposed decision trees will require an initial investment of staff time to attend training relating to their use. In their first use by staff in Schools – especially those without experience of using decision trees previously – they may in some areas lead to slower processing of EC outcomes. However, once staff gain familiarity with their use after successive Board of Examiners periods, it is anticipated that the decision trees should lead to a reduction overall in the amount of staff time spent determining EC outcomes by reducing the range of options to be considered in each individual case and simplifying the decision making.
26. APRC members noted that the approach to determining which courses should be excluded for an individual student, when multiple (or even all) courses are flagged for potential exclusion could involve complex modelling of student outcomes in affected cases. This is recognised, but it is anticipated that there would be a net benefit in terms of staff time of taking this approach, relative to the various different approaches to modelling outcomes already undertaken by staff in Schools.

Risk management

27. The current approach to determining EC outcomes is leading to a high level of inconsistency of outcome in cases between Schools. This not only risks being perceived as unfair by students, but also risks variation in academic standards across programmes. The introduction of standard decision trees will effectively mitigate these risks by ensuring consistency of outcome for students across Schools.
28. In May 2026, Senate approved the introduction of mandatory thresholds regarding the volume of credit which will be excluded due to ECs when determining students' degree outcomes. These thresholds provide an effective upper and lower limit regarding the impact of EC decisions upon degree outcomes. For the thresholds to be most effective, it is essential to have uniform decision trees in place to ensure a consistent approach regarding when course results will be referred for potential exclusion by programme Boards.
29. The decision trees refer to the fact that Schools will continue to operate their own thresholds regarding the proportion of components of assessment that can be disregarded within an individual course where ECs have been upheld and course learning outcomes met. The absence of an agreed threshold across the University presents a continuing risk that students will experience inconsistency in outcomes for ECs at course level. However, the project team has judged that it will not be possible to implement a single threshold for disregarding components until such time as there is consistent, explicit mapping of learning outcomes to assessment components for all taught courses. Under the University's new [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#) (2.1), this mapping is expected to be in place by 2028/29.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

30. N/A

Equality & diversity

31. The introduction of mandatory decision trees for EC outcomes would provide benefits to all students making use of the EC process, limiting the potential for biases of various kinds to affect decision-making, and therefore providing greater confidence that the University takes a fair and consistent approach to determining EC outcomes across Schools. This is likely to have the greatest impact for those students who currently experience the greatest level of impact upon their studies as a result of ECs. In many cases, this is due to medical or personal circumstances which may interact with protected characteristics. The University's primary approach to supporting students with disabilities with their studies is not the EC process, but the provision of reasonable adjustments based on need assessed by the Disability and Learning Support Service.

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

32. Should Senate approve the introduction of the decision trees for the current academic year, training will be provided for staff in Schools on the use of the decision trees from November 2026. The training will be complemented by a User Guide and the development of case studies, which will illustrate the decision-making process.

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Freedom of Information

Open

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Thursday 24 September 2026 at 2:00pm
Liberton Tower Room, Murchison House / Teams

UNCONFIRMED APRC MINUTES (EXCERPT)

Present: Professor Gill Aitken Myles Blaney Victoria Buchanan Dr Adam Bunni Lindsay Fox Lisa Dawson Dr Lawrence Dritsas Dr Ben Goddard Heather Innes Professor Linda Kirstein Professor Dave Laurenson Isabel Lavers Professor Steve Loughnan Charlotte McDonald Joana Mendis Cat Morley Dr Chris Mowat Dr James Mooney Dr Kirsten Phimister Kirsty Woomble	Dean of Education (CMVM) Acting Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media Director, Disability and Learning Support Service Head of Academic Policy, Academic Quality and Standards Head of PGR Student Administration (CSE) Academic Registrar, Registry Services Dean of Students (CAHSS) (Vice-Convener) Senate representative (CSE) Academic Engagement Coordinator, Students' Association Dean of Education (CSE) (Convener) Senate representative (CSE) PGR Student Administration Manager (CMVM) Dean of Quality Assurance and Assessment (CAHSS) Advice Place Manager, Students' Association Vice President Education, Students' Association Head of Taught Student Administration & Support (CAHSS) Dean of Students (CSE) Senate representative (CAHSS) Head of Taught Student Administration (CSE) Head of Postgraduate Research Student Office (CAHSS)
In attendance: Joanna Divers Miriam Kennedy Cristina Matthews	Business Analyst, Strategic Change Service Academic Services Manager (seconded to Board of Examiners Review) Senior Academic Quality and Standards Manager, Academic Quality and Standards
Apologies: Lucy Evans Mike Grieve	Associate Principal and Deputy Secretary, Students Dean of Students (CMVM)

(EXCERPT UNCONFIRMED MINUTES – APRC 2026/27 1C)

4.1	Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of Decision Trees for Exceptional Circumstances The paper was presented by the Head of Academic Policy and Regulations, with members of the project team in attendance to support questions. Board of Examiners' decision trees are intended to enable consistent and equitable outcomes for all students who have approved cases of Exceptional Circumstances
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(EC). The paper seeks endorsement from the Committee for the proposed decision trees to be mandatory for Boards of Examiners across all Schools from Semester 1 this academic year 2026/27. The Board of Examiners (BoE) Review team has developed the proposed decision trees through an iterative process, in partnership with Schools. Ten Schools piloted the decision trees last academic year, and these were further refined to the current proposed designs. The decision trees incorporate the programme-level thresholds approved by Senate in May 2026. The panel of the recent QAA National Review of Awarding Arrangements (NRAA) noted their support for the implementation of the BoE Review, and of the decision trees in particular. It was noted that the outcomes from the deep dive site visit are due in November 2026. The presenter outlined a number of different scenarios included in the proposed decision trees. The Committee discussed these and other points in detail. The main points of discussion and agreed amendments were: • A member recommended that the decision trees clarify that the thresholds for excluding courses do not apply to students who entered Honours or a PGT programme before 2026/27. The BoE Review team agreed to amend the decision trees to clarify this point. • Some members queried the resource impact of the proposed approach of not offering null sits where a course result was eligible for exclusion at programme level, highlighting the sometimes protracted dialogue with students who would prefer a null sit currently. While this challenge is recognised, the expectation is that having a formal and consistent position across all Schools that null sits will not be offered where a course is eligible for exclusion will simplify the communication to students. Members also noted that some students are more able to request a null sit, while others may feel less able to do so for a variety of reasons, and this leads to inequitable access to these. • Members noted that the approach to excluding courses starting with the lowest mark may not in some cases lead to the highest average mark, i.e. compared to the exclusion of other affected course marks. It was also noted that taking a different approach to this may involve more complex modelling of outcomes for individual students. The BoE Review team agreed to review the approach to excluding courses to take account of this feedback. • Members noted the fact that, where courses are flagged for exclusion at the end of Year 3 of an Honours degree, it is not known until the end of Year 4 whether they will ultimately be excluded for classification purposes. In relation to this, a member highlighted an error in the wording on the programme-level decision tree, which the BoE Review team agreed to amend. The BoE Review team also agreed to amend the wording for students of outcome decisions in the EC system relating to exclusion of courses to ensure that students understand that a course being flagged for exclusion may not result in the course being excluded, in the event that exclusion would not ultimately benefit the student's average mark. • A member noted that improvements to Board reports for Schools would be very helpful, especially in tracking courses flagged for exclusion from e.g. Year 3 to Year 4 of an Honours degree. The BoE Review team are working on improvements to
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	Board reports to support Schools in processing ECs which are passed from Course to Programme Boards. • A member requested that reference to PGT students being offered null sits for courses passed at 40-49 in order to reach Masters level be added to the decision trees. The BoE Review team noted that this point is covered in section 6c of the User Guide on the decision trees. The team considered adding it to the decision trees themselves, but due to the volume of information already included, they became too cluttered to present the information clearly. • A member queried whether it was still necessary for Schools to operate Exceptional Circumstances Committees (ECCs), given that the decision trees make determining outcomes more algorithmic. The EC Policy states that ECCs must consist of a minimum of an academic Convener, and one member of professional services staff. Although the decision trees simplify the process of decision-making, there will still be cases where careful consideration needs to be given to what outcome(s) will lead to the most academic benefit to the student. As such, it is likely that there will always need to be a minimum of two people involved in checking that the decisions are appropriate, at least one of whom must be an academic. The role of ECCs will be reviewed when the EC Policy is due for review in the 2027/28 academic year. • A member highlighted the discrepancy between requiring students with ECs to demonstrate that they have met learning outcomes, when this is not otherwise required on many courses where credit on aggregate can be awarded, or no “force fail” components are used. This issue is recognised, but is a result of the University’s use of credit on aggregate at Honours and PGT levels, rather than the proposed decision trees. It may be appropriate to consider the interaction between the use of credit on aggregate and the function of course learning outcomes in the future. • A member suggested that the font size used in the decision trees should be increased to make them more readable. The BoE Review team noted that the course decision trees include a lot of content, so it is difficult to increase the font size, but users can zoom in and out as needed. The team will consider ways to improve the readability of the decision trees. • A member suggested that the use of decision trees could undermine the academic judgement of Boards, and the expectation set out in the Handbook for Boards for Examiners that BoEs have an overview of each student’s academic performance. The BoE Review team highlighted that academic judgement is embedded into the assessment and feedback processes, from the setting of the learning outcomes and assessments, through to the marking and moderation processes. The decision trees also retain the academic judgement of Boards to determine which component marks must not be disregarded at the course level in order for the student to meet the learning outcomes. Clerk’s note: <i>The Committee agreed that a follow on discussion would take place between Adam Bunni and Dave Laurenson prior to the paper being finalised for Senate.</i> The Committee confirmed the position that the decision trees would not allow the option to offer null sits for the courses that were eligible for being discounted. The Committee endorsed the paper and recommended this to Senate for approval.
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Senate**21 October 2026****Senate College Professional Services Election Regulations****Description of paper**

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

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

2. *D16: To approve the arrangements for the election of members to the Senate in line with University Court approved election regulations.*

Action requested / recommendation

3. Senate is invited to *recommend that Court approve* changes to the Senatus Academicus (Senate) College Professional Services Election Regulations as provided in Appendix 1.

Background and context

4. At its [7 February 2024](#) meeting, Senate [approved a proposal](#) to add four Professional Services staff to the Senate membership.
*Four (4) ex officio positions be reserved for elected professional services staff.
The four positions will be comprised of the Professional Services staff member on Court, and three elected Professional Services staff members with one position for each College.*
5. For the membership to be compliant with University Ordinance 212 (Composition of the Senatus Academicus) the elected Professional Services staff are ex-officio members of Senate.
6. In 2024, Senate Support and Court Services drafted the College Professional Services Election Regulations to enable the election to take place in Semester 2 of the 2023/24 Academic Year.
7. The next election of College Professional Services staff is due to take place in Semester 2 of the 2026/27 Academic Year. To enable the elections to take place on the same schedule as the main Senate Elections, changes are required to the College Professional Services Election Regulations.

Discussion

8. The Senatus Academicus (Senate) College Professional Services Election Regulations govern the election of College professional services staff to the membership of Senate. A copy with track changes is included as appendix one.
9. An additional Senate meeting was added in December 2024, with all other meetings taking place on a similar timescale to previous years. The timing of the additional meeting allows for the details of all elections to Senate to be approved at the December meeting. This allows for the elections process to commence prior to the February Senate meeting.

10. The Senate elections process has increased in volume and complexity, and the additional time to conduct elections is necessary to ensure a robust election process. The earlier timescale also allows increased time for the promotion of elections and for candidates to submit their nomination. At present, the Election Regulations do not allow for the election of College Professional Services staff to commence until after the March 2027 Senate meeting.
11. Senate will be invited to approve the dates for the nomination and election periods, and approval of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers at the December meeting of Senate.

Resource implications

12. The changes to the College Professional Services Elections Regulations are intended to focus the support for elections processes into a defined period. This is expected to have a positive impact on the resource required to run elections within defined processes and periods.
13. Elections incur financial and staff costs, information on the resource required to support elections is provided in the papers that outline the annual election arrangements.

Risk management

14. The University's Risk Policy and Risk Appetite statement refers to the University holding 'no appetite for any breaches in statute, regulation.' Senate elections are mandated by University Ordinance 212.

Equality & diversity

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

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

16. Changes approved by Senate and Court, will take effect from the date approval is granted. The revised Senatus Academicus (Senate) College Professional Services Election Regulations will inform arrangements for the 2027 election process.
17. The Election Regulations for all elections are published on the Senate website and are shared with candidates standing for election.

Author

Registry Services
August 2025

Presenter

Olivia Hayes
Senate Clerk

Freedom of Information Open



Senatus Academicus (Senate) College Professional Services Election Regulations

1. The composition of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) is outlined in Ordinance 212, Paragraphs 1-3 and 5.
2. The election of academic staff to the Senatus Academicus (Senate) ~~operate~~operates under separate Election regulations. Elected academic staff are elected for a term of up to three ~~years, and~~years and hold membership as an elected member for the duration of their term of Senate.
3. The Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations are the referencing authority for detail on the composition of Senate, including ex-officio and elected staff, information regarding student membership, and the election of academic staff to Senate.
4. College professional services staff will be considered *ex officio* for the duration of their term on Senate, in line with Appendix 1 of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations.

Term of Office

5. Elected College professional services staff will stand for a term of office which will not exceed three years from the first day of August of the year of election. Elected College professional services staff will demit office on 31 July of their final year in office.
6. There is no cap on the number of terms of office for which College professional services staff members may stand; College professional services staff members will be eligible for re-election for the same term of office provided they demit office on ceasing to hold a contract of employment with the University.
7. Elected College professional services staff members may resign from membership at any time. Their membership will remain vacant until the next scheduled Senate election.

The Electoral Roll

8. College professional services staff members who are eligible to stand for *ex officio* membership of Senate and elect members from their own number will hold appointments from the University Court, as attested by a contract of employment issued by the University. In practice, 'Professional services staff' will apply to all members of staff who are categorised as 'Professional, Administration and Operational' in the University's Human Resources records and who hold a contract of employment for the relevant College.
9. Members of professional services staff who do not hold a contract of employment for the relevant College will not be eligible to stand and vote in the relevant College Professional services staff election. The electoral roll will be compiled from Human Resources' records on 31 ~~March~~January preceding the call for nominations meaning that nominees for the elected College professional services staff places will need to have been in post from this date in order to be eligible for nomination.

10. Professional services staff will be eligible to stand for the place within the College of which they are a member. If a professional services staff member is a member of multiple Colleges, they will stand in the College where they work a greater proportion of their time (based on full-time equivalent). If a professional services staff member works for equal amounts of time across multiple Colleges, they will be permitted to select the College in which they intend to stand, on condition that they only stand for election in one College, and that they declare in writing to the Senate Support Team in which College they intend to stand.

Election of College professional services staff members to Senate

11. Elections for College professional services staff members will be held on a triennial basis, or where a vacancy has arisen due to a member demitting office before their term of office was due to conclude. The election will be run by the Senate Support team.

Election Dates

12. The call for nominations for each election will be made after 31 January, ~~normally at the next Senate meeting.~~ No nominations will be accepted before this date. ~~At this meeting, Senate will agree a deadline for the submission of nomination forms.~~
13. ~~The elections will be conducted on a date which will be determined to a timescale that has been approved by the Senate, and all elections to Senate will usually take place on the same date in a given year.~~ The elections ~~will must~~ usually take place in time to communicate the results to Senate before its final meeting of the academic session, and the results must be communicated to Senate no later than 30 June each year.

Role of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers

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

Nomination and Validation of Candidates

16. Only members of the electorate in each category, as defined in paragraph 8, will be eligible to stand for election in that category. Eligible individuals will be entitled to nominate themselves as a candidate using the process specified in the call for nominations.
17. All nominations must be received by the deadline agreed. No nominations will be accepted after this date and time.
18. If the Deputy Returning Officer receives a nomination from an individual who is not eligible to stand for election under the terms defined in these regulations, the Deputy Returning Officer will contact the individual to inform them that their nomination will not be accepted. Where the individual whose nomination has not been accepted wishes to challenge the rejection of their nomination, they may do so by contacting the Returning Officer. The decision of the Returning Officer is final.

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

Conduct of election process

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

Voting arrangements

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

Counting

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

Declaration

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

22 April 2024

Date of approval / amendment	Details
22/04/24	Approved by University Court
<u>TBC – December meeting</u>	<u>Amended sections 9, 12 & 13. Subject to approval by University Court</u>

Document control

Senate Ex Officio membership, as provided in Appendix 1 of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations

Position	Membership	Membership Breakdown
Principal	1	(Required under Ordinance 212)
<i>Ex officio</i> appointments	Approximately 70, with a maximum 80 <i>ex officio</i> members in total.	Heads of Schools (Required under Ordinance 212) and Heads (Deans) of the Deaneries of the Edinburgh Medical School.
		Heads of College (Required under Ordinance 212)
		Provost
		Vice-Principals
		Assistant Principals
		Director of Library and University Collections
		Director of the Institute for Academic Development
		University Leads on Climate Responsibility and Sustainability; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
		Up to 6 College-level office holders per College nominated by that College. 5 office holders must hold academic posts (for example, Deans and Associate Deans) 1 office-holder will be a professional services staff member elected to that role by their peers.
		Office-holders who are specifically entitled to Senate membership under the terms of collaborative agreements.
		2 Senate Assessors on the University Court if not serving a term as an elected member.
		1 Academic Staff member on the University Court if not already a Senate member.
		1 Professional Services member on the University Court

Senate

21 October 2026

Lack of Updates from the University Initiatives Portfolio Board

Description of paper

1. This paper follows up on requests from Senate to the University Initiatives Portfolio Board for information and oversight of its activities and various projects.

Fit with Primary Responsibilities.

2. <i>A2: To discuss changes to existing policy and the development of new policy relating to teaching, learning and teaching quality assurance, including research undertaken by students as part of a programme of study.</i>
3. <i>A4: To oversee the implementation of policy relating to teaching, learning and teaching quality assurance, including research undertaken by students as part of a programme of study.</i>
4. <i>A6: To discuss the development of relevant University-wide innovations and changes intended to enhance the student experience, particularly those relating to educational experience and student engagement, in order to inform Senate's business.</i>

Action requested / Recommendation

5. Senate is asked to **note** the lack of information forthcoming from the University Initiatives Portfolio Board.
6. Senate is asked to **note** that its previously approved request for information about the activities and projects of the University Initiatives Portfolio Board remains in effect.
7. Senate is asked to **note** that the appointment of individual senators to a Critical Friends Group on the Academic Size and Shape project, helpful though they are expected to be, does not satisfy the requirement for oversight by Senate of changes to the university's teaching and research portfolio.

Background and context

8. During AY 25/26 Senate voted several times to request information from the University Initiatives Portfolio Board including its agendas, papers, and minutes.
9. On 12 May 2026, the Strategic Change Service offered a response to the Senate Business Committee, which was shared with Senate members by email on 18 May (a copy can be accessed by Senate members through the Senate Members Portal: [UIPB-ResponsefromStrategicChangeSenate_final](#)). It declined to give over a full dossier of its papers and minutes. Nonetheless, it promised 1) to provide a "regular" digest offering updates on the UIPB's work; 2) to provide more information on the SharePoint about the Academic Size and Shape project; 3) to scope further modes of building engagement and receiving input; and 4) to provide Senate with a timeline outlining how Senate will be engaged with its projects.
10. The UIPB Digest is available to staff at <https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/SupportingStrategicInitiatives/SitePages/Portfolio-News.aspx>. The page states that "This quarterly digest provides a roundup of the key discussions and decisions made during the last quarter." However, since May 2026, there have been no updates: only information from February-April 2026 is available. Updates to information on the UIPB SharePoint have been limited, although more, albeit uneven, information has been provided where workstreams are developing in a

devolved manner in individual Colleges. Senate has not received any timeline of engagement.

11. In April 2026 Senate requisitioned a special meeting requesting a plan from the Senior Leadership Team for bringing matters relating to the Academic Size and Shape Project to Senate. The Summary of Senate Business from this special meeting records a series of follow up actions: 1) the Board overseeing Academic Size and Shape will provide Senate with a timeline of items within Senate's remit. This will provide details on matters to be presented to Senate, including the action requested and the indicative timeline for these items coming forward. 2) Senate to receive a direct link to the governance details published on the SharePoint site for Academic Size and Shape. 3) Senate Convener and Academic Size and Shape Project Sponsors and Lead to consider whether a dedicated workshop be held on matters within Senate's remit. 4) In response to Motion 3.3, Senate to receive an update on the provision of legal advice to Senate on its powers in relation to the University Court.
12. Senate awaits confirmation that these actions have been undertaken.
13. In Summer 2026 Elected Academic members of Senate (one professorial, one non-professorial) were invited to join a Critical Friends Group focused on the Academic Size and Shape project. No formal notification of this was given to Senate.
14. Detailed design and implementation of the Academic Size and Shape Project is now underway. This includes significant numbers of course closures and changes to the University's academic portfolio, as well as mergers between subject areas. Senate has not been consulted on these changes beyond being presented with headline principles for discussion (See Senate Papers 25/26 3 H), of which many members offered criticism (See Senate Minutes 25/26 3 H). No amendments to these principles have been brought to Senate, and nor have they been formally approved by Senate. Senate has not been presented with, nor has Senate approved, any of the plans for the Academic Size and Shape Project.

Discussion

15. Senate is the supreme academic body of the university. It is the main representative body of the University's academic community of staff and students on matters relating to teaching, research, and discipline. The work of UIPB relates to these matters, so it is important that Senate is able to provide academic oversight.
16. Senate has repeatedly requested information from the University Initiatives Portfolio Board because it cannot undertake its statutory role of scrutinising and overseeing changes to teaching and research without this information. This general point has been conceded in responses from UIPB, but the specific actions promised as a result have not been implemented and there has been no explanation for this lack.
17. Senate wishes to play a dynamic and collaborative role in determining the academic provision of the university. It is a body with enormous collective intelligence that can be used to mitigate risks and missteps, and it has a full understanding of its duties to further the university's mission and agreed strategy. The present lack of information is preventing it from carrying out this role.
18. In the last weeks, two members of Senate have been appointed to a Critical Friends Group on the Size and Shape project. This is a move in the right direction and is welcomed. Senate has consistently asked for greater transparency and further opportunities for input on UIPB projects. Nonetheless, these appointments are not an adequate replacement for consultation and approval by Senate as a representative body with statutory powers of oversight.

Resource implications

19. None

Risk Management

20. Where statutory governance mechanisms are bypassed, they may present legal and regulatory risks to the university.

Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals

21. N/A

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

22. N/A

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

23.

Consultation

24. N/A

Further information

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Presenter(s)

Jacob Bard-Rosenberg

Freedom of information

OPEN

Senate

21 October 2026

Programme closures and Academic Size and Shape**Description of paper**

1. This paper notes that programme closures have recently been announced within CAHSS and are in development across the University before anything has emerged from the 'design phase' of the Academic Size and Shape workstream; that the closures proposed so far have been made with no consultation of students; that they are on the recommendation of external consultants on the basis of programme enrolment thresholds and projections of savings which depend on key assumptions, in order to meet centrally-imposed budget targets, and there is little scope for either (a) local academic decision-makers to contest these recommendations or shape alternatives, or (b) central oversight and scrutiny of their larger academic consequences. It asks Senate to vote to express whether or not it approves of the current process governing programme closures.
2. The paper contributes to the following goals from Strategy 2030:
 "The undergraduate curriculum will support breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it."
 "We will be a destination of choice, based on our clear "Edinburgh Offer". All of our staff and students will develop here, whether they are from Leith, Lisbon, Lahore or Lilongwe."

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

3. *A2: To discuss changes to existing policy and the development of new policy relating to teaching, learning and teaching quality assurance, including research undertaken by students as part of a programme of study.*

Action requested / Recommendation

4. Senate is asked to vote to approve the following motions:
 - (A) Senate considers the process that is being followed to effect the current schedule of programme closures across the University to be inadequate and does not endorse this process or the resulting programme closures.
 - (B) Senate notes the impacts on students and on the University's academic mission caused by these measures and the nature of the economic case provided, and asks University management to reconsider its approach of using programme and course closures to achieve budget savings.

Background and context

5. In the week commencing 14th September, a number of programmes were announced as scheduled for closure within CAHSS (total numbers not announced before the deadline for Senate papers). We understand that a process of external consultancy to develop suggested programme closures within CSE and CMVM is underway.
6. We note that the current schedule of programme closures is proceeding in advance of the Academic Size and Shape workstream, which is still officially in its 'design' phase.
7. The paper raises two questions: whether there has been adequate oversight and scrutiny of the larger academic consequences and impacts on students of closures within and across Schools, and whether there is a robust economic rationale for current programme closure decisions.

Discussion

8. Within Schools in CAHSS, specific programme closures were recommended by external consultants (PA Consulting). Projected savings were associated with these recommendations, which were added together to suggest ways that Schools and subject areas could meet the budget targets imposed on them by College (and on College by Court).
9. Programme closure recommendations were made on the basis of enrolment thresholds, and relied on assumptions, for example that the programmes do not share courses, and that loss of recruitment income on one programme could be compensated by increased recruitment income on another.
10. There was limited academic scrutiny of these proposals within Schools. Workshops were held with a restricted number of staff, in which Heads of School and Heads of Subject Area were asked to respond to the recommendations of the consultants. Heads of School and HoSA had little opportunity or scope to propose alternative plans, because of the need to meet hard budget targets.
11. It is unclear whether there has been adequate oversight and scrutiny of the academic impacts of closures within and across Schools, in particular of the cross-School implications of the closure of joint degrees. Staff within Schools affected by the closure of joint degrees owned by another School did not receive advance notification or the opportunity to discuss the implications for their subject areas and Schools. There has been no opportunity to discuss the closure of programmes in School or College committees. We note that there are potential risks to income of the closure of specialist degree programmes, and that joint degrees play an important role in some subject areas to support their overall size.
12. There has been no consultation with students about the closures. Closures were announced during Welcome Week, at a time when the impact will be particularly badly felt by newly arriving and returning students. Although there will be 'teach-out' of affected programmes, there will be impacts on the morale of students enrolled on programmes which are now scheduled to close and risks to their perception of the value of their programmes.
13. It is unclear whether there is a robust economic rationale for current programme closures. Email communication from the Head of CAHSS dated 02/09/26 acknowledges that "this stage [of programme closures] does not in itself lead directly to significant savings in academic salary costs." We suggest

this is because cost savings are more likely to come from course closures rather than programme closures. However, most individual and joint programmes are composed of shared courses. Furthermore, it is not necessary to close programmes in order to close courses. Therefore, the question is raised whether programmes are being closed, and opportunities for students are being lost without making significant cost savings.

14. We note that the student demographic is not the same across all degree programmes. Even if recruitment is increased on some larger programmes, this does not mean that the same groups of students will be attracted to or will be able to gain entry to those programmes. Therefore there may be impacts on Widening Participation and EDI of closing small, specialist programmes, which require to be assessed.
15. We note that some small, specialist programmes now listed for closure are associated with very high rates of student satisfaction (e.g. 100% student satisfaction in the most recent NSS).
16. Senate has discussed the impact of these closures on students, and the need to protect small, specialist programmes, including joint degrees, on both academic and economic grounds, in two previous papers ([March 2025 SE24/25 Paper B](#) and [October 2025 SE25/26 Paper 1L](#)). It has voted to express its view that the UoE must take a holistic view of the value of these degrees, which goes beyond the pressure on individual Schools to meet savings targets for their own School.

Resource implications

17. There would be cost implications in developing new ways to meet current budget targets. There are potential income savings in preventing programme closures and so protecting student recruitment.

Risk Management

18. There are risks to future student recruitment, to the University's reputation, and to the University's academic mission, of large-scale programme closures and this paper seeks to reduce these risks.

Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals

18. This paper seeks to support the University's contribution to the goal to '*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*'

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

19. This paper asks for the EDI implications of programme closures to be more thoroughly assessed before closures are effected.

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

20. For University management to determine.

Consultation

21. Consultation has been undertaken amongst elected academic members of Senate.

Further information

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Freedom of information

Open.

Senate

21 October 2026

Invitation to Dialogue on Senate's and Court's Roles and Responsibilities

Description of paper

1. This paper recognises the need for dialogue and understanding about Senate's and Court's interacting roles and responsibilities and asks Senate's convener to create sufficient opportunity for constructive discussion.

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

2.	A7: To discuss the University's engagement with external requirements and frameworks that fall within Senate's remit, in order to inform Senate's business.
3.	D24: To note the activities of Court.
4.	D18: To regulate the conduct of its proceedings and its members through Standing Orders and other mechanisms it may approve, subject to the oversight of Court.

Action requested / Recommendation

5. Senate is asked to **note** that the Statement of Primary Responsibilities recently approved by Court is intended to clarify the role and responsibilities of Senate and to promote mutual understanding between Senate and Court.
6. Senate is asked to **approve** that the convener be requested to ensure sufficient opportunity for meaningful dialogue within Senate and between Senate and Court regarding Senate's role, including time allocated in regular or special formal meetings of Senate no later than Senate's February regular meeting and including substantial opportunity for discussion with members of Court regarding Senate's and Court's roles and responsibilities.
7. In support of this dialogue, Senate is asked to **approve** that the convener be requested to ensure the timely provision of legal advice to Senate regarding applicable university governance statutes and regulations, including the advice referenced at the meeting of 19 May 2026 regarding applicable legislation, which the Academic Registrar indicated would be shared.

Background and context

8. Senate was [informed in December 2025](#) (paper 2N) that the University Court intended to develop a Statement of Primary Responsibilities (SOPR) to clarify Senate's role, for the purpose of furthering effective governance arrangements, partly in response to recommendations of external reviews of Senate and Court.
9. Senate was advised of an intended process of development and consultation, for which see the December paper and subsequent updates.
10. The intended process faced several delays and curtailments, reducing the opportunity for dialogue and understanding in the production of a draft SOPR for Court's consideration.
11. In view of these limitations, Senate in May 2026 unanimously agreed to an uncontentious motion recognising the insufficient opportunity for consideration and recommending "that Court allow for meaningful consultation with the full Senate (including the opportunity to comment on any revised versions proposed for adoption) before approving any proposed Statement of Primary Responsibilities."
12. Nevertheless, Court considered the SOPR at its June meeting and its Exception Committee approved the SOPR at the end of July 2026.

13. The [Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance](#) establishes an expectation that the institution will have appropriate measures to “clarify the different responsibilities of the governing body [Court] and the academic board [Senate] and to encourage a high level of mutual understanding between them.”

Discussion

14. There have been limited opportunities for Senate members to understand the reasoning behind the approved SOPR. Numerous requests for context, information, and guidance from the Senate critical friends group and in the online feedback form open to all Senate members have been met only with short and selective response documents with no opportunity for discussion or even clarification.
15. Available indications from Senate member consultations show the presence of significant unanswered questions and concerns, rather than mutual understanding. A majority of those responding to the May online form disagreed that the statement was effective. A large majority of Senate members did not give comments in any consultation, which itself is strong evidence of a failure to achieve buy-in or mutual understanding.
16. The only formal feedback Senate as a whole offered to Court, indeed unanimously, was that more discussion was needed prior to any statement’s approval. A request sent by the proposers of this motion to the University Secretary and Court Services in August, asking for comment on why this need was not honoured by Court, did not receive a response.
17. In this light, it is clear that the SOPR as it currently stands has not achieved one of its most important objectives: the promotion of mutual understanding between Senate and Court about roles and responsibilities. Such understanding will not be achieved without real engagement between both Senate and Court.
18. It may be that the pursuit of understanding produces clarity and consensus around the existing document, or it may be that it clarifies a need for revision. Either way, the SOPR may be best understood as a living document that currently reflects a moment in Court members’ understanding prior to the completion of the originally devised process of consultation involving Senate.
19. At the end of the day, we are a community of learners and educators, and it is so very important to remember this and the commitments this involves. Integrating expertise and building and reconciling understanding are core to what we do, and we do not leave this essential foundation at the door when we carry out our roles as members of Senate.

Resource implications

20. Meeting time for Senate and Court members and facilitative work from Senate Support and Court Services will be required if the recommendation is approved and acted upon.

Risk Management

21. “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 is not progressed.” (Quoting from previous Senate papers regarding SOPR.)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

22. The SOPR and the broader expectation of mutual understanding between Senate and Court are expected to support responsibilities regarding EDI.

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

23. Convener, Senate Support, and Court Services to implement and communicate as required.

Consultation

24. This paper follows up a unanimously agreed motion from Senate's May 2026 meeting.

Further information**Author(s)**

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Presenter(s)

TBC

Seconder(s)

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Freedom of information

OPEN

AI Statement

This paper was written entirely without the use of text generation tools.

Senate

21 October 2026

Implementation of Senate Decisions

Description of paper

1. This paper asks what has become of decisions made by Senate where the outcome may be unclear to members. It asks further what is to be done when the outcome may not comport to what Senate has decided. It recognises the role of University Court in these questions.

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

2.	A4: To oversee the implementation of policy relating to teaching, learning and teaching quality assurance, including research undertaken by students as part of a programme of study.
3.	A5: To oversee the implementation of teaching quality assurance, including oversight of reporting to relevant external bodies.
4.	B11: To oversee the implementation of policy relating to student conduct and discipline.
5.	C14: To note and discuss, as appropriate, major developments concerning the University's research provision and support for research.
6.	D18: To regulate the conduct of its proceedings and its members through Standing Orders and other mechanisms it may approve, subject to the oversight of Court.
7.	D19: As part of this, to discuss feedback and recommendations generated by internal and external effectiveness reviews of Senate and its Committees.
8.	<i>This paper speaks generally to the implementation of decisions related to the range of Senate's responsibilities in SOPR and otherwise specified.</i>

Action requested / Recommendation

9. Senate is asked to **approve** that the Senate convener be formally requested to provide (directly or by delegation as appropriate) timely and evidenced updates to Senate regarding the implementation of past Senate decisions upon request of any member of Senate.
10. Senate is asked to **approve** updating its annual internal effectiveness reviews to include a list of approved motions and a summary of implementation outcomes for each.
11. Senate is asked to **approve** the formal request for Court's consideration and response to the following questions:
 - 11.1. Who is ultimately accountable for ensuring that Senate's decisions are implemented? Who is responsible for providing Senate the information necessary for oversight of its decisions' implementation? How should Senate uphold its responsibilities if information or implementation do not appear to be forthcoming?
 - 11.2. What is Court's role in ensuring the implementation of Senate's decisions? How should concerns or questions about implementation be brought to Court's attention to facilitate its effectiveness in that role?

Background and context

12. There was a time not long ago when the parties bringing papers and motions to Senate for decision were typically closely linked to (often the same or strongly

overlapping with) the parties most involved in implementing those decisions. This is still the case for many Senate papers, for instance policy updates proposed and subsequently implemented by staff in Academic Quality and Standards and associated academic and management role holders, or papers awarding honorary degrees and emeritus status that are presented by those involved in the awarding process. Implementation of decisions was (and in comparable cases still is) usually assumed.

13. Recent years have seen numerous proposals, amendments, and motions from members of Senate who are not personally in roles that involve them in implementation. Many of these have been approved by Senate following its Standing Orders and in pursuit of its law-given responsibilities.
14. At-large members of Senate have at times struggled to see action when attempting to follow up the implementation of some Senate decisions, either by asking about these in Senate meetings or privately to relevant role-holders, or in submitting papers to Senate to this effect.
15. In semester 1 of 2023-24, a paper attempting to follow up at-large members' questions about implementation of Senate decisions from the previous year was blocked from circulation to the membership by the Senate convener. One outcome of this was a new process and expectation for disclosing the suppression of papers (S 23/24 2J, which ironically has not been implemented despite a further approved motion in May 2026 affirming that it remains in force). Another outcome was the creation of a Senate Action Log for Senate Support to track actions arising from Senate decisions.
16. While the Action Log has been helpful in some respects, many members have expressed concerns that it has not generally led to greater clarity on the implementation of decisions following initial communication of the decision to relevant parties.
17. The Universities (Scotland) Acts establish Court's responsibility to audit Senate's activities and to act on certain appeals arising from Senate's decisions. At-large members and Senate assessors to Court have at points appealed to this responsibility, but to date Court has generally decided against intervention.

Discussion

18. Senate's Standing Orders refer to the ability of any member of Senate to bring Senate business, whether student, staff, or officer. This reflects the shared stake and responsibility that all members have in Senate's role and ultimately in the success of our university. This paper is premised on the view that Senate's role is best served by members who care, who bring their own and colleagues' ideas and concerns to the floor, and who seek to understand the challenges facing the institution in a way that goes beyond reacting to papers circulated ahead of meetings.
19. Senate effectiveness can be measured many ways, but surely a basic way should be by the effects of Senate's actions. Since Senate's actions are in the form of taking decisions and providing advice, the implementation of those decisions and impact of that advice should be a primary desideratum of effectiveness.
20. Court's new Statement of Primary Responsibilities reflects a commitment from Court to greater engagement with Senate's role and, it might be hoped, an interest in supporting the effective implementation of Senate's decisions pursuant to that role.

Resource implications

21. There is a significant backlog of missing follow-up and loop-closing, which will necessarily take time and resource to close. Members can be expected to be patient and understanding of the need to prioritise and pace responses, provided progress is being made.

22. The effective implementation of Senate decisions involves respecting the resources that go into developing Senate business.

Risk Management

23. This paper addresses fundamental governance risks arising from the efficacy or lack thereof of Senate decisions.

Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals

24. Implicated papers include past decisions relating to directly or indirectly to the university's engagement with these.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

25. Implicated papers include past decisions relating to directly or indirectly to the university's engagement with these.

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

26. As stated or implied in the "action requested" section.

Consultation

27. Frankly years of questions and discussion in open Senate meetings as well as preparation among at-large members for these meetings.

Further information

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Freedom of information

OPEN

AI Statement

This paper was written entirely without the use of text generation tools.

Senate**21 October 2026****Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate and its Standing Committees – Report on the post-meeting surveys (2025-26)****Description of paper**

1. This paper provides members with analysis of responses received as part of the Senate post-meeting survey which was issued throughout the 2025/26 academic year, and updates members of actions taken in response.
2. The paper also provides members with the analysis of responses to the additional targeted questions on actions taken in response to the recommendations of the External Review.

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

3. *D19: As part of this, to discuss feedback and recommendations generated by internal and external effectiveness reviews of Senate and its Committees.*

Action requested / Recommendation

4. Senate is invited to discuss the findings of the Senate internal effectiveness review for 2025/26, and the associated responses.
5. Senate is invited to discuss the findings of the Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate Standing Committees 2025/26 provided in Appendix 3.

Background and context

6. The Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2023) sets out the expectation that universities conduct an internally facilitated review of the effectiveness of Senate and its Committees on an annual basis; and an externally facilitated review every five years.
7. At its meeting of 19 May 2026, Senate approved the plans for the 2025/26 Senate Annual Internal Effectiveness Review; whereby a report would be drafted using data collected from surveys of Senate members conducted following each ordinary Senate meeting. Individual reports on each meetings survey results are accessible to Senate members on the [Senate Members Portal](#).
8. The final post-meeting survey was also expanded to include additional targeted questions on actions taken in response to the recommendations of the External Review. The review did not include questions on actions taken in response to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion recommendations, as these actions are still in development. Members will be surveyed on this topic in the future.

Discussion

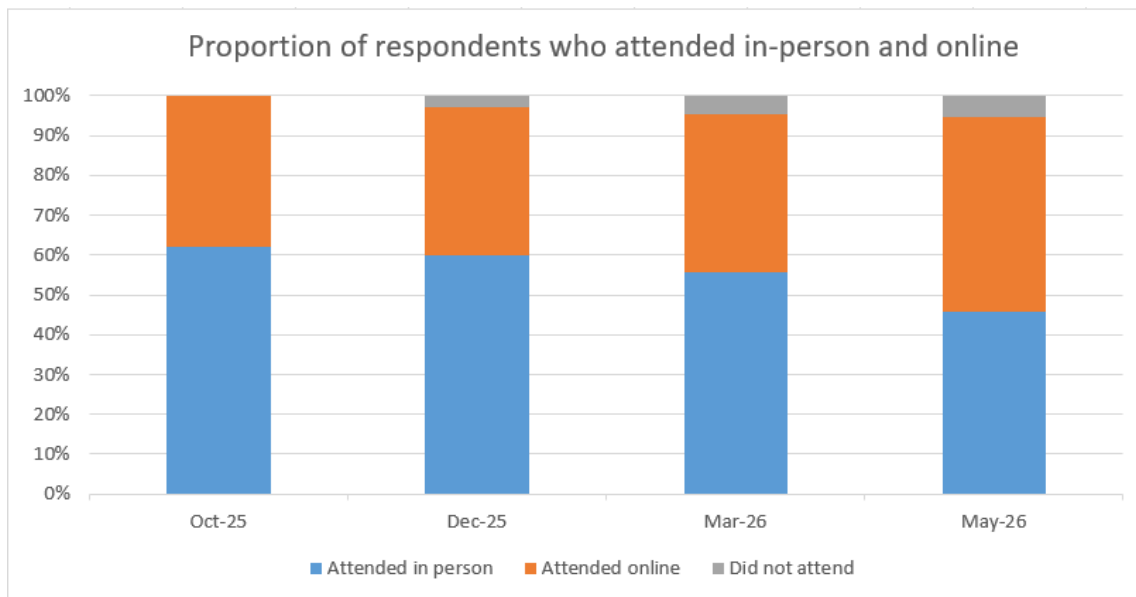
9. The structure of this report mirrors the questions asked as part of the four post-meeting surveys.

Breakdown of respondents by membership category and mode of attendance

10. Over the 2025/26 academic year, responses to the post-meeting survey were received from members in membership categories as detailed below.
11. The highest percentage of responses to the post-meeting survey was for the October 2025 meeting, when 74 responses were received, equating to an overall response rate of 27%. The lowest percentage of responses was following the December 2025 meeting, when 35 responses were received. This equated to a 13% response rate.
12. Over the course of the year, the average response rate to the post-meeting surveys was 18%.

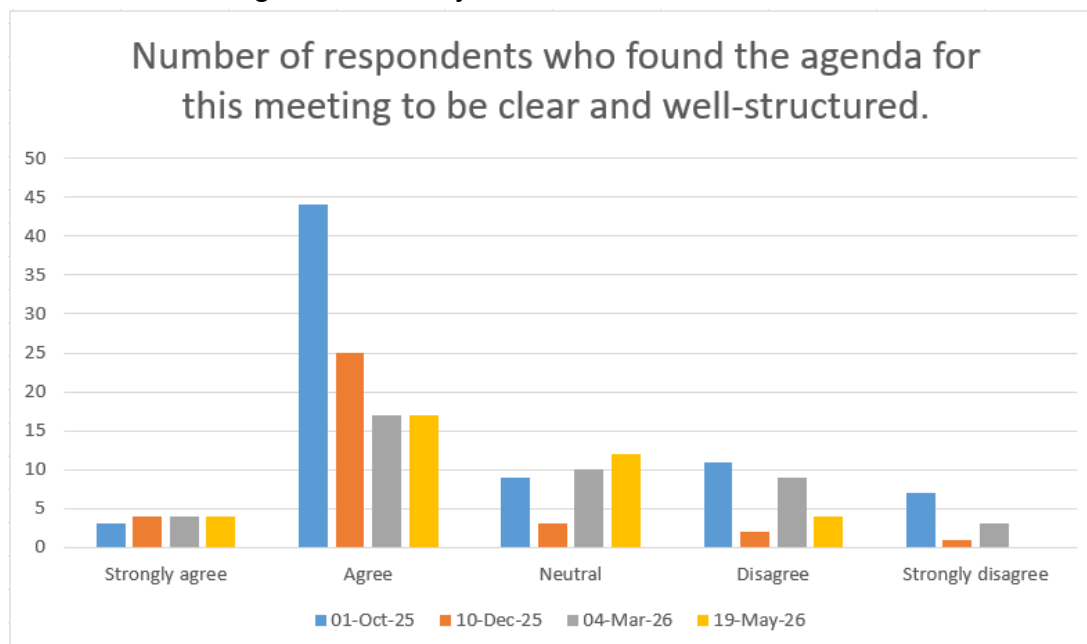


13. A mix of responses were received from members attending the meeting in person and by Microsoft Teams. Over the course of the 2025-26 academic year an average of **27** respondents attended in-person and **19** respondents attended online. A small proportion of members who did not attend completed the post-meeting survey, with an average of **1** member who did not attend meetings completing the post-meeting survey after each meeting. Further information on member attendance is provided in Appendix 1.

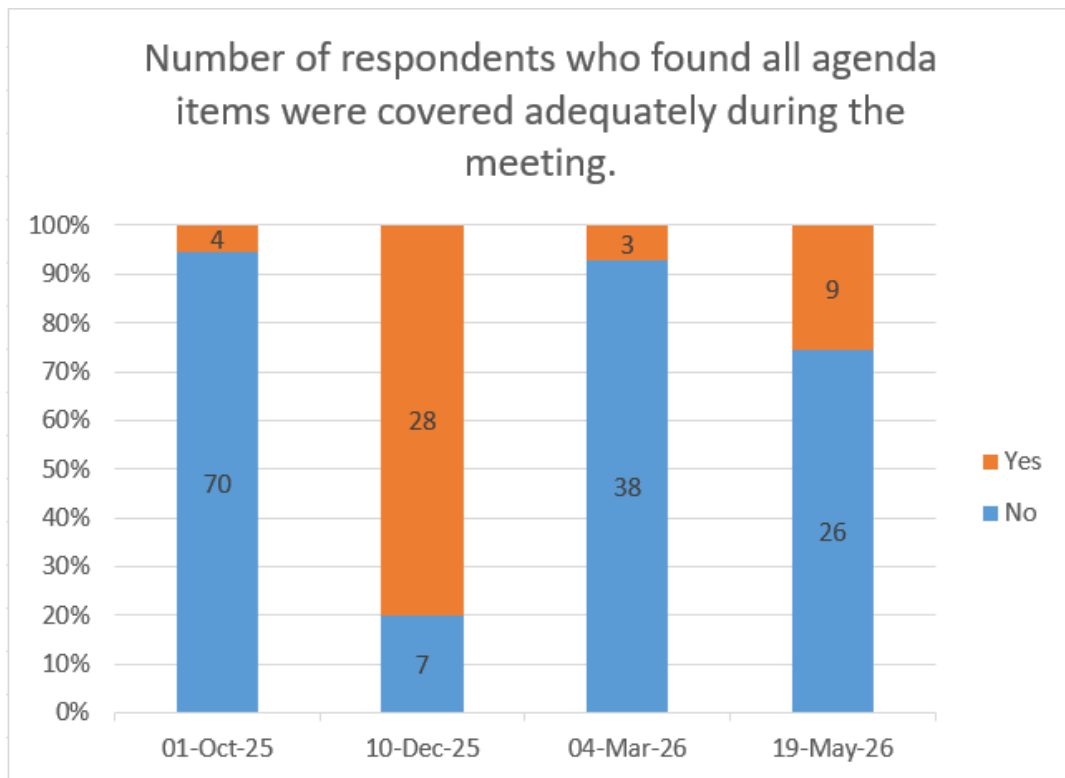


Agendas

14. The proportion of respondents who found the agenda for the meeting to be clear and well-structured was highest following the 10 December meeting, with 83% of members agreeing, though this dropped to 49% following the 4 March meeting. The overall average across the year was 59%.



15. There was a consistently high proportion of respondents who disagreed that agenda items were adequately covered during ordinary Senate meetings. The meeting of 10 December 2025 appears to be a notable outlier with member responses indicating a higher degree of agreement that the agenda was adequately covered during this meeting.



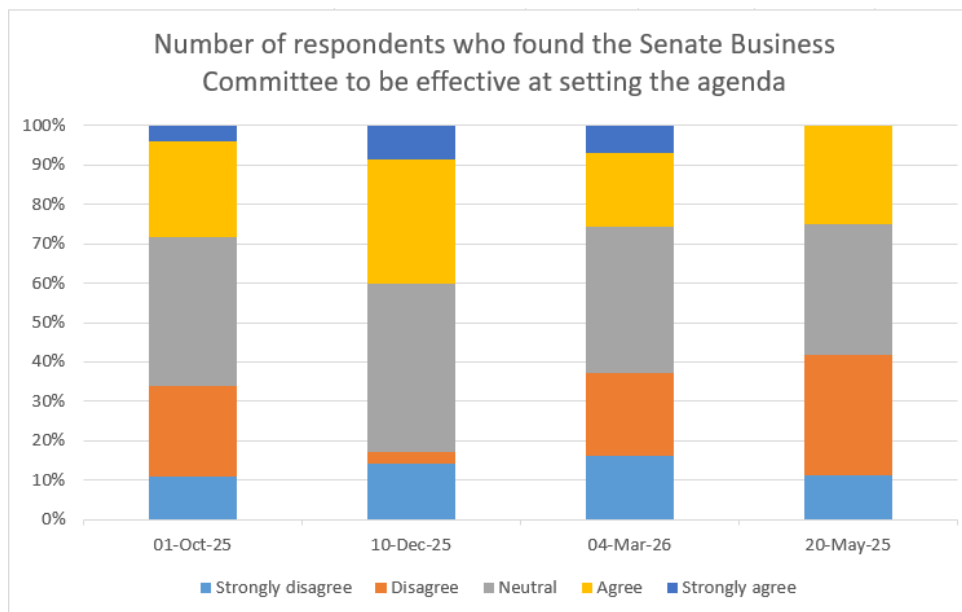
16. In response to Senate members' feedback consideration will be given to the following to improve the Senate agenda and the conduct of Senate business:

- Ensuring that the next steps are outlined for each item of business. This approach is intended to provide clarity for members and clarify actions where relevant
- Feedback from the post meeting survey on agenda-related questions will be provided to the Senate Business Committee for their consideration.

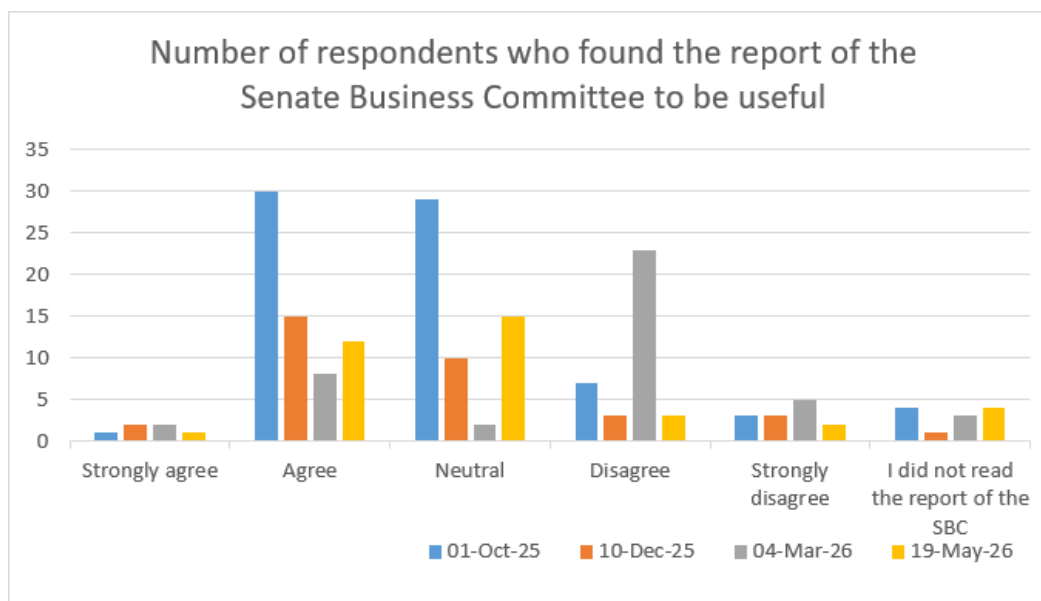
Senate Business Committee

17. The Senate Business Committee was formed during the 2024/25 academic year and the 2025/26 was the first full year of the Committee's operation.

18. Member satisfaction with the Committee's effectiveness was varied, with a majority of respondents across the year indicating a neutral response. This is believed to be due to the relatively new operation of the Committee.



19. Overall member satisfaction with the Report of the Senate Business Committee declined over the year, with 40% of members indicating they agreed with the usefulness of the report in October 2025. However, 53% of members disagreed with the usefulness of the report in March 2026. Again, there remained a relatively high degree of neutrality in response to this question across the four post-meeting surveys.



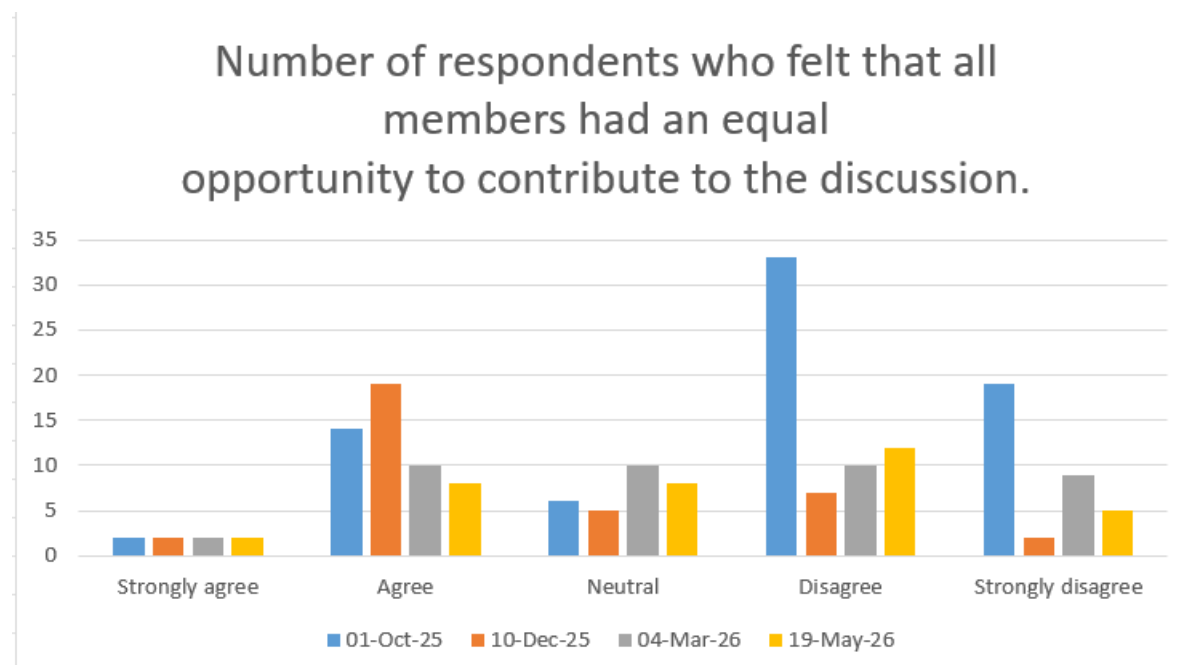
20. In response to members' feedback consideration was, or will be, given to the following:

- Ensuring that the draft minutes of Senate Business Committee meetings are available to all Senate members. This will increase the transparency of the Committee's operation and recommendations.

Additional feedback on the operation of the Senate Business Committee is provided in Appendix 2.

Members experience during meetings

21. Over the course of the 2025/26 academic year, a significant proportion of survey respondents have fed back that they do not consider members to have an equal opportunity to contribute to discussions. Responses have indicated several possible reasons, including an adversarial atmosphere during meetings, poor chairing, and compressed agenda timings dissuading members from extending time discussing particular items.



22. Members also commented that:

- The atmosphere of meetings is adversarial, and can discourage contributions from new and inexperienced members of Senate.
- Meeting attendance is low and some members believe that the outcome of some Senate decisions are not representative. For example, *'attendance at Senate is far too low and nothing is being done to ensure full participation of all elected members. The results of our votes are therefore not representative. We need to either raise the quorum much higher, or enact new policies to ensure most members attend.'*
- Meeting agendas frequently overrun and this can discourage members' from contributing to discussion.

- There are extended discussions on procedural matters and amendments which can impact on time available for later agenda items.
- A small proportion of vocal members take up a disproportionate amount of meeting time.
- Members indicated an inequitable approach to members taking up meeting time, or providing responses on clarifying points, with members reporting that greater time is given to members of University leadership when compared with elected members. For example, *‘the ‘top table’ is also often given the right to respond to every intervention, rather than taking turns like all other Senate members...’*, and *‘I feel like the voices of the executive are always prioritized above the elected Senators’*.
- The ineffective chairing of discussion items impacts on the time available for discussion.

23. In response to members’ feedback, the following points are highlighted:

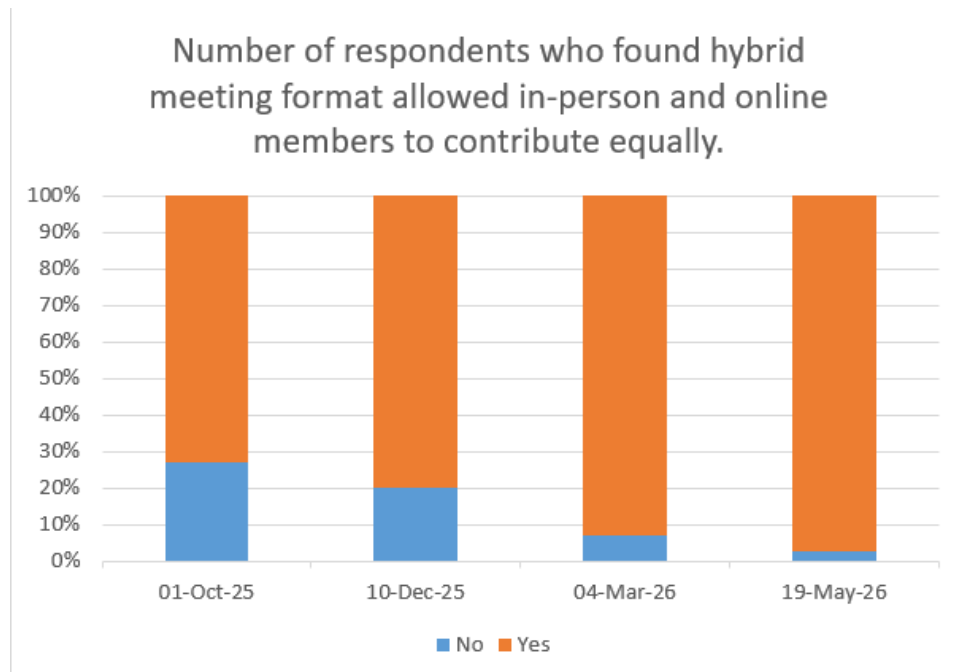
- All Senate members are asked to be collegial and constructive during meetings; and to ensure their contributions are concise, constructive, solutions focused, and relevant to the discussion. Information on contributing to discussion during Senate meetings is expanded on in the Senate Handbook.
- Senate members are reminded of Senate Standing Order 19, which states that *“A Member shall not, except by permission of the President, speak more than once to any Motion or Amendment in one debate upon one subject, except to order, in explanation, or in reply as the mover of the resolution under discussion.”*
- The University Lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is currently undertaking an in-depth examination of how members experience the culture and inclusivity of the Senate and the results of this work is expected to generate a new Senate Behaviours Agreement which will address some of the challenging points raised.
- At the commencement of each agenda item, the Convener will inform members of the time allocated for the item. The Convener will also inform members when the allocated time for an agenda item has been exhausted, so that members can then be aware that if the discussion on that item continues, this will reduce the time available for the remainder of the agenda.

Hybrid meeting arrangements

24. The majority of respondents agreed that the hybrid meeting format enabled equal contributions from members attending in-person and online. A small proportion of members indicated that they would prefer meetings to be held in a single format. Further information on in-person and online attendance is provided within

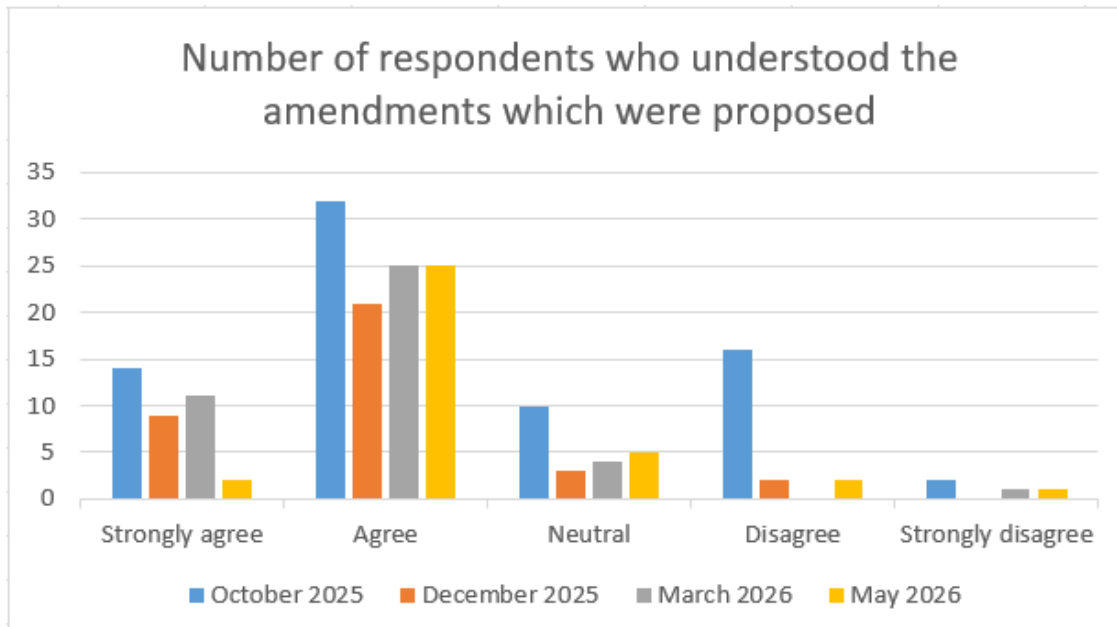
Appendix 1. Additional feedback on the format of Senate meetings is provided in Appendix 2.

25. Due to the overall high degree of satisfaction with hybrid meeting arrangements, no further actions are proposed.

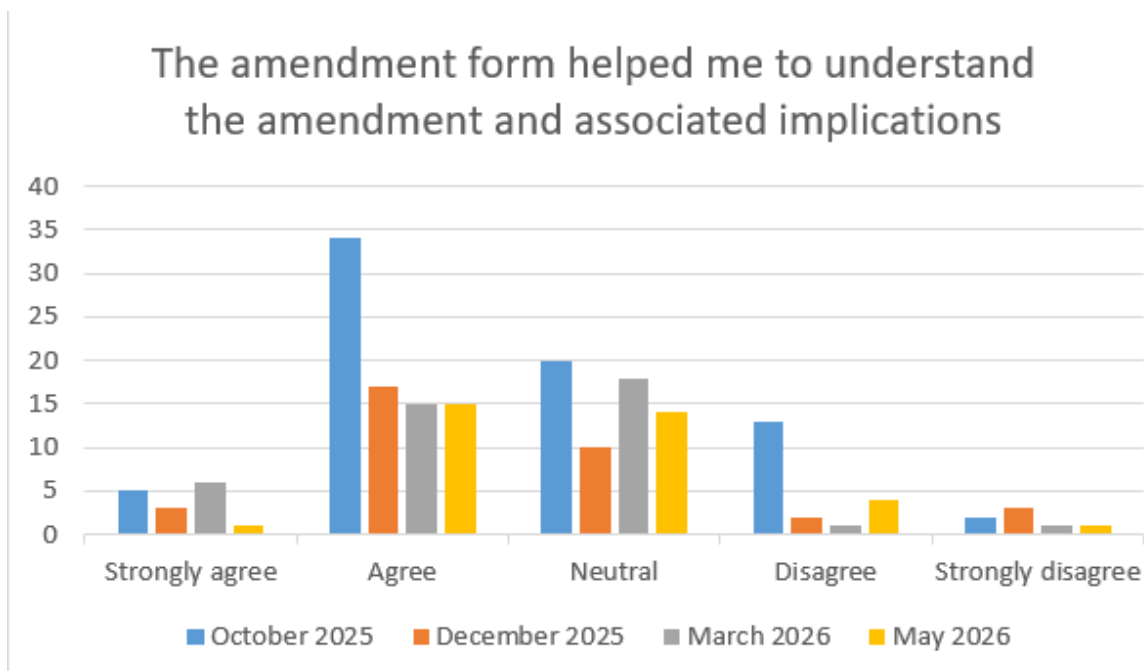


Amendments

26. A majority of respondents indicated that they understood the amendments that were proposed for each meeting. An average of 78% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the amendments proposed across the four Ordinary meetings held in 2025/26.



27. Members were also invited to provide feedback on the amendment form that was introduced for use from 2025/26. Member satisfaction with the form reduced over the course of the year, with an average of 56% members agreeing or strongly agreeing during the first half of the year, with agreement dropping to 46% in the second half of the year.



28. Responses to free-text feedback indicate that members find the proposal of motions and amendments from the floor make it more challenging to understand amendments proposed. Members indicated that decisions relating to Boards of Examiners and the election of Standing Committee Conveners were examples of poor governance due to amendments being raised from the floor and without

members having adequate understanding of the implications of Senate's decisions.

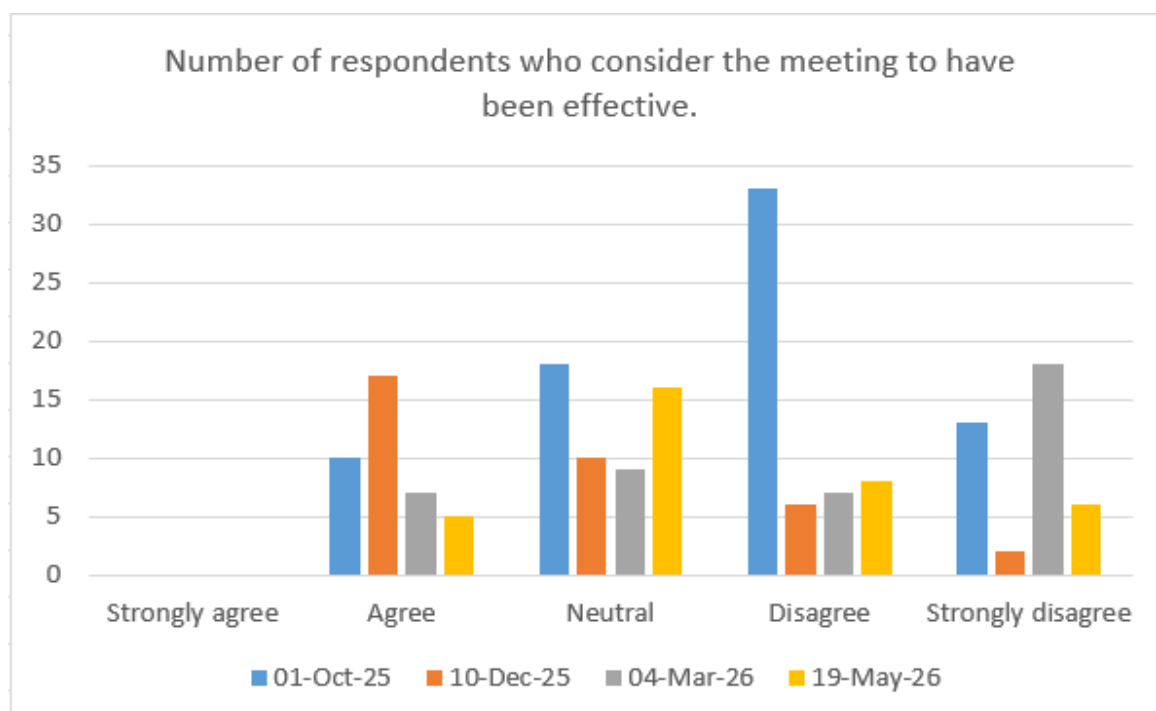
29. Additionally, members indicated that the voting options were confusing and there was a lack of clarity on the meaning of voting options, and specifically the 'I do not have enough information' option.

30. In response to members' feedback, consideration was, or will be, given to the following:

- A clarification of the voting options and detail on what each option means and the next steps for each option has been provided in the Senate Handbook under section 7.4: Voting during meetings.
- Members will continue to be encouraged to use the amendment form and the proposal of motions and amendments during live meetings of Senate will continue to be strongly discouraged.

Meeting effectiveness

31. Across the year, the majority of respondents did not consider ordinary Senate meetings to be effective. An average of 60% of respondents for both the October 2025 and March 2026 meetings considered the meeting to *not* be effective. 45% of respondents for the May 2026 meeting considered the meeting to be effective. For the meeting of 10 December 2025, a majority of respondents were neutral on this question.



32. For further information, the [post-meeting survey reports](#) contains an analysis of free text comments.

Resource implications

33. Changes arising from the review of post-meeting surveys have had minimal resource implications across the year. Should there be any additional actions proposed, either in terms of this annual review or in response to future Senate feedback, the associated resource implications must be outlined and considered ahead of formal agreement.

Risk Management

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

Equality & Diversity

35. Completion of the Senate Internal Effectiveness Review provided an opportunity to identify any equality and diversity challenges in Senate and its Committees, and the way they conduct their business. Any updates to policies and practices arising from this review will be equality impact assessed where required.

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

36. The annual report from the Standing Committees to Senate and a summary report of the findings and action taken as a result of the Senate post-meeting surveys are to be presented to the October 2026 Senate meeting. As open papers, these have been published on the University's website and will be referred to in the Senate Committees' Newsletter. Copies of the reports were provided to University Court for information.
37. The practice of issuing post-meeting surveys will continue in 2026/27, with Senate members' feedback used to identify further enhancements and, where appropriate, evaluate existing changes.

Author

Registry Services
September 2026

Freedom of Information - Open

Appendix One: meeting attendance data

	1 October 2025	10 December 2025	4 March 2026	28 April 2026	19 May 2026	25 May 2026
Location	Lecture Theatre G.03, 50 George Square, Central Area / Microsoft Teams	Larch Lecture Theatre, Nucleus, Kings Buildings/ Microsoft Teams	Larch Lecture Theatre, Nucleus, Kings Buildings/ Microsoft Teams	G.07, Meadows Lecture Theatre, Doorway 4 of the Old Medical School/ Microsoft Teams	G.07, Meadows Lecture Theatre, Doorway 4 of the Old Medical School/ Microsoft Teams	Online meeting
Meeting type	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Special	Ordinary	Special
Quorum obtained?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Attendees: % of overall membership	64%	62%	61%	59%	62%	46%
Attendees: Headcount	174	168	164	159	169	125

Appendix Two: Report of the effectiveness of actions taken in response to the recommendations of the External Review

Respondents were asked for their view on the effectiveness of actions implemented in response to the recommendations arising from the Senate External Review undertaken in 2022/23. The questions invited members to rate actions from very positive to very negative, with space for members to provide specific positive or negative impacts, and provide examples of further enhancements to the actions taken in response to the external review.

A total of 37 responses were received to the survey. This equates to a 17% response rate.

Additional questions on the effectiveness of the Senate Business Committee

Recommendation 6: *We recommend that the (renamed) Senate Exception Committee takes on the task of agenda setting and timing for Senate business. This role, if successful, could evolve over time.*

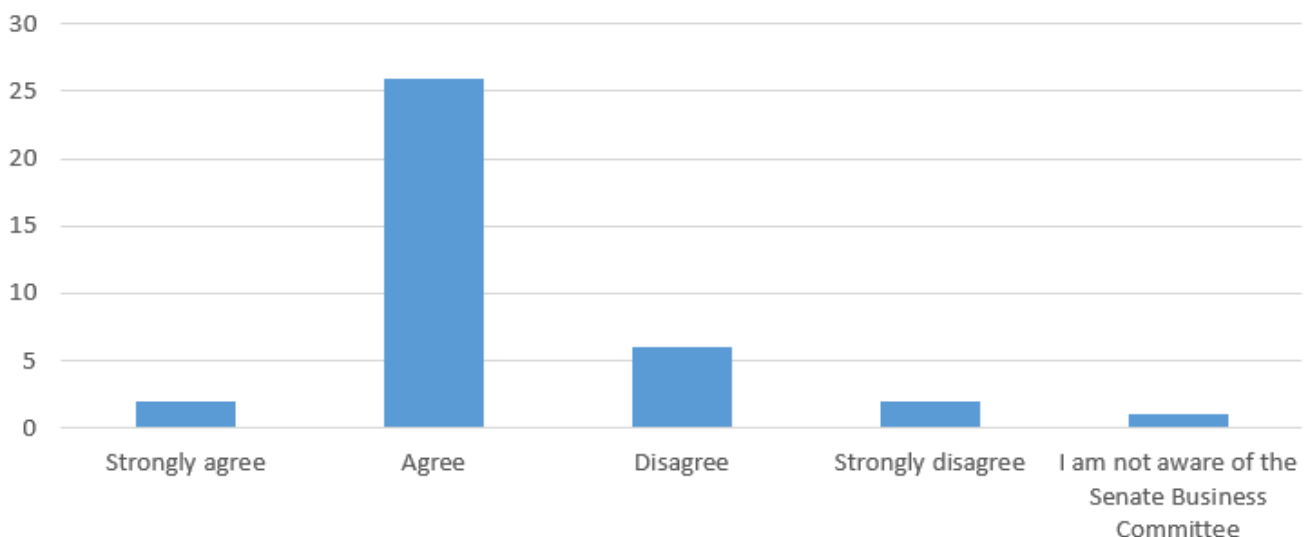
Recommendation 8: *We recommend introducing a more carefully and realistically planned and time managed agenda.*

The agenda should also make it clear if an item is for noting or discussion and suitable but specific time should be allowed for discussion.

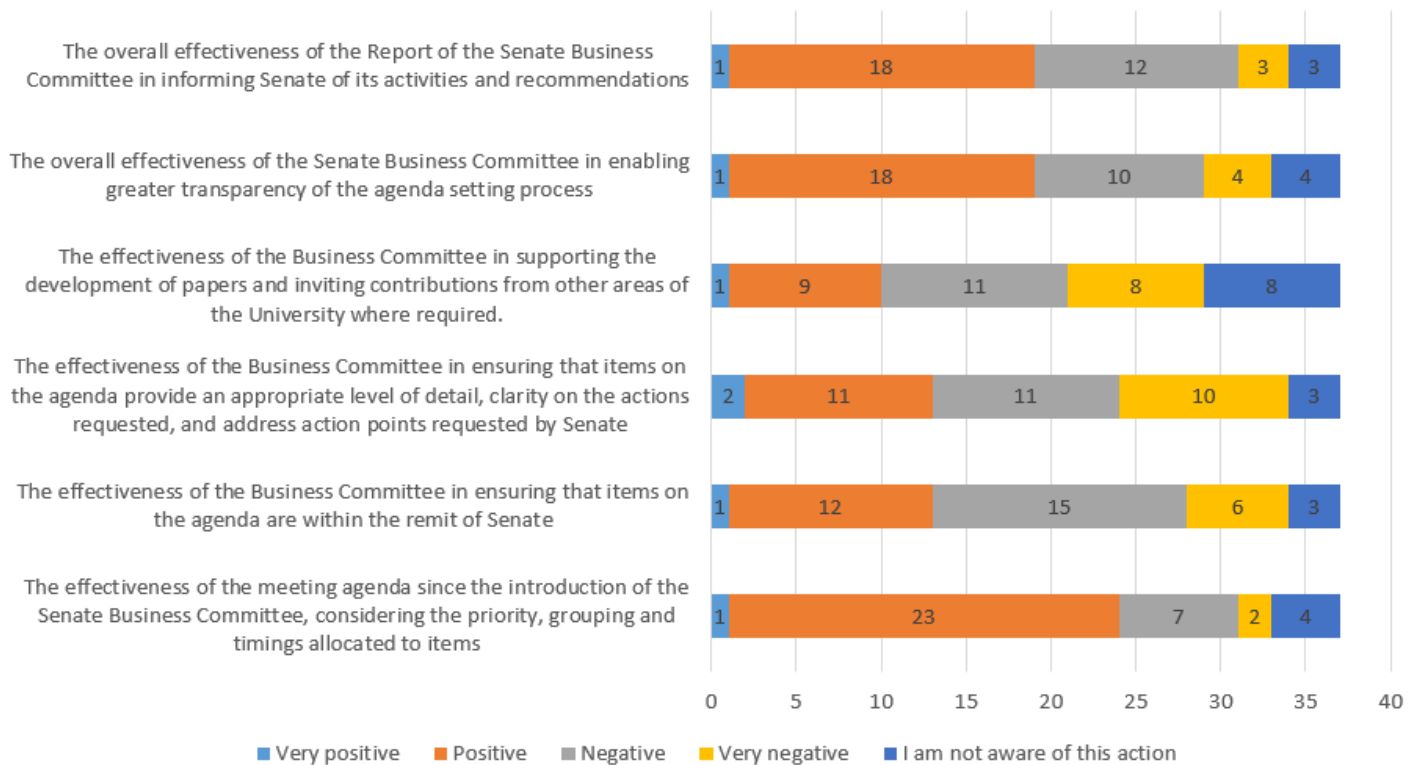
Action: *At its meeting of 11 December 2024, Senate approved the formation of the Senate Business Committee.*

The Senate Business Committee was implemented for the May 2025 Senate meeting, and will operate on a trial basis to 31 July 2026. The continuation of the Committee, as a standing committee of Senate, will be contingent on the outcome of a review to take place in early 2026.

I understand the role of the Senate Business Committee



Effectiveness of the Senate Business Committee



75% of respondents felt they understood the role of the Senate Business Committee.

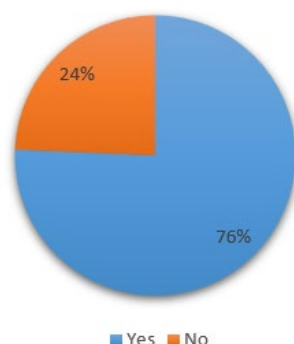
51% of respondents felt that the Report of the Business Committee had a positive or very positive effective in informing Senate of its actions and recommendations; and that the Business Committee was effective in enabling greater overall transparency of the agenda setting process.

A majority of respondents did *not* believe the Business Committee was effective in the development of papers and contributions from other areas of the University, with 51% of respondents indicating that this had a negative or very negative impact.

57% of respondents believe that the Business Committee had a negative or very negative effective in ensuring agenda items provided appropriate detail, clarity on actions requested and address actions requested by Senate; and that the Committee was effective in ensuring that agenda items were within the remit of Senate.

64% of respondents believe that the Business Committee has had a positive or very positive effect on the meeting agenda when considering the priority, groupings and timings allocated to items.

Do you recommend that the Business Committee remains in place?



Respondents were also asked if they would recommend that the Business Committee remains in place following the conclusion of the 12 month trial period. 76% of respondents agreed that the Business Committee should remain in place.

Actions in response to feedback

At the 19 May meeting of Senate, the following motion on the operation of the Business Committee was approved by a majority vote:

Motion: In keeping with the original recommendation that the Business Committee "should not be a gatekeeper" (S24/25 2J), affirmed in Senate's decision to amend the draft Business Committee terms of reference to remove language about "referring" or "redirecting" or "deeming ineligible" submitted items, it is hereby clarified that all timely submitted papers and motions as well as urgent papers and motions notified ahead of the meeting shall be included on the Billet. The role of the Business Committee is to invite relevant parties to contribute information and to invite improvements to papers, and to recommend sequencing and timings of papers (including the recommendation to deprioritise motions for consideration only if time allows), not to prevent papers and motions from appearing on the agenda by referral, redirection, adjudicating remit, or other means. If the Business Committee feels a delay to consideration of a paper or motion is advisable to allow further input or action from other parties, it may communicate this recommendation to the submitters and to Senate, but the decision to withhold a paper prior to the meeting remains with the submitters, with Senate retaining the prerogative to defer a decision on a motion at its meetings by agreement or vote.

Accordingly, the Committee's meetings in 2026/27 will focus on agreeing a priority order for all provided items, and identifying timings that enable appropriate discussion aligned to the content of papers. The Committee's recommendations will be shared with the Senate Convener who has overall responsibility for finalising the Senate agenda.

The impact of the approved motion on the operation of the Business Committee is not yet known. To allow sufficient time for the impact of the motion to be understood, the Committee will continue on an extended trial basis, with a mid-year survey of members (combined with the December post-meeting survey) inviting members to provide their view on the continued operation of the Business Committee.

Additional questions on the effectiveness of actions taken in response to recommendations on the Composition of Senate.

Recommendation 1: *Given the mission of the University we recommend the addition of a specific membership category in Senate for a Doctoral Student or Junior Research associate.*

Recommendation 2: *We recommend that Senate has 3 non-executive professional staff members on Senate.*

Suggestion 1: *We suggest that Edinburgh consider making Senate Membership for elected members' part of the WAM as a way to raise the profile of Senate membership and to give value to membership.*

Action: The [Senatus Academicus \(Senate\) Election Regulations](#) have been updated.

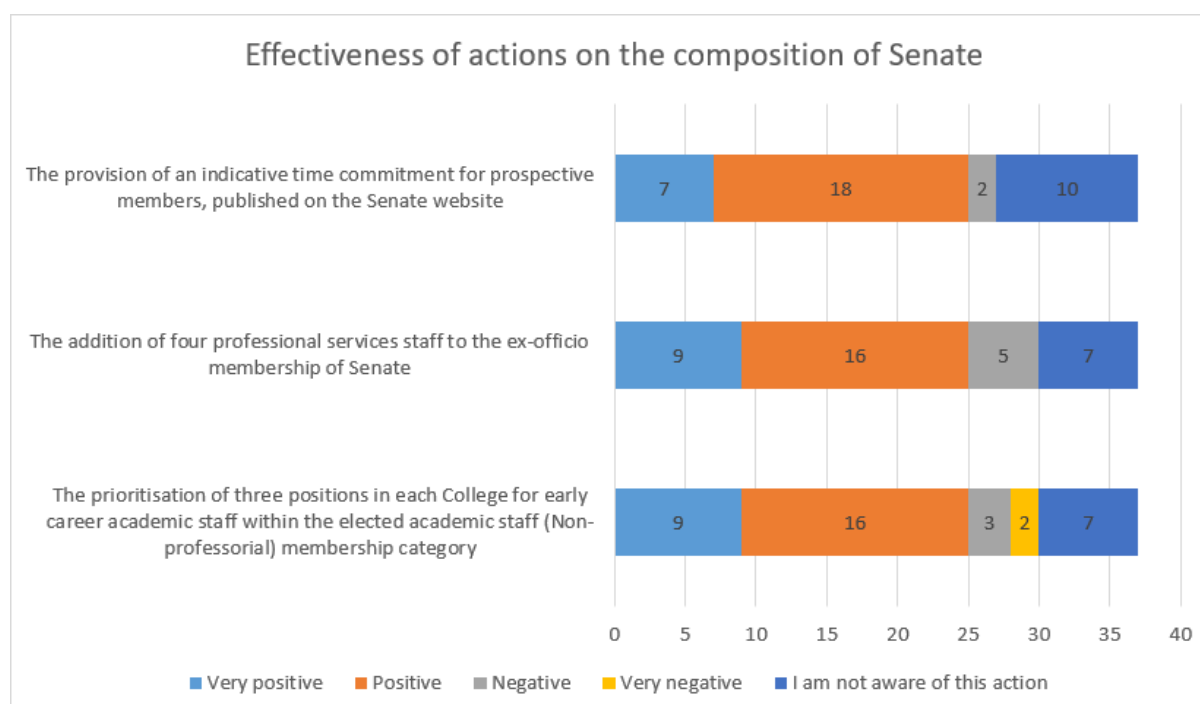
Within the Elected academic staff (Non-professorial) membership category, there are now three positions prioritised for early career academic staff within each college.

Action: [Senate College Professional Services Election Regulations](#) have been developed, and three Elected College Professional Services Staff members commenced terms of office on 1 August 2024.

Action: There was not a single university workload allocation model, that some areas of the University did not use such models, and that such models were not used for grant funded research staff. The Group suggested that indicative timings be developed for staff to engage with Senate business.

At the Task and Finish Group's meeting of 1 April 2025, the Academic Registrar reported on discussions with the Provost and Heads of College where an indicative allocation of six hours per meeting had been agreed. Further discussion would take place on recognising the contribution of student members.

The following indicative time commitment has been [published online](#) to support staff considering nominating themselves for membership of Senate.



67% of respondents felt that the actions taken on the composition of Senate had a positive or very positive effect.

8 respondents provided free-text comments which invited examples of positive or negative impacts of actions taken. Free text comments are summarised as follows:

- Members value the inclusion and contribution of professional services staff and early career staff in dedicated roles on Senate.
- Two respondents made reference to there being disruptive members among all member categories.
- One respondent noted that early career staff are well represented within the broader non-Professorial category, regardless of the three-dedicated early career positions.
- One respondent suggested that the definition of Early Career Academic may not be appropriate, as this is reflective of pay band, and not length of career.

Actions in response to feedback

Overall the actions taken on the composition of Senate are considered to have had a positive effect, with a minority of respondents indicating that these actions have had a negative effect. An average of 3% of respondents across all questions consider the actions to have had a negative impact.

The free-text comments provide insights into potential areas for improvement, however given the low response rate and absence of recurring issues, no specific actions are proposed for this category. The free text comments will be reviewed ahead of the 2027 Senate Elections for any further revisions required to ensure the actions are carried out as intended.

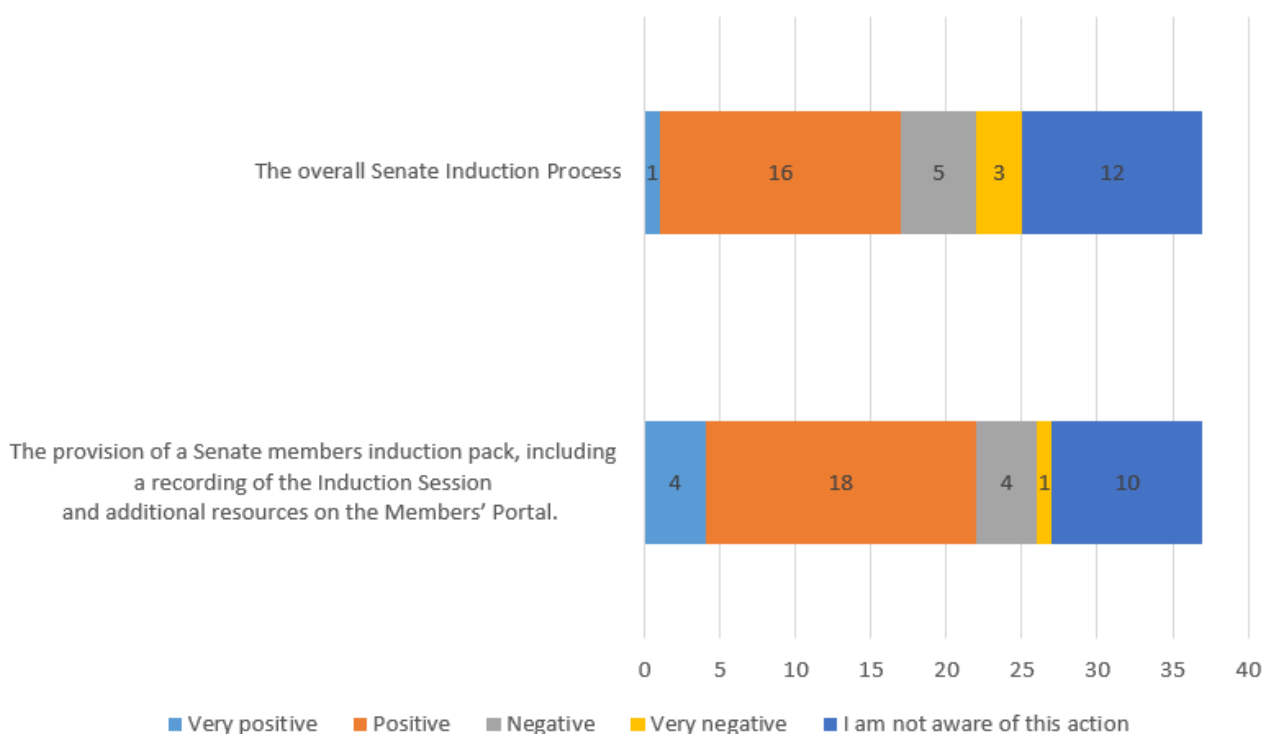
Additional questions on the effectiveness of actions taken in response to recommendations on Recruitment and Induction

Recommendation 3: *We recommend that the induction programme is completely reviewed and updated to give new members a deeper understanding of their role and responsibilities, provide nuanced support for different types of members on Senate (particularly students), and to offers existing members the opportunity to keep up to date with expectations.*

Actions:

- *New Senate members each receive a welcome email which communicates key expectations and provides links to key information sources that will help them to engage in their role.*
- *An induction recording has been developed, and is accessible to new members via the Senate Members Portal. This will be subject to annual review by the Senate Clerk.*
- *The Senate Member Resources page, on the Senate Members Portal, provides access to the Senate Member Handbook, the induction recording, and other resources.*
- *The in-person Senate member induction was held in a revised format in September 2023 and September 2024; and the format will continue to be reviewed. At the in-person induction event, members received an induction to Senate from key staff involved in academic governance.*
- *Senate members will be invited to provide feedback on the Induction, and feedback received will be used to enhance future induction events.*

Effectiveness of Senate Induction



45% of respondents felt that the overall Senate Induction process had a positive or very positive effect, 21% of respondents felt that the overall process had a negative or very negative effect and 32% of respondents were not aware of this action.

59% of respondents felt that the provision of a Senate members induction pack had a positive or very positive effect, with only 13% of respondents considering this to have had a negative or very negative effect. 27% of respondents were not aware of this action.

9 respondents provided free-text comments which invited examples of positive or negative impacts of actions taken. Key themes raised in free text comments are summarised as follows:

- Student members indicated that the student induction provision is insufficient and that a dedicated induction should be held twice a year, to ensure that all new student members receive the relevant information.
- The induction session was scheduled at a difficult time of year for some staff
- Members valued the small group session format with the Standing Committee Conveners to better understand Committee business.
- Some Senate members and University management disagree on the role of Senate which can impact on new member induction.

Actions in response to feedback

Overall the actions taken on Recruitment and Induction are considered to have had a positive effect, with a minority of respondents indicating that these actions have had a negative effect. An average of 17% of respondents across all questions consider the actions to have had a negative impact.

The free-text comments provide insights into potential areas for improvement.

In preparation for the 2026/27 Academic Year, Senate Support have consulted with the Students' Association and will be running two dedicated student induction sessions at specific points in the Committee cycle. This action will ensure that all new student members are invited to attend a dedicated induction session at the commencement of their term of office. In addition, member materials are published on the Members' Portal for access throughout the year, and any new members joining out of cycle receive a new member welcome email which outlines key information relevant to their role.

Following Induction, a survey is circulated to attendees to invite feedback on the new member induction activities. The feedback is used to identify and introduce enhancements to the induction process on an annual basis.

Format of Senate meetings

Recommendation 9: *We recommend that meetings should always finish on time.*

Recommendation 10: *We recommend that the format of Senate is decided at the same time that the dates are set. Further we recommend that one meeting a year should be fully in person with hybrid only offered for exceptional reasons.*

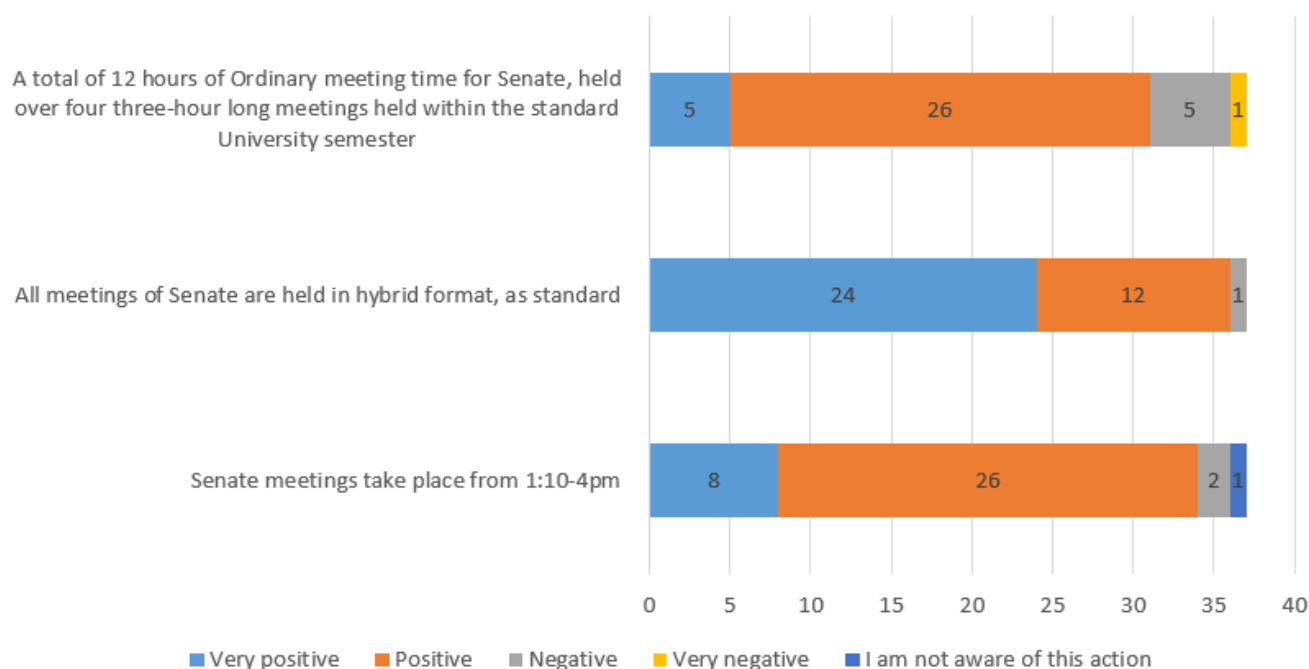
Suggestion 4: *We suggest that a proposal for 4 Senates a year is discussed.*

Suggestion 5: *We suggest holding one meeting each year in person in a suitably enabled IT space.*

Action: *At its meeting of 18 June 2024, Senate approved the following proposals which were implemented in 2024-25:*

- *to increase the annual meeting time for Senate to 12 hours;*
- *to adopt a meeting format of four, three hour long, meetings;*
- *to hold meetings within the standard university semester;*
- *to commence meetings at 1.10pm, in line with the standard University timetable;*
- *to hold meetings between 1:10pm and 4pm; and*
- *to hold meetings in a hybrid format as standard.*

Effectiveness of actions on format of Senate meetings



84% of respondents felt that the increase in meeting time to a total of 12 hours across four meetings had a positive or very positive effect while 16% of respondents felt that the increase in meeting time had a negative or very negative effect.

97% of respondents felt that the hybrid format of Senate meetings had a positive or very positive effect with only 3% (1) of respondents considering this to have had a negative effect.

92% of respondents felt that the specified times for Senate meetings had a positive or very positive effect, with 5% of respondents considering this to have had a negative effect.

9 respondents provided free-text comments which invited examples of positive or negative impacts of actions taken. Key themes raised in free text comments are summarised as follows:

- The increase in meeting time has resulted in an increase in time required to read Senate agendas and papers.
- Meeting agendas are unfinished during several meetings.
- Discussion is curtailed by hard end times.
- Three respondents indicated a preference for meetings to continue until the agenda is concluded.

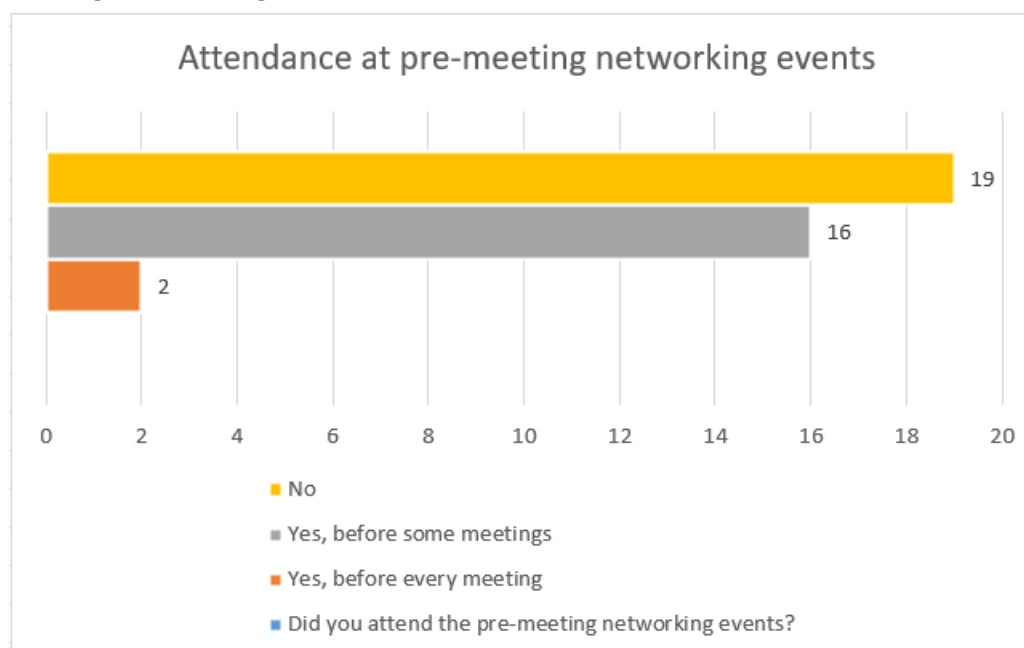
Actions in response to feedback

Overall the actions taken on the format of Senate meetings are considered to have had a notably positive effect, with an average of 91% of respondents across all questions consider the actions to have had positive or very positive effect.

The free-text comments provide insights into potential areas for improvement. An increase in meeting time has not universally resulted in meeting agendas concluding during scheduled Ordinary meetings, however the allocation of agenda time is for the Business Committee to consider. There are a small number of responses indicating support for meetings continuing

until the agenda is complete, however the given the high percentage of satisfaction with the positive or very positive impact of these actions, no change is recommended.

Pre-meeting networking events



51% of respondents indicated they did not attend pre-meeting networking events.

16 respondents provided a response to the question 'if you answered no, could you please tell us why you did not attend'. Key themes raised in free text comments are summarised as follows:

- Lack of time to attend
- The location of the meeting or pre-meeting networking events was inconvenient, for example, due to being based at a different campus to the meeting.
- Attending the Senate meeting online
- Diary constraints

Actions in response to feedback

The pre-meeting networking events had a poor uptake across the year, with a small number of members attending the events. There was an absence of suitable space available, primarily due to room constraints as Senate meeting primarily take place during the teaching term.

The catering that was provided for pre-meeting events was placed outside meeting rooms, resulting in challenges in ensuring members had access to the provided catering. The pre-meeting networking event will no longer be scheduled in 2026/27.

APPENDIX 3: Report of Senate Standing Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2025/26

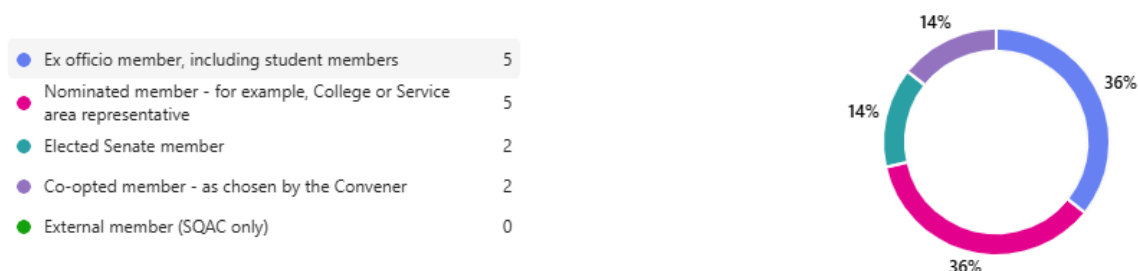
A single anonymous survey of all Senate Standing Committees was conducted in June and July 2026. Respondents were asked to identify which Committee they were a member of at the commencement of the survey. Those who are members of multiple committees were invited to complete the survey for each Committee they are a member of. The Convener, Vice-Convener and Secretary did not participate.

Fourteen responses were received, there are a total of 61 members across all Senate Committees, excluding the Convener, Vice-Convener and Secretary. This equates to an overall response rate of 23%.

Three responses were received from members of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) from a total of 20 members giving a response rate of 15%. Three responses were received from members of the Senate Education Committee (SEC) from a total of 26 members giving a response rate of 12%. Eight responses were received from members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) from a total of 15 members, giving a response rate of 53%.

An internal effectiveness review survey of Senate Committees was not undertaken in the 2024/25 academic year, however compared with the 2023/24 academic year there has been a substantial reduction in response rate. For APRC, there was a 40% reduction in response rate from 13 to 3 responses. For SEC, there was a 32% reduction in response rate from 11 to 3 responses. For SQAC, there was a 1% increase in response rate to 8 from a possible 14, which is an increase from the 9 responses from a possible 16 received in 2023/24.

Of the responses, five responses were received from ex-officio members, including student members and five responses were received from nominated members, including College and Service area representatives. Two responses were received from elected Senate members and two responses received from co-opted members.



Due to the low response rate from APRC and SEC, and the potential to identify individual respondents, the analysis of survey results has been undertaken as a single exercise for all Committees. Where there is Committee-specific feedback provided in free text comments, this has been provided for completeness with any identifying information removed from comments.

A summary of survey responses

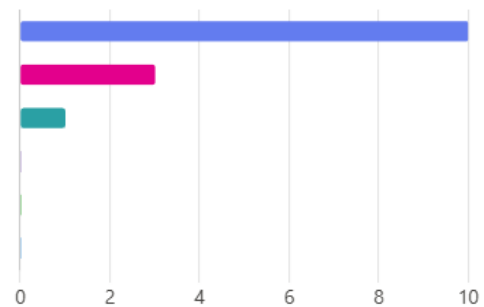
Agendas and papers

Meeting agendas

The majority of respondents found meeting agendas to be clear and well-structured, one respondent was neutral on this question and no respondents disagreed with this statement.

3. I found meeting agendas to be clear and well-structured.

Strongly agree	10
Agree	3
Neutral	1
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I did not read/use the agenda.	0

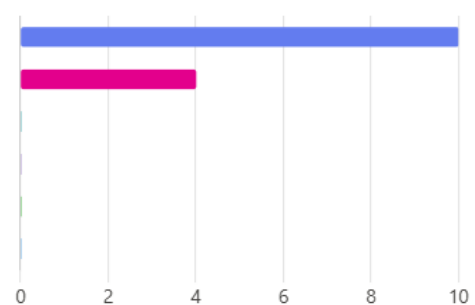


Fit to remit

All respondents agreed that agenda items fit within the Committee's remit. A majority of respondents (13) found the mapping of agenda items on the cover paper helped their understanding of how agenda items fit within the remit of the Committee, one respondent disagreed with this statement.

4. I found agenda items fit within the Committee's remit.

Strongly agree	10
Agree	4
Neutral	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I did not read/use the agenda.	0



5. The mapping of agenda items to committee remit in the cover paper helped me understand how items fit within remit.

● Yes	13
● No	1
● I am not aware of this	0

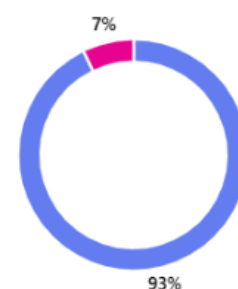


Coverage of agenda items

A majority of respondents (13) felt that agenda items were adequately covered during meetings, one respondent disagreed with this statement.

6. I felt that agenda items were covered adequately during meetings of the Committee.

● Yes	13
● No	1
● I did not attend meetings.	0



There were three free-text comments received in relation to Committee agendas. Free text comments in this category were submitted by 3 members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and a summary of the feedback is provided:

- The majority of Committee papers were to a high quality and aligned to Committee remit, however where papers were not high quality, or the action requested was unclear, this impacted on the Committee's discussions and decision-making and created confusion for members.
- There is a lack of clarity between the Committee's remit and University strategy, which impacts on the Committee's effectiveness and strategic and institutional impact on QA matters.
- Overall Committee discussions were productive and constructive, however did not address governance aspects required to support full Senate understanding and decision making on relevant matters.

Committee meetings

A majority of respondents (13) agreed that all members had an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion, one respondent was neutral on this statement.

8. I felt that all members had an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion.



A majority of respondents (13) felt that the hybrid meeting format allowed members to contribute equally. One respondent disagreed with this statement.

9. The hybrid meeting format allowed in-person and online members to contribute equally?



Four free-text comments were received in relation to Committee meetings. Three free text comments were submitted by 3 members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and one free text comment was submitted by a member of another Senate committee. A summary of feedback is provided:

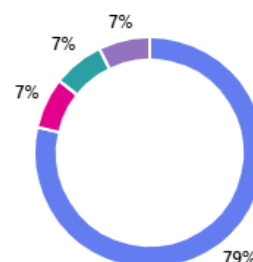
- One respondent expressed a personal preference for meetings to take place in-person or online only, noting that hybrid meetings can feel disjointed and technology is generally inadequate.
- Two respondents indicated that it was difficult to measure whether members had an equal opportunity to contribute, with one respondent stating that strong voices dominate Committee discussions.
- One respondent expressed appreciation for hybrid meetings which facilitated attendance for members in particular circumstances.

Relationship to Senate

A majority of respondents (11) strongly agreed with the understanding that the responsibilities of the Committee are delegated by Senate. One respondent agreed, one respondent was neutral on this statement and one respondent disagreed with this statement.

12. I understand that the responsibilities of the Committee are delegated by Senate

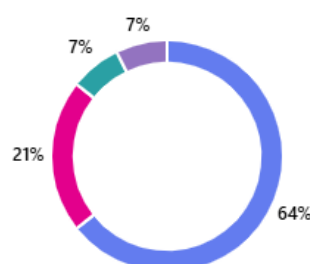
● Strongly agree	11
● Agree	1
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	1
● Strongly disagree	0



A majority of respondents (9) strongly agreed that they understood the Committee's role in relation to Senate. Three respondents agreed, one respondent was neutral and one respondent disagreed with this statement.

13. I understand the Committee's role in relation to Senate

● Strongly agree	9
● Agree	3
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	1
● Strongly disagree	0



There were two free-text comments received on the Relationship to Senate. Both free text comments were submitted by 2 members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and a summary of the feedback is provided:

- There are ongoing discussions regarding Standing Committees at Senate meetings and it has been some time since the delegation of responsibilities and roles of Committees were discussed at Senate. A respondent referenced a decision to not honour a vote on committee chair's being elected.
- One respondent expressed a general understanding of the written remit of the Committees, however another expressed uncertainty regarding their understanding of the Committee's relationship to Senate.

Committee effectiveness

A majority of respondents (12) considered the Committee to be effective. One respondent was neutral on this statement and one respondent disagreed with this statement, both respondents were members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

11. Overall, I consider the Committee to be effective.



Additional questions: measuring the effectiveness of the external review recommendations

There was one additional question intended to measure the effectiveness of actions taken in response to the External Review of Senate undertaken in 2022/23. Respondents were asked for their view on the effectiveness of Recruitment and Induction actions implemented in 2025/26 which were in response to the recommendations of the External Review.

Recruitment and Induction – Standing Committees

Standing Committee Induction pack

Of the fourteen responses, eight respondents indicated that they were not a new member in 2025/26 and therefore could not comment on the provision of a Senate Standing Committee induction pack, including a recording of the Senate Induction Session and additional Committee resources on the Committee Portal. Of the remaining six respondents, two responses indicated this was very positive, one response indicated this was positive, two respondents were not aware of the action and one respondent did not give an answer.

Overall Standing Committee Induction Process

Five respondents indicated that the overall Standing Committee Induction process was positive, with one respondent indicating they were unaware of the action. Eight respondents were not a new member in 2025/26 and therefore could not comment on the action taken, and one respondent did not give an answer.

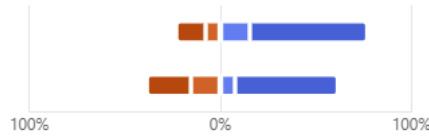
15. Please rate the effectiveness of the following actions on Recruitment and Induction:

[More details](#)

● Very positive ● Positive ● Negative ● Very negative ● I am not aware of this action ● I was not a new member in 2025/26

The provision of a Senate Standing Committee induction pack, including a recording of the Senate Induction Session and additional Committee resources on the Committee Portal.

The overall Standing Committee Induction Process



There was one free text comment with the respondent indicating that support from other members was helpful for their induction.

The responses to this section will be logged for the next External Effectiveness Review of Senate.

Good practice

Based on the responses to the survey presented above, the following areas are consistently highlighted as areas where there is good practice:

- **Fit to remit on Committee paper templates:** A majority of respondents agreed that the paper templates and mapping of agenda items to the Committee remit helped them to understand how items fit to the Committee remit. This was an action in response to the internal effectiveness review survey conducted in 2023/24.
- **Hybrid meetings:** A majority of respondents value that meetings are conducted in hybrid format. Meetings will continue to be held as hybrid, and AQS staff will arrange meetings in rooms with good hybrid functionality, wherever possible and subject to availability.

Areas for development

Two key themes were identified within the feedback as areas where the Committee could seek to focus enhancement:

- **Survey response rate:** The reduction in response rate to the survey in 2025/26 (overall response rate of 24%) makes it difficult to ensure that the results are sufficiently representative of members' views and that actions reflect members' priorities for improving the internal effectiveness of the Committee. We will therefore aim to improve response rates for the next survey.
- **Relationship to Senate:** The responses to questions on the relationship to Senate indicate that respondents have an overall positive view, however these responses indicate a lower level of satisfaction when compared to other questions. The Statement of Senate's Primary Responsibilities (SOPR) has recently been approved by the University Court and will help to explain the relationship and develop understanding of the responsibilities delegated by Senate to its Standing Committees.

Senate

21 October 2026

Interim Arrangements for Standing Committees

Description of paper

1. Senate was informed by the Principal and University Secretary that they were unable to implement Senate's approved arrangements for 2026-2027 Standing Committees. This paper clarifies interim arrangements until Senate's approved arrangements can be implemented.

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

- | |
|--|
| 2. D18: To regulate the conduct of its proceedings and its members through Standing Orders and other mechanisms it may approve, subject to the oversight of Court. |
| 3. D20: To adhere to principles of good governance on the delegation of authority to Standing Committees, as outlined in professional codes. |

Action requested / Recommendation

4. Pending the implementation of Senate's approved composition of Standing Committees, including the election of each convener, Senate is asked to **approve** the following interim arrangements:
 - 4.1. Each Standing Committee may select an interim convener from among its Senate-approved membership. To avoid the presumption of incumbency, the interim convener shall not be eligible to be elected to the established convener role when elections take place. If no interim convener can be agreed, the committee may opt to operate without an interim convener or to suspend activities.
 - 4.2. Standing Committees may meet with their Senate-approved membership to the extent Academic Quality and Standards has capacity to support this.
 - 4.3. Standing Committees may not act with delegated authority, but may make recommendations to Senate or the Senate Exception Committee as appropriate on matters requiring Senate approval. It is anticipated that the expertise and effort represented in Standing Committees will remain a respected and constructive resource for Senate.

Background and context

5. Following a vacancy in the convener of the Senate Education Committee, Senate voted on 10 December 2025 that the role should be filled by an election. This decision was not implemented and the deputy convener chaired the committee for the remainder of the year.
6. At its May 2026 regular meeting, Senate considered options for committee membership presented by Academic Quality and Standards and by member-contributed amendments to paper 5K. Senate was asked to decide whether standing committee conveners should be elected and to decide between role descriptors and election procedures given or implied in paper 5K and the pre-submitted amendments, subject to any further amendments.
7. In free and fair votes with full opportunity to discuss and to propose any further changes, Senate decided:
 - 7.1. That each Standing Committee convener should be elected by single transferrable vote, including an election in the case of a single nominee to

establish Senate's confidence in that candidate, following the timeline proposed by Academic Quality and Standards.

- 7.2. To adopt the role descriptor and election criteria proposed in the pre-submitted amendments without further changes.
8. On 30 June, the Principal and University Secretary communicated to members that elections would not be taking place until further consideration could be given to the implications of Senate's decisions (unspecified: by whom? on what basis?), with an update not expected until December due to capacity limitations from a focus on the National Review of Awarding Arrangements.
9. A request was promptly made to the Principal and University Secretary (via Senate Support) by an author of the approved amendments asking for the basis of their rescission of Senate's decision, with no response received.
10. A representation was promptly made to the University Court (via Court Services) by an author of the approved amendments expressing concern that the Principal's and University Secretary's actions amounted to rescinding Senate's approved motions contrary to Standing Order 16. No response from Court has been received beyond acknowledgement from Court Services.

Discussion

11. Committees perform valuable work for Senate, acting with delegated authority to consider matters that may be beyond the capacity of Senate to consider directly.
12. It is crucial that Standing Committees have the confidence of Senate when performing this role, and this was a stated purpose for the election of their conveners.
13. Senate's power to appoint committees and determine their powers and membership is part of the [Universities \(Scotland\) Act 1966](#). This is a power given to Senates, not to other governing or executive parties of the university.
14. Senate Standing Order 22 provides for the creation and delegation of authority to committees, including the expectation of annual consideration and approval of committees' membership. Senate carried out this expectation at its May 2026 meeting.
15. Senate's Standing Order 16 states that no decision of Senate may be rescinded except by a competent motion. Due to a numbering error during a 2008 amendment process, the cross-references in this Standing Order referring to competent motions are incorrect and should refer to Standing Orders 10 and 11, which state how and when motions must be proposed and seconded.
16. The Principal and University Secretary's action to rescind Senate's decision did not come in the form of a motion (competent or otherwise) and has not been considered or approved by Senate or its Exception Committee.
17. Given Senate's reliance on various parties to carry out its approved motion, some of whom have stated they will not do so in a timely manner, Senate-approved interim arrangements are required. The interim arrangements stipulated by the Principal and University Secretary do not have the force of a Senate decision and are indeed, for the reasons above, contrary to the Standing Orders.
18. The stated capacity limitations in Academic Quality and Standards raise questions about whether committees, authorised or not, have capacity (including extensive support capacity normally provided by AQS) to carry out their business as usual in semester 1 of 2026/27. Out of respect for these limitations, it may be prudent to keep committee activity to a minimum, which means focusing on critically necessary business that can be expeditiously recommended by committees and approved by Senate or that committees can expeditiously refer to Senate as a whole.

Resource implications

19. This paper aims to conserve AQS capacity while respecting the need to follow Standing Orders.

20. It would of course be a much better use of everyone's time and attention simply to follow the Standing Orders and focus on implementing well what Senate already decided without the need for interim arrangements. It is regrettable that the convener has not chosen to support Senate's effective operation in accordance with established procedures and its democratic decisions.

Risk Management

21. Senate retains ultimate responsibility for matters in its purview, and regular mechanisms (including special meetings and exception committee) are available for managing risks from anything that would ordinarily be fully delegated.
22. By providing authorised interim arrangements, this paper addresses the governance risk from the Senate convener's apparent noncompliance with Standing Orders.

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

23. Senate Support and existing AQS support for committees to carry out as appropriate.

Consultation

24. Please see Background and Context above.

Further information

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Freedom of information

OPEN

AI Statement

This paper was written entirely without the use of text generation tools.

Senate**21 October 2026****Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees****Description of paper**

1. The annual report of the Senate Standing Committees 2025-26: Education Committee (SEC); Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC); and Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

2. D20: To adhere to principles of good governance on the delegation of authority to Standing Committees, as outlined in professional codes.

Action requested / recommendation

3. Senate is invited to note the annual report.

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

Background and Context

4. The Senate Standing Orders require the Standing Committees to report annually on action taken under powers delegated to them by Senate. This report summarises the actions and achievements of the Senate Standing Committees, and their use of the powers delegated to them by Senate in 2025-26.

Discussion

5. Alongside the annual report, Senate members are kept informed of Senate Standing Committee business through the following mechanisms:
 - Senate receive a Standing Committee Upcoming Business report at each meeting;
 - Senate are notified when the agendas and papers for Senate Standing Committees are published with an invitation to provide comments on agenda items, either through College or elected Senate representatives on the relevant committee;
 - The Senate Committees' Newsletter.

Resource implications

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

Risk Management

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

Equality and Diversity

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

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

9. The annual report will be shared with University Court for information.

Authors

Academic Quality and Standards
September 2026

Freedom of Information Open

Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees 2025-26

1. Executive Summary

This report summarises the actions and achievements of the Senate Standing Committees, and their use of the powers delegated to them by Senate, for academic year 2025-26.

2. Introduction

The three Standing Committees of Senate are Senate Education Committee (SEC), Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC), and Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

Senate has delegated to these Committees a range of its powers, and these powers are set out in the Committees' Terms of Reference. Links to the Terms of Reference and memberships of the Senate Standing Committees are below:

- [Education Committee](#)
- [Academic Policy and Regulations Committee](#)
- [Quality Assurance Committee](#)

3. Committee meetings and Sub/Task Groups/Committees 2025-26

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

Name of Group	Reporting line
Student Appeal Committee	APRC
Student Fitness to Practice Appeal Committee	APRC
Student Discipline Committee	APRC
Annual Monitoring Sub-Group	SQAC
Student Success (Awarding Gaps) Task Group	SQAC
Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group	SEC
HEAR Recommendation Panel	SEC
Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Group and sub-group Curriculum Development and Innovation Group	SEC
External Quality Review Oversight Group	SEC, SQAC

4. Senate Standing Committees 2025-26

All committees received papers on the following:

- University of Edinburgh Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2025/26
- Committee memberships and Terms of Reference
- Committee priorities mid-year reflection
- Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review

4.1 Education Committee

The Education Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for taught and research student matters, particularly strategy and policy concerning learning, teaching and the development of curriculum.

Priorities

1. Curriculum Development (formerly Curriculum Transformation)

September: The Committee received a verbal update informing the Committee that the Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP) Board was no longer operational and that a substantive update on the Learning and Teaching Workstream would be provided in November, following further meetings of the University Initiatives Portfolio Board (UIPB).

November: The Committee received a verbal overview of the Learning and Teaching workstream and members were directed to the workstream's SharePoint hub for further details on specific projects taking place as part of the wider workstream. The Committee were informed that further substantive updates on specific L&T workstream projects would be brought to future meetings, ensuring alignment with the Committee's remit.

November: The Committee endorsed a proposal to establish the Curriculum Development and Innovation Group (CDIG). CDIG will provide strategic direction, coordination, and oversight of University-wide curriculum development and innovation activities that advance the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, including, but not limited to: Challenge Courses, Experiential Learning, the Skills for Success Framework, AI in teaching innovation. The Group reports to the Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Group, with formal updates and recommendations submitted to Senate Education Committee.

November: The Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) Challenge Courses Lead provided an update on the suite of pilot Challenge Courses developed as part of the Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP) since 2023. The Committee considered several points including the uptake of challenge courses across the University, evaluation of Challenge courses taken as electives, longer-term resourcing of Challenge courses, the role of College Curriculum Boards in approval of Challenge courses. The Committee noted the time pressure for the work, and endorsed the proposal for the Challenge Course Lead and the relevant oversight group to continue work on exploring options for defining what Business As Usual will look like in practice, prior to returning to SEC with a formal proposal for approval later in 2025/26.

March: The Committee received an update on the Learning and Teaching Workstream. The update focussed on strategically-led initiatives and university-wide changes designed to enhance the educational experience of students and learners that sit within the portfolio of the Learning and Teaching Workstream link to Senate Education Committee. A short summary was provided on the following projects: Board of Examiners; Teaching Timetabling and Course Selection; Tuition Fee Improvements; Student Records System replacement scoping; Curriculum Development, including Assessment and Feedback; LOUISA (Learn Optimised for In-course Submission and Assessments); Market Insights (primarily reports to the Future Students Committee & University Executive); Academic Size and Shape (primarily reports to the Staff Workstream) & Student Administration Review (primarily reports to the Professional Services Group of the Staff Workstream). The Committee provided feedback that an outline of what is not in scope for the workstream, as well as critical questions for the Committee to consider would be useful for future discussions on the workstream.

Priorities

March: The Committee received the final terms of reference for the Curriculum Development and Innovation Group (CDIG).

May: The Committee received options for a future framework for a steady state of Business-as-Usual processes for the approval, delivery and oversight of Challenge Courses. The Committee were informed that the Curriculum Development and Innovation Group (CDIG) are supportive of proposals which provide institutional-level oversight of Challenge Courses. The Committee were informed that funding has been secured via the Learning and Teaching Workstream for the work to continue in the 2026/27 academic year.

The Committee expressed support for Challenge Courses, and for oversight and management of these to take place at portfolio level to ensure they are fit for purpose and deliver what is required. The Committee expressed its preference for option C in the short term, and recommended that a standing group be established via the Learning and Teaching Workstream to provide oversight of Challenge Courses.

2. Learning and Teaching Strategy implementation and evaluation

September: the Committee received a verbal update on the progress of the Learning and Teaching Strategy's implementation. Members noted that discussions were being held with colleagues in Academic Quality and Standards around the development of an oversight group to help co-ordinate strategy implementation. A small number of measurable, concrete actions will be required to demonstrate traction of strategy implementation. A further requirement will involve the gathering of information regarding existing activity within Schools and Colleges which aligns to the Strategy, in order to showcase good practice. This will be demonstrated internally, as well as externally during the University's forthcoming Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review in 2027/28.

November: the Committee noted that, given the formal launch of the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030 in June 2025, governance arrangements are now required to be established in order to support the effective implementation of the Strategy. The Committee endorsed proposals to establish the Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Group (LTSIG) as a subgroup of SEC. LTSIG will lead, coordinate, and oversee the development and implementation of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Plan. LTSIG will ensure that the strategic priorities, objectives, and actions identified in the Strategy are translated into an actionable, measurable implementation plan; that progress is monitored and reported; and that impact is achieved across all areas of the University.

March: The Committee received the terms of Reference for the Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Group (LTSIG) and were informed that the first meeting of the Group took place in February 2026. The Group agreed to organise a workshop to focus on activity and good practice underway in Schools and Colleges relating to implementation of the Strategy. The Committee were also informed that benchmarking of relevant activity within other institutions is also taking place.

May: The Committee received a verbal update on generative AI from the Assistant Principal Education Futures. A team led by Educational Design and Engagement is being established to provide generative AI training to students with the training hoped to be in place by September 2026.

Priorities

3. Assessment and Feedback

September: A verbal update was provided to the Committee advising that the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group met earlier in September and agreed two short-term priorities moving forward: the development of a consolidated Assessment and Feedback Policy to formally set out all mandatory elements of the existing Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities document; and the development of moderation guidance.

November: The Committee received an update on the development of the new Assessment and Feedback Policy. Members were informed that the Assessment and Feedback and Strategy Group met in October 2025, where an initial policy draft was reviewed. The Strategy Group agreed that the policy should seek to incorporate a position on assessment across a number of thematic areas based on developments within the University and across the Higher Education sector.

December: A workshop involving members of APRC, SEC and the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group was held to further consider the draft policy. The workshop considered the following thematic areas: implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy; generative AI; recommendations from the Bristol Case Working Group.

March: The Committee was informed that the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group met in February to review and finalise the draft Assessment and Feedback Policy, prior to it being presented to SEC for discussion at its March 2026 meeting. The Committee discussed the draft, noting the intention to bring the finalised policy to SEC for approval in May 2026, for implementation in 2026/27. The Committee noted that considerable consultation has been undertaken to help shape the draft policy, most notably a workshop involving members of APRC, SEC and the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group held in December 2025. The Committee were informed that supplementary guidance for each section of the policy would be developed following the approval of the policy.

May: The Committee received the Assessment and Feedback Policy for approval. The Committee noted the extensive consultation on the draft policy undertaken since the March meeting of SEC. The Committee discussed the policy and approved the policy in principle, subject to a series of further minor revisions to be incorporated to the final policy. The Committee agreed that final approval of the policy would be carried out via electronic business. The Committee noted that moderation guidance referenced within the policy was to be approved by APRC at its May meeting.

June: The Committee approved the final Assessment and Feedback Policy via electronic business. The Committee noted that the policy would be implemented for the commencement of the 2026/27 academic year and communicated to the staff via the annual new and updated policies email circulated by Academic Quality and Standards, and briefing sessions run via Schools and Colleges.

4. Student support model – support for ongoing implementation

September: The Committee noted the University's 2025 results across the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). As part of the University's response to these results, members noted that focus will continue on significant areas of work that are long-term fundamental changes to our student experience. This includes: ensuring fidelity to the Student Support Model; student wellbeing as a triage to our services for more complex needs; cohort activities to build communities; with fostering a greater sense of students and their experiences being the University's highest priority.

Priorities

November: The Committee received a verbal update and were informed that the University's Student Life Survey returned similar results and that the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy would help support further enhancements in student experience.

March: The Committee considered a proposal to establish a short-life working group focusing on Postgraduate Research (PGR) School-level pastoral student support.

May: The Committee were informed that instead of the proposed short life working group focusing on Postgraduate Research (PGR) School-level pastoral support, this work would be taken forward by the Student Administration Review, in partnership with College Heads of Academic Administration.

Other matters considered during the year

September: The Committee received the annual update on the UK-wide Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Graduate Outcomes Survey of graduate destinations. Members noted that the University has introduced a 'What's Next' survey question which asks graduates what they are planning to move on to following graduation. The What's Next survey received a 95% response rate in 2025.

The Committee agreed changes to the approval of the University's Sector Surveys' Institutional Questions, noting that the revised approach will allow better oversight across student voice mechanisms and outcomes.

The Committee considered proposed revisions to the University's Learning Analytics Principles and Policy document. The Committee recommended that a substantive and holistic review of the policy be undertaken, ahead of an updated policy returning to the Committee for consideration.

The Committee received an update on the review of the Study and Work Away Service (SWAY).

The Committee received an update on the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme Phase 2 and noted the Programme's desire to strengthen connections across the institution to enhance the experience of online distance learners.

November: The Committee discussed risks posed by the emergence of AI agents on matters such as learning and teaching, student community and assessment and considered how the University should respond to this risk in the immediate term. The Committee endorsed proposed ways forward, including refinement of student and staff guidance on the use of AI, updating training materials, and releasing a statement on the University's position on this matter to help catalyse discussion in the UK.

The Committee also discussed the governance of Generative AI, noting that practical responses to AI issues currently fall across multiple committees with no clear, single point of ownership. The Committee expressed support for a proposal to establish College-level Generative AI leads to act as primary academic representatives on AI governance in learning and teaching, and for the requirement for additional expertise and support to be provided at the College-level with regard to generative AI, in close alignment with College Deans of Education.

The Committee considered and approved a proposal from the HEAR Recommendation Panel.

Other matters considered during the year

March: The Committee discussed the Regenerative Sustainability Strategy and made recommendations on how to progress the learning and teaching commitments within the Strategy, in alignment with both the Learning and Teaching Workstream, and the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

The Committee approved minor revisions to the Open Educational Resources (OER) Policy following a routine review.

The Committee were informed of the UK Government's confirmation that the UK will re-join the Erasmus+ programme from 2027. The Committee was updated on the next steps for rejoining the programme, with priority to be given to the University's application for the Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education. Members were informed at the May meeting of SEC that the University expects to learn the outcome of the Charter application by September 2026.

The Committee was informed of the development of the University's Bristol Case Working Group Action Plan.

May: The Committee's activities at its May meeting are summarised under relevant priorities above.

4.2 Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

The Academic Policy and Regulations Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for the University's framework of academic policy and regulation, apart from those aspects which are primarily parts of the Quality Assurance Framework.

Priorities

1. Development of curriculum framework arising from Learning and Teaching Workstream (formerly 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. APRC is consulted where developments relate to areas of policy within the Committee's remit.

2. Scheduled review of policies

Regulations reviewed by the Committee on an annual basis:

March: The Committee received the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations as part of the annual review of Degree Regulations. The Committee considered proposals for revisions and made recommendations for revisions, which were then finally approved by University Court in June 2026 via the Court Resolution process, following consultation with Senate and General Council.

March: The Committee received a proposal to amend Taught Assessment Regulation 27: Resit Assessment. The Committee did not support the proposal, however recommended that further work be undertaken in consultation with the Senate Education Committee ahead of the 2026/27 review of the Taught Assessment Regulations.

May: The Committee approved proposals for amendments to both the Taught Assessment Regulations and Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations.

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

January: The Committee approved the Postgraduate Research Thesis Guidance, a new document which incorporates four existing guidance documents on postgraduate research theses into a single document. The four existing guidance documents (Thesis Format Guidance; Including Publications in a Postgraduate Research Theses; Lay Summary in Theses; and Signed Declaration in a Postgraduate Research Thesis) were due for periodic review in 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Other matters considered during the year

September: The Committee held preliminary discussions regarding the proposed approach to using common decision trees for determining Exceptional Circumstances outcomes. The Committee expressed support in principle for the use of decision trees, and the use of common thresholds for discounting assessment and course marks when responding to Exceptional Circumstances.

The Committee also discussed the new UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) policy regarding the remote delivery of teaching. The Committee agreed a proposal to limit the remote delivery of courses on all taught programmes to 20 credits per year, with the exception of online or distance-learning programmes.

The Committee considered a request from the Royal (Dick) School for Veterinary Sciences for an exemption from the standard Models for Degree Types to support an innovative programme being developed within the School for students intercalating from the Veterinary Medicine (BVM&S) programme.

The Committee approved minor amendments to the Student Maternity and Parental Leave Policy. The revision to the policy was not part of the scheduled periodic review of policies but was proposed to ensure alignment with the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) terms and conditions for PhD students.

January: The Committee considered a proposal for a new late Exceptional Circumstances (EC) application process which was developed as part of the Board of Examiners Review. The Committee were invited to discuss, endorse and make a recommendation for approval, ahead of a final decision being taken by Senate.

The Committee discussed and approved the dates for the December 2026 exam diet. The Committee also considered the Academic Year dates for 2027/28 and the provisional dates for 2028/29, however deferred a decision on the dates to a future meeting.

March: The Committee considered and approved a proposal to establish a common approach across the University to handling late Exceptional Circumstances cases within Schools.

May: The Committee considered and approved Internal Moderation Guidance. The guidance is not mandatory policy, however refers to mandatory expectations as contained within the Taught Assessment Regulations and the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes.

The Committee approved a minor addition to the core content required in course and programme handbooks, as specified in the Programme and Course Handbook Policy.

The Committee held a discussion on scenarios relating to the Exceptional Circumstances Policy with the aim of ensuring consistent application of the policy.

July: The Committee considered a proposal for a non-standard programme arising out of a collaborative degree proposal from the School of Engineering. The Committee noted that the collaborative arrangement was subject to approval by the University Executive. The Committee agreed that the School of Engineering could continue to develop the programme, and noted its expectation to see the final proposal once the detail for the arrangement was further developed.

The Committee endorsed revisions to the Student and Staff Dignity and Respect Policies for approval by the University Executive. The Committee provided comment on the student policy, however noted that the staff policy was not within the Committee's remit.

The Committee approved amendments to the Exceptional Circumstances Policy to include essential updates required following approval of the late Exceptional Circumstances process, and the thresholds for excluding course results in cases where Exceptional Circumstances have been accepted, as approved by Senate in May 2026. The Committee noted that the Exceptional Circumstances Policy is due for review in academic year 27/28.

4.3 Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)

The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for the framework which assures standards and enhances the quality of the student learning experience.

Priorities

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

September: The Committee considered the themes arising from the School Annual Quality Reports. Themes and areas of focus relating to the QESR outcomes include assessment and feedback, training for tutors and demonstrators, student support and actions taken to address and monitor awarding gaps. Actions arising from these themes were directed to the relevant areas.

December: The Committee was informed of the University-level actions agreed in response to the areas identified for further development in the School Annual Quality Reports for 2024-25, and the themes emerging from Internal Periodic Reviews conducted in 2024-25. Several of the themes were relevant to student support, including PGR Student Experience, Student Support and Staff and Student Experience.

May: The University will present on and account for progress against the QESR 2023 recommendations at the next Institution Liaison Meeting with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

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

September: The Committee approved updates to the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) process to align with the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF). The revisions include a comprehensive revision of the University Standard Remit, which ensures consistent coverage of key aspects of the student experience across all IPRs; and a new IPR Impact Analysis template, which is the key document and reference point produced by the School for its IPR. The new box template format will support schools to understand what specific responses are required for each area.

An IPR Action Plan has 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 an updated version submitted annually along with the School annual monitoring report. This will link the annual monitoring and IPR processes and facilitate better continuous engagement throughout our two key QA processes. The IPR handbook, documentation and guidance were also comprehensively revised.

The Committee agreed to suspend the Student Support Service Annual Review (SSSAR) for 2025/26, pending the outcome of the University's review of student facing services. The Committee noted that the Student Support Thematic Review would proceed in 2025/26 with a focus on how student facing student support LGBTQ+ students. Both the SSSAR and the Student Support Thematic Review are expected to report to the Committee by the end of the 2026/27 academic year with any new arrangements to be approved for implementation from the start of 2027/28.

December: The Committee discussed the Self Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP), which is the University's annual report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on activities to effectively manage quality assurance and deliver on enhancement. The report is divided into two sections: Self-Evaluation 2024-25 (reflecting on annual institutional quality

assurance and enhancement activities and outcomes, including progress made since the last external review) and Action Plan 2025- 2026 (a consolidation of the planned institution level enhancement activities arising from the self-evaluation).

May: The Committee received a proposal to revise the forward schedule for Internal Periodic Reviews (IPRs) for the period 2026-2032. The Committee was informed of the rationale for revising the schedule, which included the changes to the structure of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM), and requests from Schools and Centres to revise their schedule to align with other internal or external review activities planned. The Committee were supportive of the amended forward schedule for all reviews and approved the revisions.

The Committee approved a proposal to postpone the Internal Periodic Review for the postgraduate taught programme in Clinical Education so that it aligns with the wider Edinburgh Medical School taught portfolio. The Committee noted that the Student Funding Council would be required to formally approve the request to postpone the internal periodic review and that a request for approval would be sought by Academic Quality and Standards.

May: The Committee received an update on the Professional Services Review. The Committee was informed that benchmarking activity was underway to develop understanding of different approaches across the sector. The Committee noted that a further paper would return in 2026/27 with detail of the benchmarking and next steps for the reviews.

The Committee also received an update on the Student Support Thematic Review and noted that the University's EDI Lead would co-chair the review with the student convener with further work being undertaken in conjunction with the Students' Association.

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

September: 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.

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 planned for April.

February: The Committee received the first Student Support Evaluation Report from the Student Support Continuous Improvement Group (SSCIG). This report provided a summary of centrally available data relating to student support for taught students across 2024/25. Learnings regarding the quality, availability and timeliness of data have been included in this report to inform future evaluation approaches. The report highlighted stress points in areas where the Student Advisor workload is high and students may not have timely access to individual meetings with their advisors. There was recognition that the appropriate data

sets are needed to fully understand availability of student advisor meetings and opportunities to have meaningful access to academic staff. The Committee were informed that academic advice is an area of focus for SSCIG and the group are looking to enhance the role descriptor for Cohort Leads to assist with improvements in this area. The Committee noted that the SSCIG is responsible for prioritising activities to respond to the development of the University's student support provision.

4. Student Voice

September: The Committee continued 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. Specific areas of focus and recommendations were identified through the quality processes and referred to the Academic Planning department within Registry Services.

February: The Committee discussed the annual monitoring templates to be used at School and programme level in 2025/26. Key changes agreed by the Committee include a new question around the Learning & Teaching Strategy, additional guidance on the effectiveness of Student Voice opportunities within Schools, and greater emphasis on identifying and effectively addressing any awarding gaps.

May: The Committee approved interim revisions to the Student Voice Policy. The revision is to reflect the new quality code and framework. There is ongoing activity to understand Student Voice practices across the institution and this will be considered in the next planned review of the Student Voice Policy, along with aspects relating to course evaluation. The Committee was informed that a full consultation and revision of the policy was planned for 2026/27.

The Committee approved revisions to the Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy.

5. Student Data Monitoring

December: The Committee reviewed the terms of reference for the Student Data Monitoring Task Group established in 2023/24. It was proposed that the group have a refreshed remit and membership, to build on the work undertaken in 2024/25 and to move forward in piloting actions to address the awarding gap. It was agreed that the appropriate direction of travel for the task group is to oversee action and interventions, evaluate these and identify those which could have a positive impact in across the University. The Committee approved the revised terms of reference for the renamed 'Student Success Task Group'. The Group will continue its work throughout 2025/26 and beyond with a revised membership.

April: The Committee received the Degree Outcomes Analysis for discussion. Key points highlighted to the Committee included widening awarding gaps for some cohorts of students and a decrease in the overall number of high-class degrees awarded across the institution in 2024/25. The analysis compared against a five-year period and it was emphasised that the impact of Covid-19 and the marking and assessment boycott in 2022/23 had an impact during that time. The Committee noted that the Student Success Task Group would hold future discussions to consider data analysis in relation to the short- and long-term objectives in addressing awarding gaps and targeted actions in response to the data

May: The Committee received a progress update on the University's activities in relation to Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP).

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

Year-round: 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.

Monitoring and Review

Year round: Throughout the year, the Committee approved a number of Internal Periodic Reviews (IPR) – Reports, 14 week and Year-on Responses. This is standard business for the Committee to maintain oversight of the IPR quality process. The role of the Committee is to verify that review teams have adhered to the required quality procedures in relation to the final reports and determine if Schools/Deaneries have made sufficient progress in relation to their 14 week and year-on responses. Comments from the Committee were referred back to Schools for further updates in the quality process.

September: The Committee received a report from the School Annual Quality Reports Sub-Group. The group reported on areas of good practice and the key University-wide themes arising from the analysis of School annual quality reports. Key themes included Staff and Student Experience, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), Assessment and Feedback, Student Support, Board of Examiners Review, Locally Developed Systems and Processes, Student Attendance and Engagement, Postgraduate Research (PGR) Funding, PGR Student Experience and Community, and Learning and Teaching Infrastructure. The Committee discussed and agreed actions in response to the report.

The Committee discussed the themes and areas for development identified via the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) process in 2024/25. The Scottish Funding Council requires institutions to include themes from internal quality review processes in the annual submission of the Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP). The Committee noted the three key IPR themes identified with themes identified via the annual monitoring quality process: Student Support, PGR Student Experience and Careers and Employability Skills. The Committee agreed further actions to address the themes identified.

The Committee were presented with an update from the Board of Examiners Review project. The Committee were updated on the timeline and scope for the project. The potential impact on workload and decision-making processes was a focal point of the Committee's discussion, highlighting the need for strategic and considered implementation of any changes.

December: The Committee discussed the College quality reports, which were informed by the School-level reports submitted earlier in the year. The reports reflected on common themes surfaced by Schools and more locally felt issues, such as College Modernisation within CMVM and the student experience at King's Buildings raised by CSE. The reports each identified priority actions set by each College for the year ahead.

February: The Committee received the 2024-25 Annual Reports for Conduct, Appeals and Complaints for discussion.

The Committee approved changes to the Programme, School, and College annual reporting templates for 2025/26. This activity is expanded on under the Student Voice priority.

The Committee discussed changes to the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy proposed as part of the policy's periodic review. The Committee provided comments on a draft Policy and noted that this would be presented to a future meeting for approval.

The Committee received the 2024-25 Short Courses Annual Report for noting.

The Committee considered changes to the Programme and Course Approval and Management (PCAM) Policy, and the Board of Studies Terms of Reference. The PCAM Policy had been revised in response to the Committee's feedback in February. The Committee noted that the Boards of Studies related guidance would be removed from the PCAM Policy and included in the Boards of Studies Terms of Reference (ToR). As the Board of Studies changes require Court approval, the guidance would remain in the PCAM Policy in the interim, to ensure it remains available to colleagues. The Committee noted that the changes to the Board of Studies Terms of Reference are expected to be concluded by Semester 1 2026/27.

The Committee received a report of the Exceptional External Examiner Appointments made in 2023-24.

May: The Committee received the annual College reports of the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes for academic year 2024/25. The Committee noted that the institutional report should focus on cross-University themes, priorities and areas requiring strategic attention and that External Examiner commentary should inform the ongoing institutional work in these areas. The Committee were in agreement that more timely responses to EE reports were required to effectively address issues that have been identified.

The Committee received the annual report of the Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation Committee. The Accreditation Committee meets annually with SRUC to reconfirm the arrangements and the two programmes which SRUC delivers as University of Edinburgh awards. The Accreditations Committee confirmed their satisfaction with the QA arrangements and delivery of the programmes by SRUC. It was noted that SRUC has degree awarding powers and will teach out the BSc programme, it was also noted that SRUC is seeking to obtain research degree awarding powers. The Committee was informed that SRUC's Memorandum of Agreement with the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies was dissolved at the beginning of 2025/26 and agreed that the Accreditation Committee must be proactive in the oversight and maintenance of QA standards whilst programmes are ongoing.

May – electronic meeting: The Committee considered temporary variations to the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy in response to disruption caused by Industrial Action. A majority of the Committee approved the proposals and therefore the variations to the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy were recommended for approval to Senate.

June: The Committee considered changes to the Programme and Course Approval and Management (PCAM) Policy and the Boards of Studies Terms of Reference via electronic business. A majority of the Committee approved the updates to the PCAM Policy and agreed to endorse the Boards of Studies Terms of Reference for Court to formally approve.

Annex – new regulations/policies/codes, and reviews of and amendments to existing regulations/policies/codes, approved by Senate and its Committees during 2025-26

New and updated policies, regulations and guidance are published on the Academic Services website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/new-policies>

Senate Committee	Name of document	Type of change (New / Revision / Deletion / Technical Update / Reviewed and no changes made)
SEC	Assessment and Feedback Policy	New
SEC	Open Educational Resources (OER) Policy	Revision
APRC	Student Maternity and Parental Leave Policy	Revision
APRC	Postgraduate Research Thesis Guidance	New
APRC	Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2026/27	Revision
APRC	Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2026/27	Revision
APRC	Taught Assessment Regulations 2026/27	Revision
APRC	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2026/27	Revision
APRC	Internal Moderation Guidance	Revision
APRC	Programme and Course Handbook Policy	Revision
APRC	Exceptional Circumstances Policy	Revision
APRC	Thesis Format Guidance	Deletion
APRC	Including Publications in a Postgraduate Research Theses	Deletion
APRC	Lay Summary in Theses	Deletion
SQAC	Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy and associated templates	Revision
SQAC	Student Voice Policy	Revision
SQAC	Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy	Revision
SQAC	Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy	Revision
SQAC	Boards of Studies Terms of Reference	Revision

Senate Education Committee – Mapping of agenda items to remit

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
September						
Student Surveys Update			X	X		
Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report – Understanding and Supporting our Graduates’ Career Destinations	X	X	X	X		
Students’ Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2025/26	X	X	X	X		X
Sector Surveys’ Institutional Questions	X		X			
Learning Analytics Policy Review	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme Phase 2 (2023-2030)	X			X		X
Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information						X
Generative AI Guidelines for Postgraduate Research Students	X	X	X	X	X	X
Senate Education Committee Membership and Terms of Reference 2025/26	X	X	X	X	X	X
February						
Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation	X	X	X		X	
Agentic AI in learning and teaching: University response	X	X	X	X	X	X
Governance of Generative AI in Teaching and Learning: Coordinating Practice	X	X	X	X	X	X
Challenge Courses Update	X	X			X	
Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – EFI Community Volunteer	X					
Assessment and Feedback Policy Update	X	X	X		X	X
March						
Assessment and Feedback Policy	X	X	X		X	X
School-Level Pastoral Support for Postgraduate Research Students	X	X		X	X	
Regenerative Sustainability Strategy	X	X	X		X	
Open Educational Resources Policy	X	X			X	X
Erasmus+ Re-association: Next Steps	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bristol Case Working Group Action Plan	X	X			X	X
Learning and Teaching Workstream Update	X					
Learning Materials Accessibility Review	X	X	X			X

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
Committee Priorities 2025/26: Mid-Year Reflection	X	X	X	X	X	X
Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation – Terms of Reference	X	X	X		X	
Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression	X					X
May						
Assessment and Feedback Policy	X	X	X		X	X
Future Operation of Challenge Courses – Options Appraisal	X	X	X		X	X
Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review and Review of progress toward External Effectiveness Review Recommendations	X	X	X	X	X	X
Committee Membership 2026/27	X	X	X	X	X	X

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

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee – Mapping of agenda items to remit

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
September						
Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of Decision Trees for Exceptional Circumstances	X	X			X	
Remote delivery of teaching	X	X	X		X	X
Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2025/26		X				X
Variation to the Models for Degree Types regulations to support an intercalated degree in transdisciplinary practice	X	X	X		X	
Amendments to Student Maternity and Parental Leave policy		X				X
Revised Student Complaints Relating to Staff Conduct Procedure		X				X
January						
Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of a New Late Applications Process for Exceptional Circumstances	X	X			X	
Academic Year Dates 2027/28 and Provisional Academic Year Dates 2028/29	X	X				
Postgraduate Research Thesis Guidance	X	X				
APRC Priorities 2025/26 – mid-year update	X	X				
March						
Undergraduate Degree Regulations 2026/27	X	X				
Postgraduate Degree Regulations 2026/27	X	X				
Taught Assessment Regulations Resit Proposal	X	X	X			
Late Exceptional Circumstances – handling of accepted cases	X	X			X	
May						
Industrial Action: Variations to Academic Regulations and Policies	X	X	X		X	X
Proposed amendments to Taught Assessment Regulations 2026/27	X	X				
Proposed amendments to Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2026/27	X	X				
Internal Moderation Guidance	X	X	X			
Minor Addition to the Programme and Course Handbook Policy			X			
Board of Examiners Review – Consistent Application of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy	X	X			X	

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
July e-business						
Collaborative Programmes in Development	X	X	X		X	X
Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure		X	X	X	X	X
Student and Staff Dignity and Respect Policies		X				X
Exceptional Circumstances Policy Updates	X	X				

- 2.1 Oversee the development, maintenance and implementation of an academic regulatory framework which effectively supports and underpins the University's educational activities.
- 2.2 Ensure that the academic regulatory framework continues to evolve in order to meet organisational needs and is responsive to changes in University strategy, and in the internal and external environments.
- 2.3 Scrutinise and approve proposals for new or revised academic policy or regulation, ensuring that policy and regulation is only introduced where it is necessary, and that all policy and regulation is suitably accessible to its intended audience.
- 2.4 Act with delegated authority from the Senate on matters of student conduct and discipline.
- 2.5 In taking forward its remit, the Committee will seek consistency and common approaches while supporting and encouraging variation where this is beneficial, particularly if it is in the best interests of students.
- 2.6 Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee – Mapping of agenda items to remit

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8
September								
University of Edinburgh Students' Association Vice President Education Priorities 2025/26	X	X			X	X		
School Annual Quality Reports 2024/25: Sub Group Report	X	X	X	X		X		
Internal Periodic Review Themes 2024/25			X	X				
Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) – process updates: Internal Periodic Review	X				X			
Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) – process updates: Professional Services Review	X				X			
Board of Examiner Review Implementation update	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	X		X	X				
December								
College Annual Quality Reports 2024-25: Sub Group Report	X	X	X	X		X		
Student Data Monitoring (Awarding Gaps) Task Group	X		X		X	X	X	
Responses from University Level Actions								
Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP)	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	X		X	X				
February								
Annual Report of Conduct 2024-25	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Annual Report of Appeals 2024-25	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Annual Report of Complaints 2024-25	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Student Support Evaluation - Annual Report 2024-25	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy	X	X	X		X			X
Annual Monitoring: Reporting Templates 2025-26	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Short Courses Annual Report 2024-25	X		X	X		X		
Committee Priorities – mid-year update	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
April								
Degree Outcomes Analysis	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Proposed updates to the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy and Boards of Studies Terms of Reference	X	X	X	X	X			X
External Examiners – Exceptional Appointments	X				X			
May								
Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy	X	X		X		X		

Meeting and agenda item	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8
Student Voice Policy	X	X		X		X		
IPR Forward Schedule 2026-32	X				X			
Postponement of Internal Periodic Review for the Clinical Education (postgraduate taught provision)	X				X			
Taught External Examiner Reports: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Thematic Analysis 2024/25	X		X	X				
Professional Services Review and Student Support Thematic Review Update	X				X			
Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) Update	X				X			
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC): Accreditation Committee Annual Report 2024/25	X			X				X
Committee Membership 2026/27	X	X		X			X	
Senate and Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review							X	
May – electronic business meeting								
Industrial Action: Variations to the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy	X	X	X	X	X	X		
June – electronic business meeting								
Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy	X	X	X	X	X			X
Boards of Studies Terms of Reference	X	X	X	X	X			X

- 2.1 Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.
- 2.2 In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University's quality framework.
- 2.3 Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice.
- 2.4 Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business.
- 2.5 Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.
- 2.6 Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.
- 2.7 Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.

- 2.8 In relation to academic collaborations with partner institutions: maintain oversight of development, approval, monitoring and review / renewal processes; receive annual reports on activity and identify any areas where action is required to maintain academic standards and the quality of the student experience.

Senate

21 October 2026

Senate & Senate Standing Committees: Planned essential business in 2026/27

Description of paper

1. This paper provides Senate with information on the planned essential business to be conducted by Senate and its Standing Committees in 2026/27. The paper contributes to Senate oversight of Standing Committee business.

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

2. *D20: To adhere to principles of good governance on the delegation of authority to Standing Committees, as outlined in professional codes.*

Action requested / recommendation

3. Senate is invited to note the planned essential business across the academic year.

Background and context

4. At its 19 May Senate meeting, Senate was invited to disband the Standing Committee priority process. Senate voted not to approve this proposal by a majority vote of 62. 51 members voted to approve the paper, 8 members abstained and 2 members did not have enough information. No comments were raised in discussion of the item.
5. 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."

Discussion

6. The previous Committee priorities process does not align with the approach set out in the Standing Committee Terms of Reference, which is to provide a schedule of business set prior to the start of the academic year. Therefore, to closer align with the intent of Committee priorities, a full schedule of planned essential business is provided for Senate and its Standing Committees in Appendix 1.
7. The schedule is not an exhaustive list of all business expected in the course of the year, however provides detail on the items of essential substantive business that are expected to come forward in 2026/27. Substantive items are those which are marked for approval or for discussion. Items that are provided for noting or for information are not included in the Schedule.
8. The Schedule is not intended to prevent additional items of business coming forward, however provides oversight of essential Senate and Standing Committee business at an early point in the academic year.
9. In September 2026, the University participated in the National Review of Awarding Arrangements (NRAA). The results of the NRAA visit are due in November 2026. The report of the NRAA may provide recommendations for the University to address, if so, this will impact on the essential business to be carried out by Senate and its Committees.

10. Senate has oversight of Standing Committee business via the following processes:
- Reports of upcoming business: Senate receives a paper at each meeting of Senate outlining the Standing Committee business expected to take place between meetings of Senate.
 - Notification of papers: Senate members receive an email notification when Standing Committee agendas and papers are published.
 - Representation: There are three elected Senate representatives on each Standing Committee to represent the views of the 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.

Resource implications

11. The essential work of the Standing Committees is dictated by university strategic priorities and the obligation to meet external requirements.
12. The resource required to carry out essential Committee business is considered by the area responsible for carrying out the business or activity. This includes the periodic review of policy.
13. Should there be changes to the Schedule of Business that result in an increase in resource required to support specific Senate or Committee functions, or changes that pose a risk to the effective academic governance of the University or compliance with external regulatory requirements, the impact will be outlined to the relevant post holders for further consideration.

Risk management

14. It is vital that Standing Committees ensure work they undertake aligns to their remit. A Committee's 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

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

Equality & diversity

16. 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

17. The annual report of Standing Committees outlines progress toward the agreed priorities for 2025/26. This concludes the previous Standing Committee priorities process.

Authors

Academic Quality and Standards
September 2026

Freedom of Information Open

Committee	Item	Brief summary of the item	Consultation undertaken	Category of business	Action	Meeting date	Approving body
Senate	Conferral of the title of Professor Emeritus/Emerita	This is a routine paper through which Senate confers the title of Professor Emeritus/Emerita on retiring professors.	Schools submit a nomination to Colleges for approval.	Senate SOPR D26	For approval	Ongoing	Senate
Senate	Rector Election dates	This paper is received every three years. The paper consults with Senate on the date of the Rector Election, in accordance with Ordinance 197.	Consultation is carried out via the Court Resolution process	Senate SOPR D25	To comment	September e-Senate	This is a Court Resolution inviting comment
Senate	Senate Election dates	This paper which seeks comment on the proposed dates for the Senate & Senate Standing Committee elections.	Review of key University dates, Court Services, Senate	Senate SOPR D16	To comment	September e-Senate	Senate
Senate	Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees	This annual report provides Senate with an overview of Committee business undertaken the previous year.	The report is drafted from the minutes of Standing Committees.	Senate SOPR D20	For approval	October	Senate
Senate	Report from the Honorary Degrees Committee	This paper seeks Senate approval of the Honorary Degrees proposed by the Honorary Degrees Committee.	Nominations are considered by the Honorary Degrees Committee	Senate SOPR A1	For approval	October	Senate
Senate, also presented to each Senate Standing Committee	Edinburgh University Vice President Education Priorities	This paper provides Senate with the priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education and the Sabbatical team on an annual basis.	Students' Association Sabbatical Officers	Senate SOPR D22	To comment	October	This is a discussion item
Senate	Board of Studies Terms of Reference	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2023/24	Consultation is carried out via the Court Resolution process	Senate SOPR D25	Senate: To comment as part of the Court Resolution process Court: To approve	October	University Court via Resolution
Senate	Senate & Senate Standing Committee Elections	This is an annual paper which seeks approval for the arrangements for Senate & Senate Standing Committee elections.	Review of key University dates, Court Services	Senate SOPR D16	For approval	December	Senate
Senate	Senate Exception Committee Membership & Terms of Reference	This paper seeks Senate approval of the membership and terms of reference of the Senate Exception Committee.	Senate membership	Senate SOPR D20	For approval	May	Senate
Senate	Senate Standing Committee Membership	This paper seeks Senate approval of the membership of the Senate Standing Committees.	Senate membership via elections, Colleges and relevant Service Heads.	Senate SOPR D20	For approval	May	Senate
APRC	Board of Examiners Review – Implementation of Decision Trees for Exceptional Circumstances	The paper seeks endorsement of University-level decision trees for use across Schools in determining outcomes in cases where Exceptional Circumstances (EC) have been accepted for individual students.	Extensive consultation via the Board of Examiners Project with Schools, Colleges, Students' Association	APRC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2 & 2.5	APRC: For recommendation to Senate Senate: For approval	APRC: September Senate: October	APRC
APRC	Framework for Curricula	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	A discussion paper will be presented to APRC in September. Colleges, EUSA, and discussion with Academic Size and Shape and Curriculum Management to ensure alignment.	APRC Terms of Reference 2.2	For approval	November	APRC
APRC	Planned review of feedback on the late Exceptional Circumstances process as agreed in March 2026.	Planned review of feedback	Schools and Colleges; Students' Association; Exceptional Circumstances Service	APRC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2 & 2.5	For approval	November	APRC
APRC	AY dates 27/28 and provisional AY dates 28/29	The approval and provisional approval of academic year dates for specified years.	The dates are structured according to a model approved by Senate in 2009 and published on the University website.	APRC Terms of Reference 2.1 & 2.2	For approval	November	APRC
APRC Senate consulted in line with Court Resolution process	Code of Student Conduct	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	The Office for Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, Students' Association, Student Experience Services, Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students, Legal Services, Academic Registrar, Student Discipline Committee, College Administration	APRC Terms of Reference 2.2 SOPR	APRC: To comment Senate: To comment Court: To approve	APRC: January Senate: May Court: June	University Court via Resolution
APRC	Email as method of contacting students, Policy on University use of	Periodic review of policy planned for 2026/27	Information Services, EUSA	APRC Terms of Reference 2.2	For approval	March	APRC
APRC	External Examining of Research Degrees, Handbook for	Periodic review of policy planned for 2026/27	Doctoral College; Colleges and Graduate Schools; EUSA	APRC Terms of Reference 2.2	For approval	March	APRC
APRC	Models for degree types	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	Colleges, EUSA, and discuss with Academic Size and Shape and Curriculum Management to ensure alignment.	APRC Terms of Reference 2.2	For approval	March	APRC
APRC	PhD by Research oral examinations by video link (Videolinked PhD oral)	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	Doctoral College; Colleges and Graduate Schools; EUSA	APRC Terms of Reference 2.2	For approval	March	APRC
APRC	Dual, Double and Multiple Awards Policy	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	Academic Collaborations Advisory Group; SQAC; Colleges	APRC Terms of Reference 2.2	For approval	March	APRC
APRC	Expected Behaviour Policy in relation to Appeals, Complaints, Student Conduct and related procedures	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	The Office for Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, Students' Association, Student Experience Services, Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students, Legal Services, Academic Registrar, Student Discipline Committee, College Administration	APRC Terms of Reference 2.2	For approval	March	APRC

APRC	Shared Academic Timetabling Policy	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2023/24. This policy will be replaced by a new Academic Timetabling Policy as part of the periodic review and wider Timetabling and Course Selection Project.	Extensive consultation via the Timetabling and Course Selection Project, including with Schools, Colleges, Students' Association, University Estates Department and Registry Services	APRC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 & 2.5	For approval	March	APRC
APRC Senate consulted in line with Court Resolution process	Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations	Annual review of degree regulations	Colleges and Schools; Doctoral College; EUSA; other departments as relevant (e.g. SWAY, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Immigration Compliance)	APRC Terms of Reference 2.1 & 2.2 SOPR	To comment	APRC: March Senate: May	University Court via Resolution
APRC Senate consulted in line with Court Resolution process	Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations	Annual review of degree regulations	Colleges and Schools; EUSA; other departments as relevant (e.g. SWAY, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Immigration Compliance)	APRC Terms of Reference 2.1 & 2.2 SOPR	To comment	APRC: March Senate: May	University Court via Resolution
APRC	Taught Assessment Regulations	Approval of essential updates to the Taught Assessment Regulations	Colleges and Schools; EUSA; other departments as relevant (e.g. SWAY, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Immigration Compliance)	APRC Terms of Reference 2.1 & 2.2	For approval	May	APRC
APRC	Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations	Approval of essential updates to the Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations	Colleges and Schools; Doctoral College; EUSA; other departments as relevant (e.g. SWAY, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Immigration Compliance)	APRC Terms of Reference 2.1 & 2.2	For approval	May	APRC
APRC	Support for Study Policy	Periodic review of policy planned for 2026/27	Colleges and Schools; Students' Association; Wellbeing Service	APRC Terms of Reference 2.2	For approval	May	APRC
APRC	International Student Attendance and Engagement Policy	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2022/23	Students' Association, Colleges, Schools, Student Immigration Service and other areas as relevant.	APRC Terms of Reference 2.2	For approval	May	APRC
SEC	Guidance on Developing a Future Ready Curriculum: Section 1 of the L&T Strategy Implementation Plan	Implementation plan for section 1 of the Learning and Teaching Strategy and accompanying guidance for Colleges and Schools	Senate Education Committee via discussion of the item	SEC Terms of Reference 2.1	For discussion	October	Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Group
SEC	Student Surveys Update: NSS & PTES 2026 Results	A report on the findings from the 2026 national student surveys for students and a plan for response.	This is a factual report which provides the findings of the national student surveys.	SEC Terms of Reference 2.3 & 2.4	For discussion	October	N/A
SEC	Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report	Explores graduate destinations and student career readiness by looking at two key graduate datasets: The Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS); <i>The Making Transitions Personal: What's Next</i> question.	Senate Education Committee via discussion of the item	SEC Terms of Reference 2.1 & 2.2	For discussion	October	This is a discussion item
SEC	Erasmus+ Reassociation	An update on action being taken to support the University's re-association with the Erasmus+ programme, with UK participation expected to resume from 2027 and institutional access to Erasmus+ funding anticipated from the 2027/28 academic year, subject to award of the Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education.	Senate Education Committee via discussion of the item	SEC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6	For discussion	November	This is a discussion item
SEC	University of Edinburgh Global Action Plan 2026-2028	Highlighting the new Global Action Plan and discussing how best to facilitate aligning it with the L&T Strategy.	Senate Education Committee via discussion of the item	SEC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6	For discussion	October	This is a discussion item
SEC	HEAR Proposal(s)	Proposed additions of specific additional recognised activity to the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).	The HEAR Recommendation Panel receives and considers proposals for additions to the Higher Education Achievement Report and makes a recommendation to the Senate Education Committee for approval.	SEC Terms of Reference 2.1	For approval	November	SEC
SEC	Definition of Experiential and Challenge-based Learning	Establish a shared institutional definition and principles of experiential learning and challenge-based learning, ensuring clarity on what it includes and its role in enhancing student learning	Curriculum Development & Innovation Group College Deans of Learning & Teaching	SEC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6	For approval	November	SEC
SEC	Operation of Challenge Courses	An update on the phased implementation plan to enable the transition of challenge courses from pilots to a business as usual approach, ensuring appropriate oversight to deliver consistency, delivery of aims and high quality student experience.	Senate Education Committee via discussion of the item	SEC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6	For discussion	November	This is a discussion item
SEC	Student Support Framework	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2024/25	Registry Services, Students' Association, Student Experience Services, Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students, Legal Services, Academic Registrar, relevant College Deans, Student Lifecycle Management Group.	SEC Terms of Reference 2.3	For approval	March	SEC
SEC	Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy	Periodic review of policy planned for 2026/27	Colleges and Schools; Students' Association; Disability and Learning Support Services, Registry Services,	SEC Terms of Reference 2.3	For approval	March	SEC
SEC	Creation of BAU group for Challenge Courses	Following the SEC decision on 7/5/26 with respect to the operational approach to support embedding of Challenge Courses, this paper will provide details on the creation of a BAU group to replace responsibilities currently undertaken by Curriculum Development & Innovation Group	Curriculum Development & Innovation Group College Deans of Learning & Teaching	SEC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6	For approval	March	SEC
SEC	Full Guidance on all sections of the L&T Strategy Implementation Plan	Implementation plan for all sections of the Learning and Teaching Strategy and accompanying guidance for Colleges and Schools	Senate Education Committee via discussion of the item	SEC Terms of Reference 2.1	For discussion	March	Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Group

SQAC	IPR Reports and Responses	Presentation of the reports and responses from the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) process	The IPR reports are drawn from the recommendations and commendations. Schools prepare a response to the reports.	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.3 & 2.4	For approval	Ongoing	SQAC
SQAC	School Annual Quality Reports 2025-26: Sub Group Report	An update to SQAC on the Sub-Group tasked with reviewing School annual quality reports and highlights the key University-wide themes arising from the analysis and recommended actions.	Schools prepare the annual reports.	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 & 2.6	For approval	October	SQAC
SQAC	Internal Periodic Review Themes 2025-26	Identifies areas of good practice and areas for further development arising from Internal Periodic Reviews (IPRs) held in 2025/26, and proposes actions to share recommendations related to key University activities.	The themes are drawn from the recommendations and commendations in all the reports. IPRS are conducted by appointed reviewers drawn from across the University and sector.	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.3 & 2.4	For approval	October	SQAC
SQAC	College Annual Quality Reports 2025-26	Presentation of the College annual quality reports for the previous academic year.	Colleges prepare the annual report	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 & 2.6	For approval	December	College Committees
SQAC	Annual Monitoring – Policy, templates and plans for School Report submission this year.	Approval of changes to the Programme, School and College annual reporting templates for 2025/26.	Senate Quality Assurance Committee and School Directors of Quality.	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 & 2.6	For approval	February	SQAC
SQAC	Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2023/24	Colleges and Schools; Students' Association; other role holders as relevant including Directors of Quality	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1	For approval	February	SQAC
SQAC	Annual Reports for Conduct, Appeals and Complaints for 2025-26	Analysis of reports, including update on last year's report and proposed actions for this year.	This is a factual report produced by the Office for Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals based on data on conduct, appeals and complaints.	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 & 2.7	For discussion	February	This is a discussion item
SQAC	Review of the Student Support Services Annual Review (SSSAR) & Student Support Thematic Review processes	A paper to SQAC with the outcome of a review of the the Student Support Services Annual Review (SSSAR) and the periodic Student Support Thematic Review processes this year to ensure closer alignment with the TQEF.	Directors of Professional Services, Service Heads, Colleges, Schools, Students	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1	For approval	April	SQAC
SQAC	Associated Institution Policy	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2025/26	Colleges and Schools; Students' Association; other areas as relevant including Edinburgh Global, Legal Services, Governance and Strategic Planning, University Secretary.	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1	For approval	April	SQAC
SQAC	School Director of Quality Role Outline	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2023/24	Colleges and Schools; Students' Association; other role holders as relevant including Directors of Quality	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1	For approval	April	SQAC
SQAC	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Third Party Credit Rating Policy	Periodic review of policy delayed from 2024/25	Colleges and Schools, Senate Quality Assurance Committee.	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1	For approval	April	SQAC
SQAC	Degree Classification Outcomes	Analysis of degrees awarded to students who completed their studies in 2025/26	This is a factual report produced by Student Insights and Analytics based on student data.	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 & 2.7	For discussion	April	This is a discussion item
SQAC	Taught External Examiner Reports: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Thematic Analysis 2025-26	Analysis of University level themes and proposed actions in relation to reports submitted via the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS)	This is a factual report that provides analysis of the annual College reports of the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS).	SQAC Terms of Reference 2.1, 2.3 & 2.4	For discussion	May	This is a discussion item

Senate**21 October 2026****Senate Standing Committee Membership 2026/27****Description of paper:**

1. This paper notifies Senate of updates to the membership of the Senate Standing Committees for 2026/27.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. Senate is invited to note the membership of the Senate Standing Committees as provided in Appendix 1, 2 and 3.

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](#)

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

Discussion

8. This paper notifies Senate of a routine updates to the membership of its Committees.
9. The membership of the Senate Academic Policy and Regulation Committee is provided in Appendix 1.
10. The membership of the Senate Education Committee is provided in Appendix 2.
11. The membership of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee is provided in Appendix 3.

Resource implications

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

Risk management

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

Equality & diversity

15. 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
September 2026

Freedom of Information: Open

Senate Academic Policy and Regulation Committee Membership 2026-27

Role on APRC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
3 x senior staff members from each College with responsibility for academic governance and regulation, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the student experience at all levels (nominated by their College)	Dean of Quality Assurance and Assessment (CAHSS)	Professor Steve Loughnan		Ex Officio
	Dean of Students (CAHSS)	Dr Lawrence Dritsas (Vice-Convener)		Ex Officio
	Head of Taught Student Administration and Support (CAHSS)	Catriona Morley		No
	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)	Professor Linda Kirstein (Convener)		Ex Officio
	Dean of Students (CSE)	Dr Chris Mowat		Ex Officio
	Head of Taught Student Administration (CSE)	Dr Kirsten Phimister		No
	Dean of Education (CMVM)	Professor Gill Aitken		Ex Officio
	Dean of Students (CMVM)	Mike Grieve		Ex Officio
	Academic Administration Manager (CMVM)	Vacant		No
1 x senior staff member from each College with responsibility for postgraduate research (nominated by their College)	Head of PGR Student Office (CAHSS)	Kirsty Woomble		No
	Head of Postgraduate Research Student Administration (CSE)	Lindsey Fox		No
	PGR Student Administration Manager (CMVM)	Isabel Lavers		No

Role on APRC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
1 x Edinburgh University Students' Association sabbatical officer	Vice-President, Education	Joana Mends	Ex Officio	Ex Officio
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Advice Place Manager & Deputy Manager, Students' Association	Charlotte Macdonald		No
1 x member of staff from Registry Services	Academic Registrar, Registry Services	Lisa Dawson	Ex Officio	No
1 x member of staff from Academic Quality and Standards	Head of Academic Policy and Regulation	Dr Adam Bunni		No
1 x member of staff from Information Services' Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division	Head of Digital Learning Applications and Media (Acting)	Myles Blaney		No
3 x elected Senate members	Representative of Senate (CSE)	James Mooney	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
	Representative of Senate (CSE)	Dr Ben Goddard	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
	Representative of Senate (CSE)	Professor Dave Laurensen	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener for their expertise	Co-opted member (Associate Principal)	Lucy Evans	1 August 2026 – 31 July 2029	Ex Officio
	Co-opted member (Disability and Learning Support Service)	Victoria Buchanan	1 January 2025 – 31 December 2028	No
	Co-opted member	Vacant		
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Academic Quality and Standards staff member		No

Senate Education Committee Membership 2026-27

Role on SEC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
Vacant	Vacant	(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)	To be confirmed		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 Students' Association	Joana Mends	Ex Officio	Ex Officio

Role on SEC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Heather Innes	Ex Officio	No
1 x postgraduate research student representative	Postgraduate Research Student Representative	Patience Mulungi	1 November 2025-19 October 2026	Student
1 x Head of School from each College chosen by the Heads of College	Head of School, CSE	Professor Jason Love	1 August 2023 – current	Ex Officio
	Head of School, CAHSS	Professor Willem Hollman		Ex Officio
	Head of School, CMVM	Professor Susan Rhind		No
3 x elected member of Senate	Representative of Senate	Dr Tamara Trodd (CAHSS)	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
	Representative of Senate	Professor David Ingram (CSE)	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
	Representative of Senate	Professor Patrick Walsh (CSE)	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
Head of Academic Quality and Standards or nominee	Head of Academic Quality and Standards	Nichola Kett	Ex Officio	No
1x member of staff from Academic Development or nominee	Head of Academic Development, Academic Quality and Standards.	Professor Cathy Bovill	Ex Officio	No
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 (Student Experience)	Lucy Evans	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2028	Ex Officio
	Co-opted member	Sian Bayne	1 August 2026-31 July 2029	Ex Officio
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Vacant		No

Senate Quality Assurance Committee Membership 2026-27

Role on SQAC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)		Ex Officio
An external member from within the Scottish Higher Education sector with experience in quality assurance	Dean for Quality Assurance & Enhancement, University of Aberdeen	Professor Steven Tucker		No
College Deans of Quality (or equivalent)	Dean of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (CMVM)	Dr Michael Daw		No
	Dean of Quality and Enhancement (CSE)	Professor James Hopgood (Deputy Convener)		Academic
	Dean of Quality Assurance and Assessment (CAHSS)	Professor Steve Loughnan		Ex Officio
1 x member of staff from each College with experience of and an interest in quality assurance at School level (nominated by their College)	School representative of CMVM (Director of Quality)	Dr Jill MacKay		Academic
	School representative of CSE (Head of Student Services)	Faten Adam		No
	School representative of CAHSS (Director of Quality)	Calum Mciver		No
3 x elected member of Senate	Representative of Senate (CAHSS)	Dr Jacob Bard-Rosenberg	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
	Representative of Senate (CAHSS)	Professor Carol Richardson	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
	Representative of Senate (CMVM)	Dr Sari Pennings	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
1 x Edinburgh University Students' Association sabbatical officer	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Joana Mendis	Ex Officio	Ex Officio

Role on SQAC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Heather Innes		No
1 x member of staff from the Doctoral College	Representative of Doctoral College	Professor Laura Bradley		Ex Officio
1 x member of staff from Academic Quality and Standards	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services	Brian Connolly		No
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener	Co-opted member (Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling)	Marianne Brown	1 August 2024 – 31 July 2027	No
	Co-opted member (Edinburgh Futures Institute)	Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar	1 August 2025 – 31 July 2028	No
	Vacant			
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Sinéad Docherty		No

Senate

21 October 2025

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 October and 2 December 2026

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

2. D20: To adhere to principles of good governance on the delegation of authority to Standing Committees, as outlined in professional codes.

Action requested / recommendation

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

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 September and December 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. Senate members are informed via email when the agenda and papers are published for each Standing Committee. Senate members are able to provide comments to their elected Senate representatives on Committees, or to their College representatives.
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

Registry Services

Freedom of Information: Open

October 2026

Appendix 1: Senate Education Committee - October – 2 December 2026

This forward agenda is not exhaustive and additional items of business may be added.

Meeting date	Agenda Item	Author
October 2026	Learning and Teaching Strategy – Implementation Plan & accompanying guidance on the Developing a Future Ready Curriculum sections of the strategy	Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Group
October 2026	Student Surveys Update: NSS; PTES; PRES 2026 Results*	Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary, Students.
October 2026	Graduate Outcomes Survey Annual Report*	Careers, Skills & Student Development
October 2026	University of Edinburgh Global Action Plan 2026-28	Edinburgh Global
October 2026	Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2026-27*	Students' Association
October 2026	Generative AI in Education: training development and guidelines update	Sian Bayne & colleagues across the University supported by LTW Educational Design and Engagement
October 2026	Towards a University approach to AI in learning, teaching and assessment	Stuart King, Chris McKenzie, Steve Loughnan with input from College Deans of Education
October 2026	Assessment and Feedback Policy Implementation	Deputy Vice Principal Students (Engagement)
October 2026	Learning and Teaching Workstream*	Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary, Students.

October 2026	Assessment & Feedback Strategy Group Update*	Deputy Vice Principal Students (Engagement)
October 2026	Learn Template Updates	Learning, Teaching and Web Services
October 2026	Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate Standing Committees 2025/26	Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
October 2026	Membership and Terms of Reference 2026/27*	Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
November 2026	Operation of Challenge Courses	Sabine Rolle, Challenge Courses Lead
November 2026	Erasmus+ Reassociation	Study and Work Away
November 2026	HEAR Proposal*	Deputy Vice Principal Students (Engagement)
November 2026	Learning and Teaching Workstream*	Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary, Students.
November 2026	Assessment & Feedback Strategy Group Update*	Deputy Vice Principal Students (Engagement)

*Indicates where an item is routine business for the Committee.

Appendix 2: Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee October – 2 December 2026

This forward agenda is not exhaustive and additional items of business may be added.

Meeting date	Agenda Item	Author
November 2026	Late Exceptional Circumstances process – update on implementation	Registry Services
November 2026	Extended Common Marking Scheme – revised descriptors	Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group
November 2026	Annual Student Concessions Report (Closed)*	Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
November 2026	Academic Year Dates – provisional dates for 2029-2030*	Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services

*Indicates where an item is routine business for the Committee.

Appendix 3: Senate Quality Assurance Committee October - 2 December 2026

This forward agenda is not exhaustive and additional items of business may be added.

Meeting date	Agenda Item	Author
October 2026	School Annual Quality Reports 2025-26: Sub-Group Report*	Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
October 2026	Internal Periodic Review Themes 2025-26*	Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
October 2026	Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2026-27*	Students' Association, Vice-President Education
October 2026	Membership and Terms of Reference 2026/27*	Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
October 2026	Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses*	Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
December 2026	College Annual Quality Reports 2025-26*: - College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences - College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine - College of Science & Engineering	College Deans and Quality Teams
December 2026	Student Support Thematic Review and Professional Services Review	Students' Association, Vice-President Education & Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
December 2026	Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) - Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)*	Academic Quality and Standards,

		Registry Services
December 2026	External Examiners: Exceptional Appointments 2025/26*	Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
December 2026	Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses*	Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services

*Indicates where an item is routine business for the Committee.

Senate**21 October 2026****University Policy and Approaches to Antisemitism****Description of paper**

1. **Fit with primary responsibilities.** This paper fulfils responsibilities A2 and A4 (development and oversight of policies related to teaching and student research), and B9 and B11 (development and oversight of policies related to student discipline) in the SOPR, and contributes to Senate's responsibility under the Universities Scotland Acts to regulate and superintend the teaching and discipline of the University.
2. The paper discusses the University of Edinburgh's approach to antisemitism in matters of teaching and discipline, and asks Senate to recommend a different approach to that adopted without Senate oversight in 2020. It is a revised version of a paper proposed for the March 2026 meeting of Senate, which, on the advice of the Business Committee, was not circulated to members.
3. Matters relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, including the response to antisemitism, form part of Senate's remit to regulate and superintend the teaching and discipline of the University and to promote research.

Action requested / Recommendation

4. Senate is asked to **note** the history and context of antisemitism definitions below.
5. Senate is asked to **note** the ongoing work of the University's EDI lead and others in relation to researching and combatting antisemitism at the University of Edinburgh.
6. Senate is asked to **approve** the following motions:
 - 6.1. In matters of teaching and discipline, the University of Edinburgh adopts a pluralistic approach to the definition of antisemitism and other forms of racism and discrimination, guided by scholarship and in comportment with all applicable laws and regulations.
 - 6.2. In keeping with this pluralistic approach, Senate recommends that the Executive rescinds its 2020 decision to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism so that the University is not constrained in its consideration and response to antisemitism by a single definition.

Background and context

7. Antisemitism is a significant problem in the UK and globally, including at the University of Edinburgh. It is deeply historically embedded. While all serious analysis would accept this,, the causes and manifestations of antisemitism are complex and contested; reasonable people disagree on them,
8. Senate of 4 March 2026 agreed unopposed an emergency resolution to invite members to submit papers on the topic of university policy and approaches to antisemitism for discussion at its next meeting, and instructed the Business Committee to allocate time on the agenda for a discussion of the papers received.
9. The authors of the March 2026 paper were invited to meet with the University's EDI lead to discuss her ongoing work in relation to antisemitism. They did so and agreed not to bring any paper to the May 2026 meeting, in order to allow for work to be done over summer 2026. It is not the authors' place to report on any work that may have

taken place, but we support its continuation. At the same time, we feel consideration of this paper without further delay is the best way for Senate to engage with the issues involved while respecting and supporting that complementary work.

10. The University Executive adopted a specific definition of antisemitism – the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism – in paper E3 of the 21 July 2020 meeting of the Executive. This decision was taken in the context of significant pressure placed on all universities by the Westminster government to do so. It did not follow formal consultation with Senate nor with networks or groups of staff affected by the adoption of the definition, including Jewish staff. The policy change referred to a request from the university's student Jewish Society, who are listed along with EUSA as having been consulted, but no record of this consultation was published, nor was there a wider consultation with students.
11. There is no universally agreed-upon definition of antisemitism, nor is there a consensus that such a definition is necessary. The IHRA definition is highly contentious, as was recognised by the July 2020 paper and in scholarly literature.
12. The world's largest body of Jewish Studies organisations and scholars, the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS), offers [guidance](#) for tackling antisemitism with university-suitable approaches. This guidance advises that 'universities should not adopt any single definition [of antisemitism] as the basis for campus speech codes or processes of adjudication,' but instead should be informed by debates around various definitions and resources, including their limitations.

Discussion

13. The Executive's summer 2020 paper:
 - 13.1. Was not based on adequate consultation among the university community and specifically did not involve consultation with affected staff.
 - 13.2. Was not based on any paper submitted to Senate, despite having wide-ranging consequences for teaching and discipline across the University
 - 13.3. Did not provide explanation for the choice of one definition over others, but highlighted the importance of having a "consistent" approach alongside fear of negative reaction from external actors, including at Westminster.
 - 13.4. Did not include an Equality Impact Assessment.
14. There is a wealth of thoughtful and scholarly criticism of the IHRA Working Definition, much of it focusing on three key issues:
 - 14.1. Its core definition is imprecise: 'Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred of Jews.' The 'certain perception' is not defined further, nor does the definition explain if antisemitism might be expressed in other ways than hatred of Jews.
 - 14.2. The eleven examples that accompany the definition and are part of policy omit many commonly found negative perceptions of Jews, while focusing excessively on attitudes and speech relating to Israel. In particular, the omitted aspects include many that are encountered in workplaces and places of learning, making the IHRA definition an obstacle to addressing these aspects under existing conduct and discipline policies.

- 14.3. The examples place excessive limits on discussion relating to Israel and Palestine.
15. Good progress in inclusive approaches has been made through papers approved at the Faith & Belief Subcommittee and the Race Equality & Anti-Racism Subcommittee of the university's EDI Committee. The University's EDI lead is currently leading research to better understand and combat Jewish students' and staff members' experience of antisemitism at the University of Edinburgh.
16. Part of the current problem of antisemitism arises from the fact that critics of Israeli policy (including, for instance, the current UK Foreign Secretary) are routinely accused of antisemitism as a result of their criticism of Israeli policy. Such accusations risk trivialising or even inflaming antisemitism.
17. Attempting to combat antisemitism through the adoption of definitions appears to be a relatively recent phenomenon, which sits alongside many other approaches to antisemitism that do not rely on producing definitions. Some of the definitions used or discussed in the literature are as follows:
- 17.1. The Helen Fein [definition](#), proposed by sociologist and genocide scholar Helen Fein. This definition takes a historical and sociological perspective, but it is relatively less well-known than the others.
- 17.2. The "[working definition](#)" of antisemitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (often simply "IHRA working definition" or "IHRA").
- 17.3. The [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#) ("JDA"), drafted by scholars in response to IHRA and seeking to improve on it. Signatories included Jewish scholars and experts on antisemitism and genocide from many institutions, including UoE.
- 17.4. The [Nexus Document](#), which aims to provide guidance that focuses on the relationship – perceived or otherwise – between antisemitism and Israel.
- 17.5. The *Diaspora Alliance* definition and *T'ruah's resources on antisemitism*. These focus on antisemitism as discrimination against Jews as Jews, and avoid political stances with respect to Israel.
18. There is no agreement among Jews about whether the IHRA Working Definition should be adopted by universities. While some mainstream Jewish organisations advocate for its adoption, other significant organisations and many Jewish individuals are opposed to it. No one organisation represents the views of all Jews.
19. Most scholars who work on Palestine and the Middle East (for instance the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies) oppose the IHRA Working Definition on the grounds that it is likely to inhibit nuanced discussions of the history and contemporary reality of the region.
20. The adoption of the IHRA definition by the University means that speech on highly contentious current political issues (e.g. Israeli policy and practice towards Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere) is governed by an imprecise and restrictive policy. It is reasonable to assume that this situation is having a chilling effect on free discussion.
21. Antisemitism should be addressed through robust work to make campus welcoming to Jews and to respond strongly to antisemitic harassment where it occurs; Senate welcomes the University EDI lead's current work on antisemitism. Such work does not require adherence to the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

Resource implications

22. The passage of this paper is likely to have few resource implications.

Risk Management

23. Given the contentious nature of this issue, there are reputational risks as well as risks to the effective fulfilment of equality and antidiscrimination obligations and aspirations, that arise both from adopting this paper's proposals and from continuing the current course without adopting them. The paper gives reasons for favouring its proposals as a preferable way to balance these risks.

Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals

24. The approach to antisemitism recommended here primarily supports SDGs 4 (quality education), 10 (reduced inequalities) and 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

Equality and Diversity

25. The paper supports our legal obligations under the Equality Act and the range of protections within it. In particular, it supports efforts to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, part of our Public Sector Duty.

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

26. Outcomes of motions to be communicated by Senate Clerk to University Court and Executive.

Consultation

27. The authors are members of the university's Jewish Staff Network. This paper draws on consultation with JSN members and EUSA Sabbatical Officers 25-26.

Further information

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Dr Michael Barany (SPS)

Presenter(s) (if required)

Prof Diana Paton

Dr Jacob Bard-Rosenberg

Freedom of information

Open

Appendix: Excerpt from a report prepared by a Jewish Staff Network member for their workstream of the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Working Group, on antisemitism policy in some major UK universities

University of Brighton: a [commission](#) concluded that the University should not adopt the IHRA definition.

Cardiff University (Russell Group university): “We scrupulously considered the formal adoption of definitions at the University’s most senior committees [...] After careful consideration, we concluded that adopting selected religion- or race-specific definitions may have the unfortunate consequence of appearing to exclude other faith groups or races in relation to whom definitions are not adopted. We therefore will not formally adopt the [IHRA] definition”.

Goldsmiths College University of London [adopted](#) both the JDA and the IHRA definition without the IHRA’s case studies (ie without the examples).

London School of Economics (Russell Group University) adopted the IHRA definition, noting [in addition](#) that “The School also does not accept that all the examples the IHRA lists as illustrations of antisemitism fall within the definition of antisemitism unless there were additional evidence to suggest antisemitic intent.” The LSE website does not currently state that it adheres to the IHRA definition.

Queen’s University Belfast (Russell Group University) “defines antisemitism as any form of hatred or discrimination against Jewish people due to their religion, ethnicity, or cultural heritage. QUB's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy opposes all forms of discrimination, including antisemitism and Islamophobia. The university aims to ensure that all students and staff are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.”

SOAS University of London decided against the IHRA definition, and [recognises](#) antisemitism as a major challenge to tackle alongside other forms of discrimination.

University of Aberdeen [adopted the JDA](#) after [consultation with staff and students](#).

University of Glasgow (Russell Group University) reaffirmed in 2024 its decision to exclude the IHRA definition’s “illustrative examples” from its antisemitism approach.

University of St. Andrews decided to not adopt any single definition; its website states that ‘endorsing any single definition of antisemitism’ would ‘undermine’ its work in tackling antisemitism.

University of Warwick (Russell Group University) engaged in a 4-year long process of discussion and analysis around the role of a university in education, critical thinking, and inclusion. The final [report](#) resulted in no definition being adopted.

University of West of Scotland does not reference any definitions on its webpages. The university has been [developing educational resources](#) for schools and universities since 2017, together with the Holocaust Educational Trust.

Senate**21 October 2026****Boards of Studies Resolution****Description of paper**

1. This paper is presented to Senate for consultation in accordance with the procedures for the creation of Resolutions as set out in the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966.

Fit with Primary Responsibilities

2.

D25: To make recommendations to Court in relation to certain matters (e.g. creation of new degrees, amending existing degree regulations) as specified in the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966; and to act as a consultative body to Court on all draft Court Resolutions

Action requested / Recommendation

3. Senate is invited to make observations on the following attached draft Resolution:
No.7/2026: Boards of Studies
4. In line with the statutory requirements for consultation on Court Resolutions, any comments or observation on the Resolution are to be submitted directly to Court Services via email to Court@ed.ac.uk by 7 November 2026.

Background and context

5. Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 enabled the University Court to exercise by Resolution a wide range of powers, including the creation of Chairs and "...to regulate and alter the constitution, composition, and number of the faculties and boards of studies, and to create new bodies of the same kind." The Act sets out the procedure for making Resolutions and stipulates that Senatus Academicus, the General Council and any other body or person having an interest require to be consulted on draft Resolutions throughout the period of one month, with the months of August and September not taken into account when calculating the consultation period.

Discussion

6. At its meeting on 25 January 2018 the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC, the predecessor committee to the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee) approved a proposal to simplify the Board of Studies Terms of Reference, and incorporate the remit and operation of Boards of Studies into the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy.
7. The Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy is now governed by Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC). The policy was reviewed in academic year 2025/26 as part of its periodic review. Consultation indicated that having key information for Boards of Studies split across both the Terms of Reference and the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy has resulted in overlapping remits between both policies and created confusion amongst staff who are consulting the policies. During its review of the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy, SQAC recommended that the key information regarding Board of Studies governance, remit and composition be included in the Terms of Reference, and that the operational detail be removed, this not being necessary for the policy.

8. A Draft Resolution has been formulated to incorporate the recommended amendments.
9. The majority of the proposed amendments to the Board of Studies Terms of Reference are a result of incorporating information about Board of Studies previously contained in the Programme and Course Approval and Management (PCAM) policy into the Terms of Reference, rather than as a result of changes to policy. The table below includes the list of amendments, and indicates where the amendments are not proposed policy changes.

Section of policy	Amendment
New headings corresponding to content that was previously in the Programme and Course Approval and Management policy	New headings for: - Governance and remit - Composition
Section 2	Reworded to include credit and non-credit bearing courses, and additional sentence to clarify where Boards of Studies need to seek approvals from College Committees - to note that this is not a policy change and was previously part of the Programme and Course Approval and Management (PCAM) policy
Section 3	Additional text to clarify Boards of Studies responsibilities - to note that these are not new responsibilities as they were previously part of the PCAM policy: - Ensure that proposals are supported by the necessary documentation - Ensure that proposals comply with the University's regulations and policies - Maintain oversight of programme and course handbooks
Throughout policy	Replacement of Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC, predecessor committee to the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee) with Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), as the Committee now responsible for reviewing the Board of Studies Terms of Reference
Section 6	Requirement to meet at least once per academic year - to note that this is not a policy change and was previously included in the PCAM policy Consultation with Colleges has indicated that there is no fixed timescale for reporting, so the proposed amendment is to remove "but at least annually" for the frequency of reporting

Sections 7 and 8	Amendment to clarify that a Deputy Convener must also be appointed, and additional information about membership and quorum - to note that these are not policy changes as they were previously part of the PCAM policy information on Board of Studies composition Remove statement "CSPC (or its successor Committee) will define further membership requirements and define the quorum for the operation of Boards", given that this does not happen in practice.
Section 10	Bodies established at College or University level to fulfil the functions of Boards of Studies are unusual, and may review programmes or courses that are outwith Schools (e.g. programmes owned by Colleges, some non-credit bearing courses). The proposed amendment proposes that these recommendations should be made by the Head of College (for College level committees), and approved by Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

Resource implications

10. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) has given due consideration to any potential resource implications and there are none to be raised to Senate.

Risk Management

11. SQAC has considered any risks arising from the proposed amendments to Boards of Studies.

Responding to the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals

12. N/A

Equality and Diversity

13. SQAC considered the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) as part of its review of the policy. The EqIA noted little to no impact, as there is only a small number of changes to policy.

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

14. The final Resolution will be submitted to the Court meeting on 7 December 2026.

Consultation

15. The statutory approval process for Resolutions requires consultation with Senate and the General Council prior to approval by the University Court.

Further information

Author(s)

Governance & Court Services

September 2026

Freedom of information

Open paper

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Draft Resolution of the University Court No. 7/2026

Boards of Studies

At Edinburgh, the Seventh day of December, Two thousand and twenty six.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to prescribe new regulations for Boards of Studies:

THEREFORE the University Court, on the recommendation of the Senatus Academicus and in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, with special reference to paragraph 1 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby resolves:

1. The Board of Studies Terms of Reference are hereby set out:

Governance and Remit

1. Each School (or equivalent) must have at least one Board of Studies or a body that fulfils the role of a Board of Studies.
2. Boards of Studies must review and approve new courses and programmes, and amendments to existing courses and programmes, including credit-bearing and non-credit bearing courses. New programmes and major changes to programmes (as defined in the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy) must also be approved by the relevant College Committee.
3. Board of Studies are responsible for:
 - ensuring that proposals are academically appropriate, and are supported by the necessary documentation
 - ensuring that proposals comply with the University's regulations and policies
 - assessing whether the proposals will contribute to a good student experience
 - oversight of programme and course handbooks, although the approval can be delegated to members of staff within a School
4. Boards of Studies are also responsible for keeping the teaching, learning and assessment methodologies under review, and for offering advice on the School's portfolio of programmes.
5. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) (or any successor committee to whom Senate delegates its responsibility in relation to curriculum approval) will

determine further requirements for the criteria and reference points that Boards should take account of when considering proposals.

6. Boards of Studies must meet at least once per academic year, and must report direct to the relevant College committee(s) as necessary.

Composition

7. The Convener of a Board of Studies, and the Deputy Convener, are academic members of staff appointed by the Head of School.
8. The membership of each Board includes: the Head of School and the Director of Teaching (or equivalent); all staff involved in the teaching of a degree programme which the Board is responsible for; one student member from within the School; and one external member from another Board of Studies within the University. The Head of College has the right to appoint an ex officio College member to every Board of Studies in the College. Boards of Studies can include members from other areas of the University, for example from other Schools or from relevant support services. There is no formal quorum for the Board of Studies, but the minimum composition of Board of Studies meetings needs to provide effective academic oversight of the decisions made by the Board and therefore some roles may have to be represented for the Board to be considered robust.
9. SQAC (or its successor committee) will determine the requirements for the operation of Boards of Studies, and may add additional requirements for Boards of Studies.
10. While normal practice is for Boards of Studies to operate within individual Schools, bodies may be established at College or University level to fulfil the functions of Boards of Studies, with the approval of SQAC (or its successor committee) on the recommendation of the Head of College.

2. On the date on which this Resolution comes into force Resolution 5/2019 shall be repealed.

3. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from a date to be confirmed.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary