

H/02/27/02

**Meeting of the Senatus Curriculum and Progression Committee  
to be held at 2.00pm on Thursday 20 September 2018 in Raeburn Room, Old College**

**AGENDA**

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2018** Enclosed
2. **Matters Arising**
  - a) **Electronic Business 31 August-5 September 2018: Graduate Apprenticeship in Data Science**
  - b) **Electronic Business 26-29 June: Taught Assessment Regulations 2018/19 and Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure**
  - c) **Authorised Interruption of Study Policy**
  - d) **Academic Misconduct**
  - e) **Publication of Results**
- For Discussion**
3. **Service Excellence Programme, Student Administration and Support** CSPC 18/19 1A
4. **Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre MSc Programmes – Academic Governance** CSPC 18/19 1B
5. **Data Science, Technology, and Innovation Distance Learning Programme: Structure and Governance at University Level** CSPC 18/19 1C
6. **Intercalation into Edinburgh by students from medical programmes at other institutions** CSPC 18/19 1D
7. **MEd Leadership and Learning: Request for Concession to TAR56** CSPC 18/19 1P
8. **Postgraduate Assessment and Progression** CSPC 18/19 1E
9. **Consolidation of Programme and Course Approval and Management Information** CSPC 18/19 1F
10. **Mitigating the academic impact on students of the Spring 2018 industrial action while maintaining academic standards** CSPC 18/19 1G
11. **Distance Learning at Scale Update** Oral Item H
12. **Publication of semester and vacation dates** CLOSED (I)
13. **Review of Student Support** Oral Item
14. **Assessment and Progression Tools** Oral Item
- For information and formal business**
15. **Senate Committee Input into 2019-22 Planning Round** CSPC 18/19 1J

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| <b>16. Edinburgh University Students' Association Priorities 2018-19</b>   | CSPC 18/19 1K |
| <b>17. Collaborative Provision: Memoranda of Agreement</b>   | CLOSED (L)    |
| <b>18. Annual review of effectiveness of Senate Committees</b>   | CSPC 18/19 1M |
| <b>19. Knowledge Strategy Committee Report</b>   | CSPC 18/19 1N |
| <b>20. Guidance for Committee Members 2018/19</b>  |               |
| • <b>CSPC Membership and Terms of Reference 2018/19</b><br><a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/cspcremit.pdf">https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/cspcremit.pdf</a> |               |
| • <b>Committee Members' Guidance</b><br><a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees">https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees</a>                          |               |
| • <b>Annual report of the Senate Committees (31 May 2018) outlining agreed plans for 2018/19</b>   | CSPC 18/19 1O |
| <b>21. Any other business</b>  |               |

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)  
held on Thursday 31 May 2018 at 2.00pm in the Board Room, Chancellor's Building,  
Little France**

**Present:**

Professor Graeme Reid (Vice-Convener)	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Dr Paul Norris	Associate Dean (Academic Progress), CAHSS
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration (CAHSS)
Alexandra Laidlaw	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Bobi Archer	Vice President Education Students' Association
Gin Lowdean	Advice Place Manager, Students' Association
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team
Anne-Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web

**In attendance:**

Mr Gavin Douglas	Deputy Secretary, Student Experience (item 3 only)
Ms Amy Partridge-Hicks	Timetabling / Service Excellence Programme (item 4 only)
Mr Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services
Ms Diva Mukherji	Incoming Vice President Education, Students' Association
Dr Charlotte Matheson	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

**Apologies for absence:**

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Dr Cathy Bovill	Institute for Academic Development
Ms Nicola Crowley	Head of Medical Teaching Organisation (CMVM)
Mrs Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems and Administration
Dr Juliette MacDonald	Edinburgh College of Art
Dr Antony Maciocia	Dean of Students (CSE)
Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)
Professor Susan Rhind	Assistant Principal, Assessment and Feedback
Professor Lesley McAra	Assistant Principal, Community Relations
Ms Ailsa Taylor	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

The meeting was convened by the Vice-Convener Professor Graeme Reid.

**1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 22 March 2018 and the exceptional meeting held on 13 April 2018 were **approved** as an accurate record.

## 2. Matters Arising

The Committee noted that it had conducted electronic business by correspondence between 23-27 April 2018 to approve the remit and membership of an exceptional CSPC concessions sub-group related to the industrial action.

## 3. Service Excellence Programme – Special Circumstances Update

Gavin Douglas updated the Committee on the Service Excellence Programme (SEP) strand of work relating to special circumstances (SC) and coursework extensions. He noted that, since the Committee's last meeting, SEP had convened a meeting of a range of stakeholders to explore how the proposed University-level unit could approach the role of reviewing whether SC applications are complete and valid, and determining the impact of the special circumstances, prior to the Board of Examiners determining the appropriate action. SEP plans a further discussion in late June 2018 to explore proposals in more detail, with a view to presenting proposals to College Learning and Teaching Committees in early Semester One 2018-19 and then Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee in November 2018. The Committee confirmed that no changes to SC or coursework extensions processes will be implemented for 2018-19.

Gavin Douglas also reported that CMVM is at early stages of discussion regarding a possible pilot of involving professional services staff in aspects of the consideration of SC applications.

## 4. Shared Academic Timetabling Policy and Guidance

Amy Partridge-Hicks introduced Paper 6A, which set out proposals for a revised Policy. In relation to section 3.14 (Equality and Diversity) she noted that the Timetabling and Examination Services team have an online form that allows students to request alternate tutorial allocations to accommodate religious observation (or other considerations) and that the team accommodates requests where possible.

The Committee **approved** the revised Policy subject to the following revisions:

- Clarifying that the rule that rooms may not be booked across 11 am and 4pm except for bookings of at least 3 hours applies only to general teaching space, rather than specialised space such as studios and laboratories;
- Clarifying that a small proportion of teaching activities are scheduled to take place in staff offices, and that these could not be incorporated in timetable information;
- Clarifying that the statement in 3.11 (not 3.2) is the correct approach to room conflict resolution;
- Reformatting the document in the standard Senate Committees' Policy template, incorporating a succinct version of the preamble (Sections 1 and 2).

In addition to approving the Policy, the Committee **agreed** that Dr Jeremy Crang would liaise with Space Strategy Group to discuss appropriate arrangements to enable student parents to access suitable space for child feeding.

<b>Action:</b> Dr Jeremy Crang to liaise with Space Strategy Group to discuss appropriate arrangements to enable student parents to access suitable space for child feeding. Dr
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Jeremy Crang to also bring this point to the attention of the thematic review of support for mature students and student parents and carers.

**Action:** Amy Partridge-Hicks to liaise with Academic Services to agree a final version of the Policy for launch with effect from 2018-19.

## 5. Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression Task Group Report

Dr Adam Bunni introduced Paper 6B. The Committee discussed all aspects of the paper in considerable detail, given the significance of some of the proposals.

### ***Masters programme without a dissertation / research project***

The Committee **approved** the recommendation that the University should allow the creation of Master's degrees without compulsory substantial dissertation/research project elements, where there is a strong academic rationale to do so, but that the Models for Degree Types policy will not change, and that CSPC will approve requests for divergence from it on a case-by-case basis. In general, the Committee's view was that the normal pattern would be for Masters programme to continue to include a dissertation / project element, but that it is likely to become more common for a minority of programmes (eg online, professionally-focussed and modular Masters models) to have academic rationales for not including this element, and that the Committee should be sympathetic to cases where there is a strong academic rationale. It did however emphasise that cases made solely on the basis of logistical or resourcing rationales would not be supported.

The Committee had reservations regarding the idea that Masters programmes which do not contain a dissertation or research project element should carry a different Master's degree title to those currently utilised in the University. It sought further benchmarking information regarding the degree titles that other institutions are using, and the types of programmes involved.

### ***Resubmission of Masters dissertations/research projects***

The Committee **approved** the recommendation that Boards of Examiners should offer Masters students one opportunity to submit a revised version of the dissertation or research project, on the basis of the eligibility rules set out in the paper, subject to the following points:

- There would be no borderline arrangements in relation to the proposed threshold of 45%;
- The Regulation / guidance would clarify the Tier 4 monitoring arrangements that Schools would need to operate while students are resubmitting their dissertation (it would be necessary to define a small number of contact points);
- The student's transcript will record the mark achieved following resubmission (but capped at 50%), unless it is possible to record a Pass (in which case, this option will be used instead);
- The students will be recorded on EUCLID as 'Interrupted: assumed completed and result assumed pending', although planned work involving the Senate Researcher Experience Committee and Student Systems in relation to doctoral students may lead to an alternate way of recording them;

- The new arrangements would take effect for students submitting dissertations in 2018-19 (rather than those who are submitting their dissertations in summer 2018 and whose Boards of Examiners are due to issue results for them during Semester One 2018-19);
- Academic Services would revise the proposed regulations to address these points.

In approving the recommendation, the Committee noted that by setting the threshold at 45%, it was very likely that students eligible for resubmission would be able to achieve a Masters level pass mark on the basis of minor revisions with no need for additional research.

### ***The role of the dissertation/research project supervisor***

The Committee **approved** the recommendation that text be added to the Programme and Course Handbooks Policy providing information regarding expected content for inclusion regarding supervision of PGT Master's dissertations and research projects, subject to the following amendments to the draft text:

- "Feedback you receive from your supervisor is intended as guidance, and must not be interpreted as an indication that your work will receive a particular final mark / outcome";
- "You may be allocated a supervisor whose area of expertise is not a precise match for your chosen area of research, but who has the required expertise to supervise a dissertation/research project ~~in this area.~~"
- Add an additional bullet point asking Schools to provide information regarding the expected timescales for the main interactions between the student and supervisor (for example, when the supervision starts and finishes).

### ***Award of Merit and Distinction where students have failed courses***

The Committee approved the recommendation that the University should allow students to qualify for the award of Master's with Merit or Distinction in spite of receiving fail marks in up to 40 credits worth of courses, provided they meet any other criteria for the award of Merit or Distinction as outlined in programme or course handbooks. It confirmed that these new arrangements would take effect for all students on programme in 2018-19 (ie not just those commencing their programme in 2018-19), but not for students whose final programme Boards of Examiners meet in Semester One of 2018-19.

### ***Progression and Pass Marks***

The Committee discussed the recommendations and the consultation responses in depth. It was very supportive of removing the elevated hurdle of 50% for Master's awards (meaning awarding Master's degrees passed on the award of credit as a result of the attainment of a pass mark of 40%), and of removing the existing progression hurdle following the taught component of most PGT programmes, allowing students to undertake a dissertation if they wished. It was particularly supportive of removing the latter arrangement. However, the Committee recognised that consultation responses were divided on the proposals, with roughly half of Schools not supporting the removal of the progression hurdle. The Committee also recognised that it would be necessary to undertake careful systems and regulatory analysis prior to implementation, for example regarding the consequential implications for the regulations (and systems) of removing the progression hurdle without also removing the elevated hurdle. It therefore concluded that it would not introduce any of these changes for

2018-19. It did however **agree** to work towards implementing both aspects of the recommendations for 2019-20 – and that with this in mind it would undertake further consultation activities and technical analysis during 2018-19 with a view to making a final decision during 2018-19.

**Action:** Academic Services to undertake further benchmarking regarding the use of alternate Masters titles.

**Action:** Academic Services to clarify with Student Systems whether it would be possible to record a resubmission of a dissertation / project as Pass (when the course had been set up on the basis of a 101 point scale).

**Action:** Academic Services to revise the relevant Taught Assessment Regulations for 2018-19 to reflect the agreed changes regarding resubmission of dissertations and the award of Merit and Distinction. Academic Services would also make some further clarifications to the draft regulations (offering the Committee a chance to comment by correspondence if the revisions are material).

**Action:** Academic Services to add the relevant text to the Programme and Course Handbooks Policy.

**Action:** Academic Services to scope out the work required to support the planned progression and pass marks work (including considering if a task group would be required).

## 6. Authorised Interruption of Studies Task Group Report

Dr Paul Norris introduced Paper 6C, which set out proposals for a new Policy. The Committee **approved** the Policy subject to the following revisions:

- In 4.2, in both sentences it should state ‘College or School’;
- The paragraph in section 7 should be numbered;
- In section 7, explain that when considering applications, the College / School should take a permissive approach to considering applications, and therefore support them if the student has provided a good reason for the interruption unless doing so would not be compatible with the student achieving a successful outcome to their studies (and as long as the interruption is within the maximum periods for interruptions of studies set out in section 2.3);
- In 8.1 delete “current”;
- Clarify that the provisions in 9.3 are only likely to be relevant to students who have interrupted their studies for medical reasons that have led them to not be fit to study;
- Add a statement that, in the event that the School or College rejects an application for Authorised Interruption of Studies, the student would be able to ask the School or College to reconsider. Schools / Colleges would be required to publicise their processes for handling appeals.

The Committee also **agreed** to delete the PGR authorised interruption or extension of study document.

In relation to 9.3 of the draft Policy, the Colleges **agreed** to liaise with Legal Services during the summer to clarify the circumstances in which there may be a legal reason for the University to need to ask students to provide evidence of their ability to return to study.

**Action:** Academic Services to finalise the new Policy for launch for 2018-19, taking account of the Committee's comments. Academic Services will also make some further clarifications to the draft Policy (offering the Committee a chance to comment by correspondence if the revisions are material).

**Action:** Academic Services to create a template form for Authorised Interruption of Studies applications.

## 7. Timing of Final Assessment for Semester 1 Courses

The Committee discussed Paper 6D. It felt that, in general, where Schools are holding final assessments for S1 courses in the S2 examination diet, they are doing so for carefully considered reasons. The Committee **agreed** to take no further action.

## 8. Academic Misconduct- Update Paper and Revised Procedures

The Committee discussed Paper 6E, which contained a proposed plan for future University-level activities in relation to academic misconduct, and proposed revisions to the procedures for investigating academic misconduct.

The Committee **endorsed** the plan, subject to amending the final row (it should read 'College Administrators' rather than 'College DOPs'). The Students Association reported that they were aware that some students have been paying plagiarism checking companies to check their essays prior to submission to the University, and that some of these companies subsequently sell their essays to other students (thereby leaving students at risk of being accused of plagiarism). Anne-Marie Scott **agreed** to explore whether it would be possible to allow students to get direct access to Turnitin, so that they would have no reason to use other companies. If this were possible, the Committee would then discuss the desirability of making this service available to students.

The Committee discussed the revisions to the procedures (which were largely intended to re-present existing procedures, with a view to a more fundamental review in 2018-19). The Committee **approved** the Policy subject to the following points:

- Academic Services planned to undertake some further redrafting of the document, with a view to improving the presentation and clarity;
- Delete the unnumbered paragraph after 3.1 ("The SAMO may wish to check...");
- In 3.2, refer also to direct entry students into UG years three or four;
- In 6.1 (and 4.8) clarify the arrangements for informing the student and Personal Tutor of the decision (the Committee agreed that it was important to inform the student and Personal Tutor, but doubted that Conveners of Boards of Examiners are currently responsible for doing this, or that they should be in the future);

- In section 13.1 refer to the Advice Place as a source of independent advice to students.

**Action:** Anne-Marie Scott to explore whether it would be possible to allow students to get direct access to Turnitin.

**Action:** Academic Services to finalise the new Policy for launch for 2018-19, taking account of the Committee's comments, and also making some further clarifications to the draft Policy. Academic Services will consult the College Academic Misconduct Officers and Advice Place on the final version of the Policy, and, if the revisions involve significant material changes, it will also consult the Committee by correspondence.

## 9. Taught Assessment Regulations 2018/19

The Committee discussed the proposals set out in Paper 6F. It **agreed** the revisions to the Regulations subject to the following point:

- Regulation 28.4 should be amended to indicate that professional services staff could also approve requests for extensions (as has been allowed during the recent industrial action), for example by adding "...or equivalent member of academic or professional services staff assigned this responsibility by the School". The Committee noted that feedback suggested that some Schools may already be operating on this basis in practice.

**Action:** Academic Services to revise the Regulations for launch for 2018-19, taking account of the Committee's comments. Academic Services will also make some further clarifications to the Regulations (offering the Committee a chance to comment by correspondence if the revisions are material).

**Action:** Academic Services will consult the Conflict of Interest Policy and propose to the Committee how students can ensure that a School is taking appropriate action to ensure that no member of staff with a conflict of interests in relation to a student is involved in any assessment or examination related to that student.

## 10. Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2018/19

The Committee discussed the proposals set out in Paper 6G. It **agreed** the revisions to the Regulations.

**Action:** Academic Services to revise the Regulations for launch for 2018-19, taking account of the Committee's comments. Academic Services will also make some further clarifications to the Regulations (offering the Committee a chance to comment by correspondence if the revisions are material).

## 11. College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences – Assessment Requirements for ANTHUSIA Joint PhD candidates

The Committee noted Paper 6H.

## 12. Publication of results for Semester 1 Postgraduate Taught Courses

The Committee discussed Paper 6I. It **agreed** that the publication date for results of Semester One courses whose assessment was complete during or immediately following S1 should be 22 February 2019. It emphasised that when communicating this decision to Schools, and when restating the broader position that all UG and PGT courses whose

assessment was complete during or immediately following S1 should be confirmed by a Board of Examiners early in S2 and published in January or February, the rationale for these arrangements should be highlighted.

The Committee recognised that the new date of 22 February would be after the 31 January deadline for students to withdraw from their programmes if they are to be entitled to a partial refund of fees, and emphasised that students who choose to withdraw as a direct result of academic failure in relation to S1 course results that are not communicated to them until after 31 January should be allowed a fee refund (as long as they take swift action once they have their results). Academic Services noted that it is not possible to make a definitive commitment to this without changing the Tuition Fee Policy, but **agreed** to seek formal confirmation from the Fees team that they would use their discretion in relation to students in this situation.

**Action:** Academic Services to liaise with Student Systems to amend the relevant key date and to communicate to Schools the position regarding 2019-20

**Action:** Academic Services to seek confirmation from the Fees team regarding the position on students who wish to withdraw after 31 January.

### 13. Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure

The Committee discussed Paper 6J. While supportive of changes within the document, it considered that further work was required. For example, it commented that:

- The arrangements in Section A did not reflect current arrangements in the Colleges;
- Para 10 should refer solely to those students recommended for exclusion rather than all students who have not met the criteria for progression;
- Para 12 should clarify that the provision only applies where the student does not attend the interview “without good reason”;
- Sections 21 and 22 should clarify that Schools are responsible for setting out requirements for attendance for their programmes and courses;

The Committee **agreed** that Academic Services would liaise with Colleges and the Students Association to undertake a further stage of revision, with a view to seeking approval for the revised Procedure before the start of session 2018-19 (noting that it is important to have the revised Procedure in place by then, given that the Code of Practice for Researchers and Supervisors will no longer have relevant provisions regarding exclusion for unsatisfactory progress for PGR students).

**Action:** Academic Services to liaise with Colleges and the Students’ Association to undertake a further stage of revision, with a view to seeking approval from the Committee by correspondence.

### 14. Programme and Course Handbook Policy – Update

The Committee **agreed** the proposed changes to the policy subject to the following points:

- On p2, Delete the first clause of the first sentence (“When they are available to prospective (or current) students”;

- The Students' Association has suggestions for revisions to the text on student well-being.

<b>Action:</b> Academic Services to liaise with the Students' Association, and the Director of Student Well-being to finalise the Policy.
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## 15. Course Organiser: Outline of Role – Update

The Committee **approved** the updated guidance subject to adding a statement in the 'General Course Management' section that Course Organisers are responsible for ensuring that their students are notified regarding which of their lectures will be recorded or not in line with the Lecture Recording Policy.

## 16. Annual Review of Effectiveness of Senate Committees

The Committee noted Paper 6M.

## 17. Review of the Code of Student Conduct

The Committee approved the arrangements for the review set out in Paper 6N. It noted that, when considering training and support for conduct investigators, Academic Services should also consider training and support for Student Discipline Officers, Discipline Committee members, and note-takers.

## 18. Student Appeal Committee and Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee 2018/19

The Committee **approved** the membership of the Committees, and thanked Prof Reid for his long period of service as a member of the Appeal Committee.

## 19. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Committee **approved** Academic Services' plan to add a paragraph to each relevant policy to highlight the importance of staff handling personal data with due regard to confidentiality and security, and empowered Academic Services to make the relevant changes without reference to the Committee. Academic Services also **agreed** to refer to the Complaints Investigation Manager the importance of applying the same principles to the procedures for complaint investigations.

<b>Action:</b> Academic Services to add a paragraph to each relevant policy.
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<b>Action:</b> Academic Services to refer the issue to the Complaints Investigation Manager.
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## 20. Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

The Committee noted Paper 6P.

## 21. CSPC Meeting Dates 2018/19

The Committee noted Paper 6Q.

## 22. Any Other Business

Tom Ward, Academic Services 1 June 2018

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **Service Excellence, Student Administration & Support Update**

### **Executive Summary**

Dated 07 September 2018, this paper provides a brief update of the work being undertaken by the Student Administration & Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme, as part of a commitment to ensure that the Senate Committees are appraised of progress across each of these areas.

### **How does this align with the University/Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The Service Excellence Programme has been identified as a strategic priority.

### **Action requested**

To note (no requested action at this stage).

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Future Service Excellence Programme recommendations will be communicated by the Board through existing committee structures. Future SA&S proposals will be routed through Researcher Experience Committee, Learning & Teaching Committee, Quality Assurance Committee or Curriculum & Student Progression Committee as necessary.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**  
N/A at this stage.
- 2. Risk assessment**  
SA&S aren't identifying risks for consideration at this stage.
- 3. Equality and Diversity**  
N/A at this stage.
- 4. Freedom of information**  
Open

### **Key words**

Service Excellence Programme / Student Administration & Support

### **Originator of the paper**

Chris MacLeod  
Student Administration & Support Programme Lead  
07 September 2017

## **SEP 2018: UPDATE ON SERVICE EXCELLENCE (STUDENT ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT)**

The Student Administration & Support (SA&S) Programme Board last met on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018 with a revised membership; 2 Heads of Schools (Professors Argyle and Kelly) and one former Head (Professor Foster) have joined the Board reflecting a desire for strengthened academic representation. The Board received the following updates:

- The recruitment of the following new team members:
  - Brian Butler (Programme Manager)
  - Tejesh Mistry (Implementation Lead)
  - Cat Cairns (Design Lead)
  - Chris MacLeod (Programme Lead)
- Presentation of a revised programme plan designed to be ambitious in its focus on pace and the realisation of benefits, while addressing concerns about deliverability and workload.
- Presentation of a “conceptual Target Operating Model” for Student Administration and Support as a whole. This is a model that identifies the structures, people, systems and processes that are required to deliver student administration and support activities at UoE in the future, with the aim of:
  - Simplifying access to support for students
  - Reducing the administrative burden on academic colleagues
  - Strengthening the professional development and career possibilities for professional services staff in Schools, Colleges and other areas whilst also reducing the volume of repetitive or redundant work carried out these colleagues due to poor systems, lack of data etc
  - Achieving greater efficiencies for the University overall.
- Presentation on the approach to be deployed in taking the “conceptual Target Operating Model” to the next stage
- Presentation on the status of projects currently in implementation (further information below)

The Board endorsed the following proposals:

- The recruitment of 1 x Grade 8 Design Lead and 3 x Grade 7 Service Excellence Partners – these are posts to be filled on a secondment basis by appropriate professional services staff from within the University, where possible.

Detailed Design - The programme is scheduled to run a range of workshops with key stakeholders during October, November and December in support of its detailed design phase. The focus of these workshops will be on: Programme and Course Information Management (PCIM), Academic Lifecycle, Post Graduate Research (PGR), Board of Examiners, Exam Operations, Course Selection and Student Finance.

Work is currently underway to identify subject matter experts within the University to assist the design team on PGR.

Implementation – the following projects are currently in implementation phase:

- Exam Timetabling - was launched as a new service in July 2018 introducing exam information directly in Office 365 calendars across 5,000 re-sit exams benefitting 2,500 students. The second phase of the project is planned to roll-out across all exams from November. Further communications will support the wider launch in December 2018.
- Student Immigration Service – the new single service (bringing together teams currently split between Edinburgh Global and Student Administration) is expected to launch in November 2018 with the staff team having come together into the new office space by the end of October. Activities are being delivered to ensure that the service can launch in the best possible position including: website development, team building, introducing the UniDesk enquiry management system, review of existing procedures, staff recruitment and a communications plan.
- Comprehensive Student Timetabling – bringing together the bulk of timetabling activity in the Timetabling Unit to deliver comprehensive student timetables - is on track for launch in January 2019 with Trade Union consultation currently being carried out to review any impact on staff. Plans have been developed to support Schools and Deaneries in the coming months to implement local administration and coordination which is essential for the new Timetabling model to function effectively. Ongoing work is required to resolve the issue of NHS staff access to the new room booking system (in CMVM)
- Work and Study Away (WSA) - the new service taking on responsibility for administration of most working and studying away opportunities across the University (not just study abroad) is scheduled to be launched in March/April 2019. The staff impact assessment has been completed, and shows that significantly more staff are involved in administration of WSA than was previously thought. The HR process has been delayed to allow for the business case to be rebased. There are ongoing discussions about the continued role of academic staff in approving learning agreements. Procurement of the new WSA system has progressed to the scoring phase for prospective vendors.

Further information is available on the SA&S wiki: [SA&S Wiki](#)

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre MSc Programmes – Academic Governance**

### **Executive Summary**

Given that the arrangements for the academic management and governance of EPCC's academic programmes are non-standard, and that some aspects of these arrangements are changing due to the transfer of oversight responsibilities from Physics and Astronomy to Informatics, the Committee is being invited to comment prior to the final approval by the Head of the School of Informatics, Director of EPCC, and the Head of the College of Science and Engineering.

This paper provides an overview of the governance arrangements of the EPCC MSc programmes (MSc in High Performance Computing and MSc in High Performance Computing with Data Science) and three standalone Level 11 courses offered by EPCC as part of the Data Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) online MSc programme. The governance of these programmes is migrating from the School of Physics and Astronomy to the School of Informatics for academic year 2018/19. The paper also highlights staff roles and the arrangements surrounding these and the contracts under which staff who teach on the MSc are employed.

Few fundamental changes are planned to the existing model used since academic year 2016/17, when EPCC demerged from the School of Physics and Astronomy and became a Centre of Excellence within the College of Science and Engineering, beyond the move of governance to the School of Informatics and some process improvements. The transfer of programme codes was approved by College of Science and Engineering Curriculum Approval Board on 28 March 2018 and took place in August 2018. The MSc programmes in HPC and HPC with Data Science were moved to the School of Informatics prospectus with the disclaimer that this was subject to approval for the 2018/19 admissions cycle.

The fundamental rationales for this transfer are threefold: first, that the alignment of parallel and high performance computing with Physics instead of Computer Science was historical and no longer reflected the current state of the field, making academic governance under the School of Informatics the more logical choice given the current and anticipated future trajectories of the subject areas; secondly; the creation, in academic year 2014/15, of the MSc in High Performance Computing (HPC) with Data Science further increased the programmes' alignment with the School of Informatics; thirdly, EPCC's move to the University's Central Area (into the Bayes Centre) made support from the School of Informatics and access to School of Informatics resources much easier to access than those of School of Physics and Astronomy.

**How does this align with the University/Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Aligns with the strategic objective of Leadership in Learning and the current Development Themes of Digital Transformation and Data. The MSc programmes in question are also well aligned to the Development Theme of Partnerships with Industry as multiple dissertation projects every year are undertaken with industrial partners: from SMEs to multinationals.

### **Action requested**

For review and comment.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Implementation will be carried out by the EPCC MSc Programme Team (led by MSc Management Committee) and School of Informatics Board of Studies (led by Director of Teaching), with assistance from College of Science and Engineering Academic Affairs as required. Communication to colleagues within required units will be carried out by the implementation teams noted above. Communication to students and applicants (and other units dealing with such areas: e.g. Student Recruitment and Admissions, College of Science and Engineering Recruitment and Admissions) will be undertaken by the EPCC MSc Programmes Officer, in collaboration with the Informatics Marketing Team.

The transfer of these programmes to the governance of the School of Informatics was approved by College of Science and Engineering Curriculum Approval Board on 28 March 2018 thus much of the broader implementation in relation to that is already underway or has already been completed and has been communicated to applicants/entrants for 2018/19.

### **Resource/Risk/Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

EPCC has employed an MSc Programmes Officer (1.0 FTE) since March 2017 to support the programmes and students directly in addition to its preexisting resourcing of teaching staff (including Course Organisers), Personal Tutors, and the Programme Director. The possibility of an additional member of the centre admin team is currently under consideration, whose role may in part support and act as a back-up to the MSc Programmes Officer.

There will be minor additional demands on the time of existing staff in School of Informatics, however every effort has been taken to avoid duplication (e.g. having the EPCC MSc Programmes sit within School of Informatics MSc Board of Examiners). There may also be minor resourcing implications for Student Systems and College Planning Team on occasion to support bespoke reporting.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The arrangements are intended to ensure that the MSc programmes and level 11 courses are subject to the same rigorous requirements, governance, oversight, and quality assurance as all others within the University, hence having their governance sit under an existing School, despite the programme and course teams sitting in a distinct unit. It is expected that this will enable the College of Science and Engineering to have appropriate arrangements in place to manage risks associated with academic standards and the student experience.

### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The arrangements are unlikely to have an equality and diversity implications.

### **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is open.

#### **Originator of the paper**

Ben Morse, MSc Programmes Officer, EPCC

#### **Contributors to paper**

Mark Parsons, Director, EPCC

Neil Heatley, Head of Informatics Student Services, School of Informatics

Stuart Anderson, Director of Teaching, School of Informatics

31 August 2018

## **EPCC MSc Programmes – Academic Governance**

### **Background and status of EPCC**

The EPCC suite of programmes currently includes two on-campus MSc programmes (High Performance Computing and High Performance Computing with Data Science). Both programmes are 1 year full-time programmes and come with 2 and 3 year part-time options; MSc in High Performance Computing (HPC) is also available for direct admission as a PGDip. These programmes are characterised by a practical focus and are led by EPCC staff who are experienced practitioners in the fields of High Performance Computing and Data Science. The programmes have long-standing links to industry in terms of dissertation projects and graduates are highly sought by both industry and academia.

The core and a selection of optional courses on the programmes (totalling 16 courses, including one dissertation course for each programme) are taught by EPCC staff. The DPT for both programmes offers some named further optional courses taught by the School of Informatics as well as the option for a 10-credit outside course from elsewhere in the College.

EPCC also contributes three courses (at present), a Personal Tutor, and the Programme Director to the Data Science, Technology and Innovation Programme (DSTI). The three courses are also treated as EPCC courses and subject to the same arrangements as below, without being part of the EPCC MSc programmes.

Since becoming a Centre of Excellence within the College of Science and Engineering, EPCC has representation on most College committees, including those in relation to learning and teaching, excepting, at present, CQAC, ST Forum, and CLTC. In all practical aspects beyond governance of the MSc programmes it is treated as a School-like unit within the College. Its Director is Professor Mark Parsons who sits on College Strategy & Management Committee with the other Heads of School.

### **Overall Management and Oversight of EPCC Academic Programmes**

All EPCC programmes and courses are listed under Informatics in the DRPS and postgraduate prospectus to reflect academic oversight arrangements, while care is taken to note that the core teaching is undertaken by EPCC staff.

EPCC staff oversee the day-to-day management and delivery of the programmes. For all complex enquiries or anything above programme level the Programme team (Programmes Director, MSc Programmes Officer, Personal Tutors, Course Organisers) refer to the appropriate process or representative from School of Informatics: Director of Teaching, Head of Student Services/Head of ITO, Senior Tutor, Head of School, Board of Studies.

EPCC staff will report to School of Informatics processes as regards MSc learning and teaching activity, via the EPCC MSc Management Committee and Informatics Board of Studies, however their line management as staff rests within EPCC as a separate unit of the College.

Any disagreements that take place will ultimately be referred to the Informatics Head of School and Director of EPCC. Should a solution not be reached at this level it will be referred to the College of Science and Engineering for mediation as with a joint-degree programme.

### **Administration, Teaching and Student Support**

All EPCC programme and course level administrative and student support (except admissions) is provided by the Programme Team, currently: MSc Programmes Officer (1.0 FTE), Programmes Director, Personal Tutors, Course Organisers. The Programme Team reports to and is under the oversight of the Director of EPCC as chair of the MSc Management Committee.

The EPCC MSc programmes are led by the EPCC MSc Programmes Director. Day to day operations are overseen by the EPCC MSc Management Committee which is chaired by the Director of EPCC. Director of Teaching Responsibilities rest with the School of Informatics Director of Teaching. Head of School responsibilities (for EPCC MSc Programmes only) rest with Head of School of Informatics. Senior Tutor responsibilities rest with the School of Informatics Senior Tutor. Special Circumstances cases are

considered through the School of Informatics Special Circumstances Committee. The EPCC Head of School equivalent for all other matters is the Director of EPCC.

EPCC staff will represent the programmes at School of Informatics Boards and Committees including Level 11 Board of Examiners, Board of Studies, Special Circumstances Committee. Members of EPCC staff, who are experienced practitioners in the fields of High Performance Computing and Data Science, act as course organisers and teaching staff for all EPCC-taught courses.

EPCC will appoint their own student demonstrators to assist with EPCC course practical class teaching (commonly PhD students with an EPCC connection, often alumni of the programmes or those in the Pervasive Parallelism CDT to which EPCC contributes supervision). Dedicated student study space will be provided within EPCC's space at the Bayes Centre for all EPCC students.

For a full breakdown of the fulfilment of roles, committees, and current named contacts please refer to Appendix A.

### **Staff status**

When EPCC was established its staff were employed on Academic Related contracts. When this category was abolished staff were moved en masse to Professional Services contracts. However, the Director of EPCC has always been an Academic member of staff. The vast majority of EPCC staff are classified as research active. Many are Principal Investigators on research grants in their own right. Many also regularly publish. A clear case has been made on many occasions that these staff are "Hybrid Staff" but HR has been unwilling to accept such a category of staff in the University. As such the REF eligibility of a number of staff is still not settled. The Director of EPCC is entirely satisfied that EPCC staff should lead on teaching supervision and marking. This is an HR issue not a skills issue. As the above arrangements demonstrate, care has been taken to ensure that EPCC's involvement in learning and teaching activities is properly academically governed.



## EPCC MSc Programmes – Academic Governance

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### Appendix A

#### Summary of roles:

Role (as relates to MSc programmes in HPC/HPC with Data Science)	Filled by role	Current Named Contact	Reports to
Head of School (HoS)	School of Informatics (INF) HoS	Jane Hillston	1. Head of College of Science & Engineering (CSE)
Chair of EPCC MSc Management Committee	Director of EPCC	Mark Parsons	1. Head of College of Science & Engineering (CSE)
(EPCC) Director of Professional Services	EPCC Director of Operations	Maureen Simpson	1. Director of EPCC 2. College of Science & Engineering (CSE) Registrar
Director of Teaching (DoT)	INF DoT	Stuart Anderson	1. INF HoS 2. CSE Dean of Learning and Teaching
Director of Quality (DoQ)	INF DoQ	Ian Stark	1. INF HoS 2. CSE Dean, Quality Assurance
School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO)	INF SAMO	Kyriakos Kalorkoti	1. INF HoS 2. CSE College Academic Misconduct Officer
Senior Tutor (ST)	INF ST	Paul Jackson	1. INF HoS 2. CSE Dean of Students
Convenor of Board of Examiners	INF Level 11 BoE Convenor	Michael Mistry	1. INF HoS
Regulations Expert(s) (RE)	INF RE(s)	(INF to provide named contacts – role transferring)	1. INF HoS
Convenor of Special Circumstances Committee	INF Convenor of Special Circumstances Committee	(INF to provide named contact – role transferring)	1. INF HoS
External Examiner	External Examiner for EPCC Courses and Programmes	Matt Probert (awaiting approval)	1. INF MSc BoE
Year Coordinator (INF-specific role)	EPCC MSc Programmes Director  Back-up arrangements: MSc Management Committee.	David Henty	1. INF DoT 2. EPCC MSc Management Committee 3. INF MSc Year Coordinator***
Programme Director	EPCC MSc Programmes Director	David Henty	1. INF DoT 2. EPCC MSc Management Committee 3. INF MSc Year Coordinator***
Personal Tutor	EPCC Personal Tutors	1. Mark Bull 2. Jane Kennedy	1. INF ST



## EPCC MSc Programmes – Academic Governance

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	Back-up arrangements: other Personal Tutors, Student Support Officer.	3. Weronika Filinger 4. Arno Proeme 5. Darren White	2. EPCC MSc Programmes Director
Course Organiser	EPCC Course Organisers  Back-up arrangements: course-specific, but generally speaking each course has an obvious deputy course organiser who will be supported by senior colleagues. For those which do not the Programme Director or another course organiser will step in.	1. David Henty (x3) 2. Mark Bull 3. Adam Carter (x2) 4. Michael Jackson 5. Dan Holmes 6. Manos Farsarakis 7. Rupert Nash 8. Chris Johnson 9. Elena Breitmoser (x2) 10. Mark Tucker 11. Nick Brown 12. Adrian Jackson 13. Alistair Grant 14. Ioanna Lampaki	1. EPCC MSc Programmes Director 2. INF DoT
Programme Administrator	EPCC MSc Programmes Officer  Back-up arrangements: EPCC admin team led by Director of Operations with potential for agency assistance in case of specific expected short-term or unexpected longer-term absence. For specialist areas/complex issues some assistance/consultancy may be required from ITO/Informatics Student Services in the case of unexpected absence. A further role within the Centre Admin team is under consideration which would provide direct back-up arrangements and have day-to-day involvement as a member of the programme team.	Ben Morse	1. EPCC MSc Programmes Director 2. EPCC Director of Operations 3. INF Head of ITO / INF Head of Student Services***
(EPCC) Student Support Coordinators	EPCC Lead Personal Tutor EPCC MSc Programmes Officer	Mark Bull  Ben Morse	1. EPCC MSc Management Committee 2. EPCC MSc Programmes Director 3. INF ST 4. INF Head of Student Services***
Student Support Officer	EPCC MSc Programmes Officer	Ben Morse	1. EPCC MSc Programmes Director 2. EPCC Director of Operations
Course Secretary	EPCC MSc Programmes Officer	Ben Morse	1. EPCC MSc Programmes Director 2. EPCC Director of Operations
EPCC Complaints Area Contact	EPCC MSc Programmes Officer	Ben Morse	1. EPCC Director of Operations 2. Director of EPCC



## EPCC MSc Programmes – Academic Governance

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			3. (For any complaint relating to the MSc programmes): INF DoT, INF HoS.
Data Protection Champion	EPCC Data Protection Champions	1. Mario Antonioletti 2. Anne Whiting 3. William Kerr 4. Ben Morse (link to ITO Data protection practices for MSc programmes)	1. EPCC Director of Operations 2. Director of EPCC 3. (For MSc programmes) INF Teaching Organisation/Head of Student Services***

\*\*\* denotes a non-direct report where contact is made to ensure process consistency and continuity and for consultancy on complex issues.

### Summary of Committees

Committee	Filled by	(EPCC) Members/Representatives	Reports to
Board of Studies (BoS)	INF BoS	1. EPCC MSc Programmes Director (or representative) 2. EPCC Course Organisers (as required) 3. EPCC MSc Programmes Officer (as required)	1. INF HoS
Board of Examiners (BoE)	INF Level 11 BoE	1. EPCC MSc Programmes Director 2. EPCC Course Organisers 3. EPCC MSc Programmes Officer (attending only, minuting as required)	1. INF HoS
Special Circumstances Committee (SCC)	INF SCC	1. EPCC Lead Personal Tutor / Student Support Team Representative 2. EPCC Personal Tutors (as required)	1. INF BoE 2. INF HoS
Programme Committee	EPCC MSc Management Committee	1. Director of EPCC (chair) 2. EPCC MSc Programmes Director (deputy chair) 3. EPCC Technical Director 4. EPCC Data Science Subject Experts	1. INF BoS
Student Support Team	EPCC Student Support Team	1. EPCC MSc Programmes Officer 2. EPCC Personal Tutors 3. EPCC Study Skills Coordinator	1. EPCC MSc Management Committee 2. INF MSc SCC
Research Ethics Committee	EPCC Research and Ethics Committee	1. Neil Chue Hong (chair) 2. William Kerr 3. Ben Morse 4. Adrian Jackson 5. Lorna Smith 6. Manos Farsarakis	1. Director of EPCC 2. (For anything relating to MSc: INF HoS)



## EPCC MSc Programmes – Academic Governance

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### Appendix A

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#### Summary of Processes

Process	Responsibility	Oversight	Notes
Personal Tutoring Statement	EPCC Student Support Coordinators INF Head of Student Services	1. EPCC MSc Programmes Director 2. INF ST	The Personal Tutoring Statement of the School of Informatics is used, however with minor alterations for specific roles/e-mail addresses. Such amendments will be included in as an appendix to the Informatics Personal Tutoring Statement.
Quality Assurance Reporting*  *EPCC will produce QA reports for inclusion as an appendix to Informatics returns to provide a clear highlighting of all issues not common to EPCC and Informatics	EPCC MSc Management Committee EPCC MSc Programmes Director EPCC MSc Programmes Officer INF DoQ INF Head of Student Services	1. INF HoS 2. CSE Dean, Quality Assurance 3. Academic Services	After discussion with Academic Services staff during May 2018, it is considered advisable that for at least the first cycle EPCC QA returns are prepared in such a way as can be easily distinguished from the rest of Informatics so that any issues specific to EPCC can be more easily identified and acted upon, thus the usage of an appendix appeared best at least initially.
Communication to students/applicants regarding arrangements	1. EPCC MSc Programmes Officer, who will liaise with and inform, as necessary:  2. INF Marketing team 3. CSE Recruitment and Admissions 4. Student Recruitment and Admissions	1. EPCC MSc Programmes Director 2. INF Head of Student Services 3. CSE Head of Recruitment and Admissions 4. Communications and Marketing	Admissions, recruitment and marketing information for the MSc programmes will make it clear that the programmes are run and taught by EPCC and are highly practical in nature. It will also be made clear that the programmes fall under the academic governance of the School of Informatics.  Course information will make it clear that courses are taught by EPCC members of staff rather than Informatics and are practical in nature.  Learn courses will make use of a distinct EPCC style and EPCC-specific guidance in addition to overarching School of Informatics information. EPCC MSc students will have access to an additional Learn course to act as a programmes information hub and will receive separate induction



# EPCC MSc Programmes – Academic Governance

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## Appendix A

			procedures to make arrangements clear.
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### Current Challenges Known:

- Student reporting at School level, unless allowing filtering for programmes means students on EPCC programmes affect School of Informatics reporting
  - Possible solution: Student Systems find a way to separately flag EPCC students
  - Possible solution: Reports run at programme level rather than School level
  - Current workaround: filter reports after run, where programme data/personal tutor information available.
  
- EPCC courses not obviously different to other Informatics courses
  - Possible (Additional) solution: creation of new Subject Area within Informatics Course Catalogue for EPCC courses and course codes to sit with a degree of separation.
  - Current workaround: clear guidance on course catalogue entries and information during induction events

### OUT OF SCOPE

EPCC and Informatics have existing arrangements in place for the supervision of PhD students on Informatics Graduate School Programmes by EPCC staff. Such arrangements are not affected by this. The only change potentially foreseen to these arrangements in the short-medium term would be the creation of a new Programme Code so that students being primarily supervised within EPCC (not on a CDT programme) can be easily distinguished from Informatics PhD students on the existing ICSA (Computer Architecture, Compilation & System Software, Networks & Communication) programme code. This will allow better reporting and avoid potential confusion for applicants within the admissions system. This is expected to be submitted to INF BoS for approval in Autumn 2018.

This document, at present, only refers to the EPCC MSc Programmes in High Performance Computing and High Performance Computing with Data Science (including part-time options and direct PGDip application for HPC only), and the constituent EPCC courses on the DPTs of those programmes and the three courses EPCC contributes to the DSTI programme. Any future additional programmes or courses will not be covered by these arrangements unless added.

### APPROVAL

This document is subject to approval by the Head of the School of Informatics, Director of EPCC, and the Head of the College of Science and Engineering. CSPEC is invited to comment on arrangements.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **Data Science, Technology and Innovation Online Learning Programme: Structure and Governance at University Level - Update**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper provides an update (to the paper reviewed last year) on the responsibility for managing the suite of Online Learning Programmes in Data Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) within the College of Science and Engineering. This paper explains how the College manages these programmes, including explaining how it fulfils programme management and support functions normally delivered at 'School' level while maintaining an appropriate separation with normal 'College' functions.

Since these arrangements are non-standard in some ways in terms of University regulations (for example, operating a Board of Studies at College rather than School level), the Committee requested an update following approval in 2017. Specifically, we were asked to report back on whether (a) our student support mechanisms which are coordinated through the College of Science & Engineering online learning team have proved effective and (b) whether it is practical for the Programme Director to act as the School Academic Misconduct Officer (the implication of this arrangement being that the Programme Director is not be a dissertation marker). Having run for a year, we conclude that (a) our CSE online learning team are providing effective student support (working with participating Schools as appropriate) and that (b) the dual role of Programme Director and Academic Misconduct Officer is working well. The paper below puts this in the broader context of the programme, for completeness.

### **How does this align with the University/Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Aligns with the strategic objective of Leadership in Learning.

### **Action requested**

For review.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The College Office will take responsibility for implementing the arrangements. There is no need for communication activities.

### **Resource/Risk/Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

The arrangements have resource implementations for the College, since it fulfils programme-management and support functions that are normally delivered within Schools. There are minor resource implications for Student Systems and other departments in aligning systems and processes with these arrangements. The

College online learning team will be based in the Bayes Centre when it opens in late August 2018 and the College resource cost is part of our contribution to the Data Driven Innovation component of the City Deal programme.

## **2. Risk assessment**

The arrangements are intended to enable the College to have appropriate arrangements in place to manage risks associated with academic standards and the student experience.

## **3. Equality and Diversity**

The arrangements are unlikely to have an equality and diversity implications.

## **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is open.

### **Originator of the paper**

Professor Dave Robertson, Head of College of Science and Engineering  
Teresa Ironside, Head of Online Learning Development, College of Science and Engineering  
10 August 2018

This paper follows on from the original paper originated by:

Professor Dave Robertson, Head of College of Science and Engineering  
Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services  
9 November 2017

# Data Science, Technology and Innovation Online Learning Programme: Structure and Governance at University Level – Update

The Data Science, Technology and Innovation programme (DSTI) was founded to run data science online learning across our Colleges. It was founded in CMVM in 2015 and moved to CSE at the start of the 17/8 academic year. This paper summarizes the structure and governance in place within CSE. Mostly the translation has been direct but there are a few adaptations to the new context. The committee is invited to review these arrangements following approval in 2017.

## Background and Motivation for the DSTI Programme

Data intensive research is pervasive across academia and industry. Its influence is felt in different ways and at different scales so there will be a sustained demand for education from introductory courses through to specialized courses (where specialization may be in technology/theory or in the application domain). This will lead to a complex and changing landscape for education involving data, one in which we will need to be agile in provision; and our prospective students will demand choice in the quantity, level and style of provision. This will vary widely across traditional disciplines and may promote strong interactions between domains as new research areas develop. These new areas are likely to be important drivers for research and education but their precise scope and nature is hard to predict. Our aim is to provide a simple, robust, adaptive framework within which to offer an academically cohesive range of courses drawn from across the University. We believe that a demonstration of excellence in data science across a wide range of fields will be of reputational and recruitment benefit to the UoE and our prospective students.

Against this background, the pace of development of the DSTI programme is likely to increase as a consequence of initiatives to increase the scale of our educational offerings in data science. One of the principal drivers currently is the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal initiative which commits the University to data science education at a large scale.

## The Origins of DSTI

In March 2015 CSPC supported the establishment of what became the ‘Data Science, Technology & Innovation’ suite of PGT programmes. Development of these educational offerings was pump-primed by an investment of £180k from the University’s Distance Education Initiative. This award was made to Dave Robertson (at that time co-Director for one of three research centres within the Usher Institute, the Centre for Medical Informatics) as a consequence of an initial bid made by Austin Tate (in School of Informatics). The sequence of programme development was then:

- January 2016 – Soft launch of programme with PG Certificate and Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD) and an overall cohort of 8 students.
- September 2016 – Full launch of additional programmes which included: MSc, MSc with Specialism in Medical Informatics, PG Diploma and the continuation of the PG Certificate (with change in start date to September entry) and PPD (with six entry points throughout the year in-line with course start dates).
  - Cohort size of 42 (grew in-year with PPD where students often converted to MSc programme).
- September 2017 – Continuation of suite of programmes above with addition of new specialism in Anaesthesia and Critical Care.
  - Cohort size of 94 with continuing and new students (again, grew in-year with PPD where students often converted to MSc programme).
- September 2018 – Continuation of suite of programmes above
  - Anticipated intake of new students up to 100 over the next academic year
  - 3 students have graduated with PG Certificate to date
  - Anticipated cohort size to reach ~200 with continuing and new students with anticipation to grow in year with PPD where students often convert to MSc programme).

## Modular Structure and Component Courses

Two founding principles of DSTI were:

- That programme ownership should be intentionally agnostic of course components, maximizing interdisciplinary potential.
- That there should be transparent programme *and* course ownership for QA purposes.

The DSTI programme was designed to be modular, with course content adopted into the programme suite. All courses are originated by individual Schools and standard approval procedures via relevant School Board of Studies apply. All courses within DSTI programmes are captured using consistent course catalogue descriptor templates. Retention of School 'ownership' of individual courses is consistent with current University practice and allows particular courses to exploit individual School brands as part of their marketing strategy.

At programme-level, the establishment of a Programme Oversight Committee (POC) was designed to foster cross-College communications relating to DSTI and to manage future programme expansion and development. Schools that elect to contribute courses to the DSTI framework are invited to nominate a senior academic for DSTI POC membership. Membership is reviewed annually to ensure continued alignment with course portfolio and additionally includes academics who do not contribute courses to ensure wide representation across the University. Feedback from course organizers and members has been uniformly positive about POC; meetings are well-attended.

## Governance and Operating Model in CSE (2017 onwards)

Having moved to CSE, the operating model currently in effect is a modification of the one used when in CMVM:

- Courses continue to be sourced from across the University with course ownership retained within each School/Deanery. Responsibility for the dissertation 'course' will rest with the College and the Programme Director.
- The Programme Director is Dr Adam Carter, replacing Dave Robertson (since Dave now is Head of CSE). The Programme Director will be treated as having the responsibilities of a School Director of Teaching, for example having responsibility for being aware of any changes to University policy and regulation and for ensuring the programmes comply with them.
- Consistent with the 'single offering' approach administrative aspects of programme coordination, student support, marketing, and induction are delivered by dedicated administrative staff located in the CSE Online Learning Team with support from College staff within CSE College Office. Admissions remain at programme level but with same staff providing a single port of call for all initial enquiries and offers of admission being made by CSE Recruitment and Admissions staff.
- Personal Tutors continue to be assigned at the programme level and are sourced from all 3 participant Colleges, with the Programme Director acting as their Senior Tutor. A Personal Tutor statement has been developed that outlines responsibilities and escalation points for Personal Tutors on DSTI specifically.
- Director of Quality is Dr Adam Carter.
- For the dissertation stage of the programme, the Programme Director will act as School Academic Misconduct Officer (the implication of this arrangement is that the Programme Director will not act as marker for the dissertations).
- The Programme Oversight Committee Terms of Reference have been formally updated to include reference to its function as the Programme Board of Studies, with the College responsible for appointing its membership. Dr Michael Rovatsos, Director of the Bayes Centre is the POC Chair and has chaired one meeting to date.
- When considering rigour and transparency in the formal DSTI quality model, concepts of separation between programme, College and University have been taken into account. The Programme Level and School Level QA Reports will be submitted by the DSTI Programme Team (lead by the Programme Director and Head of Online Learning Development, CSE).
- In 2017-18, the DSTI programme was included in the Postgraduate Programme Review for the Deanery of Molecular, Genetics & Population Health Science.
  - It will be necessary to agree with the Senate Quality Assurance Committee which PPR the programmes will be included in during the next cycle of reviews.

- The intention to establish the Bayes Centre as an entity within the College of Science & Engineering as School-level organizational entity may create new options for owning these programmes for QA and other purposes. Operation of the Programme, however, remains with College, maintaining the broad, School-independent operation of the overall programme.
- The College is responsible for appointing the Programme level (Stage 2) Board of Examiners. Convener of the Programme level (Stage 2) Board of Examiners meetings is now Professor Graeme Reid.
- The nominated Regulations Expert is Teresa Ironside (with expertise in programme management in School of Informatics and in CMVM, employed at CSE College office).
- The College will agree with Student Administration and Support which School's graduation ceremony graduants of the programmes will attend.
  - In the July 2018 ceremony two students graduated within the School of Informatics ceremony. This will be reviewed going forward.

Student Systems are in the process of assessing the extent to handling the programme and dissertation course in this way will require any developments to systems, student surveys and management information reporting.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **Intercalation into Edinburgh by students from medical programmes at other institutions**

### **Executive Summary**

Historically, some medical students from other UK institutions have come to Edinburgh University for one year to pursue an optional intercalated degree, usually as the 3rd year of their medical programme. This has become difficult since at the time of recent changes to the Edinburgh MBChB, we moved to award the intercalated Hons degree at the end of the MBChB programme (after 6 years). This paper aims to restore the possibility of awarding an intercalated degree to external students at the end of their year of study, without altering processes for Edinburgh students.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

It helps showcase Edinburgh's education externally.

### **Action requested**

For discussion and approval.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

We would like to implement these new arrangements for 2019 entry. In order to allow students to plan and apply, we will advertise and write to medical schools in October 2018.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Students will bring additional funding equivalent to those for students currently on Y3 of the MBChB. Numbers on individual courses/ programmes are already controlled to match availability of staff and other resources.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The question of compliance with SCQF regulations is discussed in the paper.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

No new issues arise from this proposal which concerns using existing procedures to admit external students to existing programmes and courses.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

This paper is open.

### **Originator of the paper**

Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Team, Academic Services  
Dr David Kluth, Programme Director for MBChB, Edinburgh Medical School  
Prof Neil Turner, Dean for Undergraduate Learning and Teaching, CMVM

## **Intercalation into Edinburgh by students from medical programmes at other institutions**

### **Background**

Students in the third year of the University's MBChB (Medicine) programme currently 'intercalate' from their Medical studies to pursue the final year of an Honours programme in a related subject (usually within Biomedical Sciences). If they complete this successfully, they graduate with a BMedSci (Hons) at the same time as graduating with their MBChB on completion of the medical programme (by which time they have sufficient credit for both the MBChB and an Honours degree). Taking the Honours degree in the third year was previously optional for medical students- although the majority took this option- and was treated as a separate, intercalated programme. Intercalation remains common at other UK institutions which offer medical programmes.

Historically, small numbers of medical students from other UK institutions would come to the University for one year to pursue their intercalated degree, either because they were keen to study in a different setting, or because Edinburgh offered programmes not offered by their home institution. Universities which offer medical degrees regard the exchange of students in the intercalated year as beneficial to all parties, so the University is keen to be in a position to facilitate this.

### **BMedSci (Hons) – arrangements for University of Edinburgh MBChB students**

The degree which the University offers both to our own medical students taking the Honours degree, and to any incoming students intercalating from other institutions, is the BMedSci (Hons). As an Honours degree, award of the degree is contingent on the award of a minimum of 480 SCQF credits at appropriate levels. Our own MBChB students achieve a total of 900 credits over their six years of study, which is sufficient to qualify both for the award of the MBChB (which is an Ordinary degree, and therefore under the SCQF only requires 360 credits) and the BMedSci.

### **BMedSci (Hons) – arrangements for students intercalating from other institutions**

Any students intercalating into the University from other institutions would require to be awarded 360 credits in Recognition of Prior Learning in order to be in a position to qualify for the award of the BMedSci (Hons) at the end of their year (120 credits) of study here. 360 credits is the equivalent of three years' worth of study in higher education. Although some universities offer medical students the opportunity to intercalate after three years, the majority (like Edinburgh) offer this after two years, which means that medical students intercalating into Edinburgh from these institutions would have completed only two years of study in higher education.

Given the potential to perceive that these students (those intercalating from other Universities) are being awarded the BMedSci (Hons) despite having insufficient credit for the degree, it is important that the University can explain how this is compliant with the SCQF. The most appropriate way to resolve this issue is through Recognition of Prior Learning.

Many programmes within CSE and MVM, including programmes within the Deanery of Biomedical Sciences and the School of Biological Sciences, which medical students enter in the final year for the Honours component of their programme, consider offering direct entry to second year for suitably

qualified applicants (e.g. those with two or more Advanced Highers, three A-level qualifications, or International Baccalaureate scores of 36+). Where direct entry is offered to students entering the standard (four-year) Honours programme, these students are awarded 120 credits in Recognition of Prior Learning based on their outstanding School level qualifications.

In the vast majority of cases, a student undertaking a medical degree at another institution who applied to intercalate onto one of our Honours programmes for a year would have suitable qualifications to have been eligible for direct entry to second year, had they applied for entry to the standard (four-year) Honours degree. We are proposing, therefore, that successful applicants may be awarded a total of 360 credits in Recognition of Prior Learning: 240 credits in recognition of their first two years of study in higher education (i.e. on their medical programme), and a further 120 credits in recognition of their school qualifications, as is normal under direct entry.

A very small minority of students from Widening Participation backgrounds may apply to intercalate at Edinburgh without having the school qualifications normally expected when considering direct entry. These students would commonly not have had access to Advanced Highers (or similar) while they were at school, but would in these circumstances have demonstrated their potential in their school-level qualifications, and aptitude in higher education in the first two years of their medical programme. We are proposing that the Committee approves a generic concession to allow these students to graduate with the BMedSci short of credits, in order to ensure that they have the same entitlement to access intercalated programmes here.

Since we have workable arrangements in place for the University's own MBChB students to be awarded the BMedSci (Hons) at the end of their studies, there are no grounds for considering an exceptional concession of this type for those students. It may, however, be necessary to consider concessions on a case by case basis for any of the University's MBChB students who withdraw from their studies following the 'intercalated year' but without completing year four (and therefore without the full 480 credits required for the BMedSci (Hons)).

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **MEd Leadership and Learning: Request for Concession to TAR56**

### **Executive Summary**

*This paper requests to waive the progression requirements of completing all taught components before undertaking the project component of a PGT degree as outlined in Taught Assessment Regulation 56.*

*This concession is requested in order to allow a change in the current DPT of the MEd Leadership and Learning programme to add flexibility to the pathways of study through the programme. The proposed changes request:*

- *Removal of the compulsory requirement to complete PG Certificate: Core Process*
- *Allow participants to undertake the Extended Work Based Project as either the second or third 60-credit option to achieve the MEd LL (and not as a final 'capstone' project as currently configured)*

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

*Providing the highest-quality research-led learning and teaching*

### **Action requested**

*For approval*

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

*Via CAHSS College Office as soon as possible.*

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

*None*

#### **2. Risk assessment**

*While there are risk implications associated with the Extended Work Based project, these have been addressed in the paper.*

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

*No equality and diversity implications have been identified.*

#### **4. Freedom of information**

*Open paper*

### **Key words**

*Concession, Assessment Regulations*

### **Originator of the paper**

*Dr Zoë Robertson*

*Programme director: MEd Leadership & Learning*

*May 2018*

## MEd Leadership and Learning: Proposed Change to DPT and request for concession (TAR 56)

**Programme Director: Dr Zoë Robertson**

### Background information and rationale for change

This proposal is to change the current Degree Programme Table (DPT) of the MEd Leadership and Learning in order to add flexibility to the pathways of study through the programme to ensure it has greatest relevance for the target market of teachers and educational leaders in Scotland.

The MEd Leadership and Learning is a professional masters degree programme designed specifically for practising teachers and educational leaders and managers to undertake practice focused masters level study. The Teacher Education Partnership Steering group (comprised of strategic education leaders across each partner local authority) welcome the proposed changes and believes this better accommodates the professional learning needs of their teachers and educational leaders.

### Current pathways to achieve the MEd Leadership and Learning:

There are currently three possible pathways to achieve the MEd Leadership and Learning. The PG Certificate: Core processes for Leadership and Learning along with the Extended Work-based project are compulsory for achieving the MEd Leadership and Learning, regardless of pathway followed. Participants may enter the MEd by undertaking either Core Processes, Middle Leadership and Management or Into Headship.



### Key issues with current pathways:

This is a new programme with the first intake of participants in September 2016. These individuals are now coming to the end of their study on the first PG Certificate and seeking options to continue study. As a result it is now evident where the professional needs lie and the need for greater flexibility. In addition the programme needs to be able to respond to the changing educational policy context. The current pathways assume a linear career trajectory and professional learning journey. The reality, of course, is far more complex and nuanced. In particular, the current design prohibits a natural learning journey for individuals who are pursuing a specific school leadership and management career trajectory.

### Proposed changes to the DPT for the MEd Leadership and Learning:

The proposed changes reconfigure the DPT as a set of decisions rather than predetermined pathways. The proposed changes request:

- Removal of the compulsory requirement to complete PG Certificate: Core Process

- Allow participants to undertake the Extended Work Based Project as either the second or third 60 credit option to achieve the MEd LL (and not as a final 'capstone' project as currently configured).

This is therefore a request to waive the progression requirements of completing all taught components before undertaking the project component as outlined in Taught Assessment Regulation 56. Requirements for progression would be determined at programme level and stated in the handbook (in line with TAR 56 for dissertation components taken in parallel)

Therefore, to obtain the full MEd Leadership & Learning, individuals would select a 60 credit option from each column. One option from Column A would be the mandatory entry point. The Extended Work Based project would remain a compulsory requirement to obtain the full MEd Leadership & Learning but need not be taken as a final 'capstone' project.

- The proposed change enables the individual, on completion of a Column A option, to then select whether to follow a Column B or Column C option next. Thus the 60 credit PG Certificate: Leadership of Learning Extended Work Based Project is no longer a 'final' project. It can now be taken as either the second or the final PG Certificate.

These changes will create a more meaningful and flexible pathway of study for participants. The proposed changes to the DPT increases the flexibility in terms of the routes of study without amending or adding any additional courses to the DPT. Thus, reducing resource implications.

#### **Moray House School of Education Approval Process:**

These proposed changes have been taken through and subsequently approved at the School Postgraduate Studies Committee and School Board of Studies (pending approval of concession to TAR 56).

One issue was ensuring that participants moving directly to the Extended Work Based project as their second 60 credits of study would be appropriately prepared in terms of their research engagement and understanding. This is addressed in a number of ways:

- This is a professional masters underpinned by critical enquiry and practice based action research. Skills and knowledge are developed throughout each course and is deeply contextualised and situated.
- The Professional requirements aligned to GTCS Professional Standards is underpinned by research and enquiry in practice.
- Regardless of their chosen pathway through the masters, participants will develop critical understanding of relevant research approaches, plan and implement small-scale enquiry, and be able to systematically gather, analyse and present evidence in a critical way.
- The Extended Work Based Project is supported by a taught element that focuses on appropriate research methodology, skills and knowledge required. The School of Education also offers online Research Methods courses that may be available for participants to audit to further support their learning needs, if appropriate.

Dr Zoë Robertson

Programme director: MEd Leadership & Learning and Co-Director Teacher Education Partnerships

## Appendix A: Current DPT structure for MEd Leadership and Learning

<b>Postgraduate Certificate</b>	SCQF Level	Credits
PG Certificate: Core Processes for Leadership and Learning <b>EDUA11351 Self Study Enquiry (20 credits)</b> <b>EDUA11350 Practitioner Enquiry (20 credits)</b> <b>EDUA11352 Developing as a Leader (20 credits)</b> <i>All courses compulsory to achieve the PG Certificate: Core Processes for Leadership &amp; Learning</i>	11  11	60  60
<b>OR</b>		
PG Certificate: Middle Leadership and Management <b>EDUA11345 Developing as a Middle Leader and Manager (20 credits)</b> <b>EDUA11346 Leading Change and School Improvement (40 credits) (with award of GTCS Standard for Middle Leadership and Management)</b> <i>All courses compulsory to achieve the PG Certificate: Middle Leadership and Management</i>	11	60
<b>OR</b>		
PG Certificate: Into Headship <b>EDUA11343 Developing as a Strategic Educational Leader (20 credits)</b> <b>EDUA11344 Leading Strategic Educational Change (40 credits) (with Specialist Qualification for Headship)</b> <i>All courses compulsory to achieve the PG Certificate: Middle Leadership and Management</i>	11	60
<i>NOTES: for professional purpose all courses must be passed at a pass rate 50%</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

<b>Postgraduate Diploma: Leadership and Learning</b>	SCQF Level	Credits
PG Certificate: Core Processes for Leadership and Learning	11	60
<b>AND</b>		
PG Certificate: Middle Leadership and Management <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Into Headship (with Specialist Qualification for Headship) <b>OR</b> 60 credits from Level 11 courses in Schedules A-Q,T and W	11  11  11	60  60  60
<i>NOTES: Choice of courses subject to approval by Programme Director; for professional purpose all courses must be passed at a pass rate 50%</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>

<b>MEd Leadership and Learning</b>	SCQF Level	Credits
PG Certificate: Core Processes for Leadership and Learning	11	60
<b>AND</b>		
PG Certificate: Middle Leadership and Management <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Into Headship (with Specialist Qualification for Headship) <b>OR</b> 60 credits from Level 11 courses in Schedules A-Q,T and W	11  11  11	60  60  60
<b>AND</b>		
<b>EDUA11353 Project Proposal and Extended Work-Based Project</b>	11	60
<i>NOTES: Choice of courses subject to approval by Programme Director; for professional purpose all courses must be passed at a pass rate 50%</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>

## Appendix B: Proposed change to DPT for MEd Leadership and Learning

Postgraduate Certificate	SCQF Level	Credits
PG Certificate: Core Processes for Leadership and Learning <b>EDUA11351 Self Study Enquiry (20 credits)</b> <b>EDUA11350 Practitioner Enquiry (20 credits)</b> <b>EDUA11352 Developing as a Leader (20 credits)</b> <i>All courses compulsory to achieve PG Cert: Core Processes for Leadership &amp; Learning</i>	11  11	60  60
<b>OR</b>		
PG Certificate: Middle Leadership and Management <b>EDUA11345 Developing as a Middle Leader and Manager (20 credits)</b> <b>EDUA11346 Leading Change and School Improvement (40 credits)</b> <i>(with award of GTCS Standard for Middle Leadership and Management)</i> <i>All courses compulsory to achieve PG Cert: Middle Leadership and Management</i>	11	60
<b>OR</b>		
PG Certificate: Into Headship <b>EDUA11343 Developing as a Strategic Educational Leader (20 credits)</b> <b>EDUA11344 Leading Strategic Educational Change (40 credits)</b> <i>(with Specialist Qualification for Headship)</i> <i>All courses compulsory to achieve PG Cert: Middle Leadership and Management</i>	11	60
<i>NOTES: for professional purpose all courses must be passed at a pass rate 50%</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>
Postgraduate Diploma: Leadership and Learning	SCQF Level	Credits
PG Certificate: Core Processes for Leadership and Learning <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Middle Leadership and Management <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Into Headship (with Specialist Qualification for Headship)	11  11  11	60  60  60
<b>AND</b>		
PG Certificate: Core Processes for Leadership and Learning <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Middle Leadership and Management <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Into Headship (with Specialist Qualification for Headship) <b>OR</b> 60 credits from Level 11 courses in Schedules A-Q,T and W <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Leadership and Learning ( <b>Extended Work-Based Project</b> )	11  11  11  11	60  60  60  60
<i>NOTES: Choice of courses subject to approval by Programme Director; for professional purpose all courses must be passed at a pass rate 50%</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>
MEd Leadership and Learning	SCQF Level	Credits
PG Certificate: Core Processes for Leadership and Learning <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Middle Leadership and Management <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Into Headship (with Specialist Qualification for Headship)	11  11  11	60  60  60
<b>AND</b>		
PG Certificate: Core Processes for Leadership and Learning <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Middle Leadership and Management <b>OR</b> PG Certificate: Into Headship (with Specialist Qualification for Headship) <b>OR</b> 60 credits from Level 11 courses in Schedules A-Q,T and W	11  11  11  11	60  60  60  60
<b>AND</b>		
PG Certificate: Leadership and Learning ( <b>Extended Work-Based Project</b> )	11	60
<i>NOTES: Choice of courses subject to approval by Programme Director; for professional purpose all courses must be passed at a pass rate 50%</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>



The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## Postgraduate Assessment and Progression

### Executive Summary

This paper outlines proposals for further work relating to the recommendations contained within the report of the Postgraduate Assessment and Progression Task Group received by CSPC last Academic Year (CSPC 17/18 6 B). The paper presents benchmarking information and analysis of potential implications of changes to pass marks and progression requirements for Taught Master's programmes.

### How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper is relevant to the theme of Leadership in Learning, particularly with regard to the desire to develop flexible learning pathways.

### Action requested

For discussion

### How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

This paper is for discussion. Any agreed course of action will be undertaken by Academic Services following receipt of advice from CSPC.

### Resource / Risk / Compliance

#### 1. Resource implications (including staffing)/ Risk Assessment/Equality and Diversity

This is a discussion paper. At this stage there are no proposed changes to existing policy or practices.

#### 2. Freedom of information

Open

### Key words

Postgraduate Taught Master's, Progression, Pass Mark

### Originator of the paper

Stuart Fitzpatrick, Adam Bunni

Academic Services

11 September 2018

## **Postgraduate Assessment and Progression**

### **1. Background**

At its meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018, CSPC considered the report of the Task Group on Postgraduate Assessment and Progression, and approved a number of recommendations, which have been adopted for the 2018/19 session:

- The University should allow the creation of Master's degrees without compulsory substantial dissertation/research projects where there is a strong academic rationale to do so;
- Boards of Examiners will offer PGT Master's students one opportunity to submit a revised version of the dissertation or research project subject to eligibility;
- Text has been added to the Programme and Course Handbooks Policy providing information regarding supervision of PGT Master's dissertations and research projects;
- The University will allow students to qualify for the award of Master's with Merit or Distinction in spite of receiving fail marks in up to 40 credits worth of courses, provided they meet any other criteria for the award of Merit or Distinction as outlined in the programme or course handbooks.

### **2. Progression and Pass Marks**

The Task Group had also examined the matter of the progression hurdle at Master's level, and the pass mark at Master's level being 50%. Most existing taught Master's programmes at the University include a progression point between the taught and research components of the programme, preventing progression to the dissertation stage of a programme if the taught component has not been passed. However, the traditional model of two semesters of taught courses followed by a dissertation is becoming less dominant within the University, especially with the growth of online Master's programmes. As different models of Postgraduate Taught study arise, including programmes where research is undertaken alongside taught courses, and the potential for entire Master's to be delivered without a dissertation or substantial research project, the progression hurdle becomes less relevant.

All of the University's Postgraduate Taught awards – Certificate, Diploma and Master's – primarily involve study at SCQF level 11. Credit for courses studies at SCQF level 11 is awarded to students attaining a course result of 40% or higher, irrespective of whether the course is being counted towards a Certificate, Diploma or Master's award. However, students are generally required to achieve an overall average of 50% in taught courses in order to progress to the dissertation or research project component, with a minimum of 80 credits gaining marks of 50% or more; students are also required to gain a mark of 50% in the dissertation or research project in order to qualify for the award of a Master's degree. This can create confusion, for example where a student achieves a mark of 40-49% in the dissertation or research project, and is therefore awarded the credit for every component of their programme, but is not eligible for the award of the Master's degree.

### **3. Previous discussion at CSPC**

At the 31<sup>st</sup> May meeting, CSPC considered the information provided by the task group on these issues (see Appendix 1). The Task Group had recommended that further exploratory work should be undertaken in this area, with benchmarking against Russell Group comparator institutions in relation to pass marks, marking schemes and progression hurdles informing this work.

CSPC considered the recommendations and the consultation responses from Schools included in the Task Group report in depth. It was very supportive of removing the elevated pass mark of 50% for Master's awards (implying that Master's degrees should be awarded based on the attainment of credit as a result of achieving a pass mark of 40%), and of removing the existing progression hurdle following the taught component of most PGT programmes, allowing students to undertake a dissertation if they wished. CSPC had been particularly supportive of removing the latter arrangement.

CSPC had, however, recognised that consultation responses from Schools had been divided on the proposals, with roughly half of Schools not supporting the removal of the progression hurdle. CSPC had also recognised that it would be necessary to undertake careful systems and regulatory analysis prior to implementation, for example regarding the consequential implications for the regulations (and systems) of removing the progression hurdle without also removing the elevated hurdle. CSPC had therefore concluded that it would not introduce any of these changes for 2018-19. It did however agree to work towards implementing both aspects of the recommendations for 2019-20 – and that with this in mind it would undertake further consultation activities and technical analysis during 2018-19 with a view to making a final decision during 2018-19.

This paper presents relevant benchmarking data relating to pass marks at Master's level at other Russell Group institutions, and an initial analysis of the potential options for making changes to pass marks and the approach to progression on Master's degrees.

#### 4. Benchmarking indications

Benchmarking against 22 fellow Russell Group institutions indicates that the pass mark at a Master's level is 50 in all of the 21 institutions which use a 101 point scale. In contrast to this University, the majority of institutions also require a mark of 50 to pass Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate level work, with the exception of three institutions where this pass mark is 40.

At an Undergraduate level, the majority of Russell Group institutions operate a pass mark of 40.

A breakdown of pass marks at Master's, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate, and Undergraduate levels across the Russell Group is contained in Appendix 2.

#### 5. Examples of potential models, and possible implications

In this section, we have set out the various potential combinations of changes both to the pass marks for Master's degrees, and to the progression hurdle between the taught and research component of the most common type of taught Master's degree, giving an indication of the implications of pursuing these models. Any model involving the removal of the progression hurdle would imply the following:

- On traditional Master's programmes involving taught courses followed by a dissertation or research project, students would no longer be required to achieve a minimum level of performance in the taught courses in order to undertake the dissertation or research project;
- This would mean some students undertaking the dissertation or research project who could not qualify for the award of the Master's degree even if they passed the dissertation or research project, but may be eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma.

## **Model A – Moving the Pass Mark at Master’s level from 50 to 40 following a recalibration of the marking scheme**

### **Implications**

- A change to the Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme (CMS 4), or amendment to the Undergraduate Common Marking Scheme (CMS 1) to accommodate Postgraduate Taught study, would be required;
- Grade descriptors would require to be changed to reflect the fact that the award of a mark of 40 would represent the same level of performance as that currently represented by a mark of 50; this would involve a significant volume of work;
- Changing grade descriptors in this way would adversely affect those students who would have previously received a Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) or Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) based on average marks between 40 and 49; these students would no longer achieve an award; data provided by Student Systems indicates that there were around 130 students in this category in each of 2015/16 and 2016/17;

#### *If a progression hurdle was retained*

- The criteria for the progression hurdle would change: students would be required to achieve an average of at least 40 across 120 credits of courses, with marks of 40 or more in at least 80 credits’ worth of courses, in order to progress to the dissertation or research project (these would also be the criteria for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma);
- Students would be required to attain a mark of 40 in the dissertation or research project in order to qualify for the award of the Master’s degree;
- A student not meeting the criteria for progression would be eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate as long as they had achieved an average of 40 over 60 credits with a mark of 40 in at least 40 credits;

#### *If there were no progression hurdle*

- Assuming that the provisions for the award of credit on aggregate remain the same, decisions regarding credit on aggregate would be made at the end of the programme;
- If the current criteria for the award of the Master’s degree were carried forward, students would be required to attain an average of 40 or more across the 180 credits of the programme, with a mark of 40 or above in a least 140 credits’ worth of courses (which would mean that they would necessarily need to achieve a mark of 40 or more in the dissertation or research project);
- Students who do not meet the requirements for the award of the Master’s degree may be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma, which may include credits gained for the dissertation or research project;
- A student achieving an average of 40 in any 120 credits of the programme, with a mark of 40 or above in at least 80 credits would be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma (i.e. up to 40 credits could be awarded on aggregate, as at present); As above, a student achieving an average of 40 in any 60 credits of the programme, with a mark of 40 or above in at least 40 credits would be eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate (i.e. up to 20 credits could be awarded on aggregate, as at present).

### **Considerations**

- The pass mark on undergraduate programmes is 40, irrespective of whether the courses are at levels 7/8, or 9/10. This is based on the fact that it should be more challenging to achieve a mark of 40 at level 10 than at level 7. It could therefore be considered that it is unnecessary to have a different pass mark for level 11 or above.
- Changing the pass mark for a Master's degree to 40 would place the University at odds with the rest of the Russell Group, where the pass mark is routinely set at 50. This could risk implying that it is "easier" to obtain a Master's degree at this University than at other institutions.

## **Model B – The Pass mark for courses at Master's level becomes 50, with 40-49 no longer being deemed as a pass, even for the award of PG Certificate or Diploma**

### **Implications**

- A change to CMS 4 would be required to reflect the fact that a mark of 40 would no longer be sufficient for the Certificate or Diploma;
- Those students who would have previously received a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma based on average marks between 40 and 49 would no longer achieve an award.

#### *If a progression hurdle was retained*

- The criteria for the progression hurdle would remain as they are: students would be required to achieve an average of at least 50 across 120 credits of courses, with marks of 50 or more in at least 80 credits' worth of courses, in order to progress to the dissertation or research project (the assumption being that credit on aggregate could be awarded for up to 40 credits of courses with marks below 50);
- Meeting the criteria for the progression hurdle would also trigger eligibility for the Postgraduate Diploma;
- Students would be required to attain a mark of 50 in the dissertation or research project in order to qualify for the award of the Master's degree.
- A student not meeting the criteria for progression would be eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate as long as they had achieved an average of 50 over 60 credits with a mark of 50 in at least 40 credits;

#### *If there were no progression hurdle*

- Assuming that the provisions for the award of credit on aggregate remain the same, decisions regarding credit on aggregate would be made at the end of the programme;
- If the current criteria for the award of the Master's degree were carried forward, students would be required to attain an average of 50 or more across the 180 credits of the programme, with a mark of 50 or above in a least 140 credits' worth of courses (which would mean that they would necessarily need to achieve a mark of 50 or more in the dissertation or research project);
- Students who do not meet the requirements for the award of the Master's degree may be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma, which may include credits gained for the dissertation or research project;
- A student achieving an average of 50 in any 120 credits of the programme, with a mark of 50 or above in at least 80 credits would be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma (i.e. up to 40 credits could be awarded on aggregate, as at present);

- As above, a student achieving an average of 50 in any 60 credits of the programme, with a mark of 50 or above in at least 40 credits would be eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate (i.e. up to 20 credits could be awarded on aggregate, as at present).

### **Considerations**

- Changing the pass mark to 50 for courses at Master's level would remove the current discrepancy between the award of credit for courses (based on a mark of 40 or more), and eligibility for the Master's degree (based on marks of 50 or more);
- On Postgraduate Taught programmes, students can take up to 30 credits at levels below 11, depending on the requirements of their programme. It is difficult to justify using a pass mark of 50 in these instances;
- Changing the pass mark to 50 for courses at Master's level would reflect the most common arrangements in place at other Russell Group institutions, where there is no distinction between the level required for a pass at Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma, or at Master's level.

### **Model C – Retaining the current pass marks whilst removing the progression hurdle**

#### **Implications**

- Retaining the current pass mark whilst removing the progression hurdle introduces the possibility of scenarios where students had passed all courses, but not at a high enough level to achieve a Master's degree;
- There may be instances where students receive excellent dissertation/research project marks, but perform poorly in the taught element of the programme, leading to a situation where the student cannot be awarded a Master's due to the results they received in the taught element of the programme;
- Students would need to be made aware, prior to the beginning of their dissertation, whether they had a chance of obtaining a Master's;
- Assuming that the provisions for the award of credit on aggregate remain the same, decisions regarding credit on aggregate would be made at the end of the programme;
- If the current criteria for the award of the Master's degree were carried forward, students would be required to attain an average of 50 or more across the 180 credits of the programme, with a mark of 50 or above in a least 140 credits' worth of courses (which would mean that they would necessarily need to achieve a mark of 50 in the dissertation or research project);
- Students who do not meet the requirements for the award of the Master's degree may be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma, which may include credits gained for the dissertation or research project;
- A student achieving an average of 40 in any 120 credits of the programme, with a mark of 40 or above in at least 80 credits would be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma (i.e. up to 40 credits could be awarded on aggregate, as at present);
- A student achieving an average of 40 in any 60 credits of the programme, with a mark of 40 or above in at least 40 credits would be eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate (i.e. up to 20 credits could be awarded on aggregate, as at present).

#### 6. For discussion by CSPC

**CSPC is invited to discuss the benchmarking data, along with the information regarding potential models and their implications, and consider whether it wishes to conduct further work at this time exploring any of these potential models.**

CSPC is advised that Assistant Principal, Professor Susan Rhind is preparing a paper for Senate Learning and Teaching Committee relating to the University's approach to marking schemes and marking practices, which will necessarily overlap with any further work relating to Postgraduate Taught marking scales. Should CSPC wish to pursue further work in this area, it will be important to ensure that this is aligned with any broader discussion of marking schemes being undertaken by Learning and Teaching Committee.

## **Appendix 1 – Extract from the Postgraduate Assessment and Progression Task Group Final Report (CSPC 17/8 6 B)**

### **E) Progression and Pass Marks**

#### **Background**

Most existing taught Master's programmes at the University include a progression point between the taught and research components of the programme, preventing progression to the dissertation stage of a programme if the taught component has not been passed. However, the traditional model of two semesters of taught courses followed by a dissertation is becoming less dominant within the University, especially with the growth of online Master's programmes. As different models of Postgraduate Taught study arise, including programmes where research is undertaken alongside taught courses, and the potential for entire Master's to be delivered without a dissertation or substantial research project, the progression hurdle becomes less relevant.

All of the University's Postgraduate Taught awards – Certificate, Diploma and Master's – primarily involve study at SCQF level 11. Credit for courses studies at SCQF level 11 is awarded to students attaining a course result of 40% or higher, irrespective of whether the course is being counted towards a Certificate, Diploma or Master's award. However, students are generally required to achieve an overall average of 50% in taught courses in order to progress to the dissertation or research project component, with a minimum of 80 credits gaining marks of 50% or more; students are also required to gain a mark of 50% in the dissertation or research project in order to qualify for the award of a Master's degree. This can create confusion, for example where a student achieves a mark of 40-49% in the dissertation or research project, and is therefore awarded the credit for every component of their programme, but is not eligible for the award of the Master's degree.

#### **Benchmarking**

The Task Group examined data from Student Systems regarding the proportion of students who progressed to dissertation or research project elements of Master's degrees, and also the proportion of those who progressed only to fail to qualify for the award of a Master's based on their performance in the dissertation/research project element.

Data received from Student Systems indicated that, in Academic Year 2015/16, of 3,627 full time students, 68 (1.9%) did not progress to the dissertation or research project stage of their programme.

As mentioned previously, in the same Academic Year, the data provided by Student Systems indicated that of those students who were submitting for the Master's award in the 2015/16 session, 3,542 students had submitted for an MSc or equivalent PGT level qualification. Of these 3,542 students, only 193 (5.4%) were unsuccessful in achieving their intended award. These numbers amounted to one or no students failing the dissertation component on most programmes.

#### **Consultation**

Schools were asked to comment on the following proposals:

*Removal of the elevated hurdle of 50% for Master's awards (meaning awarding Master's degrees passed on the award of credit as a result of the attainment of a pass mark of 40%), and the removal of the existing progression hurdle following the taught component of most PGT programmes, allowing students to undertake a dissertation if they wished.*

This proposal can be split into two parts, the first being the removal of the elevated hurdle of 50% at Master's level, and the second being the removal of the progression hurdle, whereby students must pass the Taught component of the programme before the Dissertation stage.

When responding to the issue of the elevated 50% hurdle, arguments in favour of removing the elevated hurdle included those who had simply stated that they supported the proposal outlined in the consultation document, which focused on the fact that credit was awarded for Master's level (SCQF level 11) courses based on a mark of 40%.

Arguments against this were that students who were not averaging above 50% were not sufficiently strong students; that reduction in the minimum mark required appeared to pose a greater risk to perceived standards than not having a dissertation; and the idea that a Master's from Edinburgh would be perceived as 'easier' to pass with a pass mark of 40%.

In regards to the removal of the Progression Hurdle, views from respondents tended to be more negative. For those respondents who addressed it specifically, the majority were in favour of maintaining the progression hurdle, as it protected students who were not performing academically from "wasted" effort. It also prevented an increase in workload for staff acting as supervisors in terms of supporting academically weak students. There was also concern that students might persist in the hope of achieving an MSc by completing the dissertation, in spite of their taught course marks making this impossible.

## **Recommendation**

### **Progression**

The responses to the consultation indicated that there is not widespread support among Schools for the removal of the progression hurdle between the taught and research components of Masters programmes. However, there are different models of postgraduate taught study arising which may mean that the progression hurdle becomes less relevant. These models include:

- Programmes in which research is undertaken alongside taught courses;
- "stackable" programmes (often online) where students build up credit over a longer period to work towards a Masters-level qualification;
- Masters programmes without a substantial research component.

**The Task Group therefore recommends that further work should be done to conduct benchmarking and to explore this issue in greater detail, before returning to CSPC for further consideration.**

### **Pass Marks**

The Task Group examined possibilities and related issues around the current pass mark at Master's level, and considered whether or not to recommend that this be altered from the current 50 to 40, and recommend a recalibration of the relevant Common Marking Schemes to reflect this. The threshold for the award of credits would not be lowered, rather the descriptors for what currently constitutes a mark of 50 would now constitute a mark of 40. The responses to the consultation document were split in regards to this proposal, and the Task Group recognises that the issue of potential recalibration of marking schemes is a complex one which would require further consideration before any concrete recommendation could be made. **The Task Group therefore recommends that further benchmarking in relation to pass marks and marking schemes should be undertaken to explore this issue in more detail, before returning to CSPC for further consideration.**

## Appendix 2 – Russell Group Benchmarking\*

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Masters Pass Mark</b>	<b>Dip/Cert Pass Mark</b>	<b>UG Pass Mark</b>
<b>University of Bristol</b>	50	50	40
<b>Durham University</b>	50	40	40
<b>University of Exeter</b>	50	50	40
<b>University of Glasgow</b>	12	9	9 (equiv. D3)
<b>Imperial College London</b>	50	50	40
<b>King's College London</b>	50	50	40/50 (programme dependent)
<b>University of Leeds</b>	50	50	40
<b>University of Manchester</b>	50	40	40
<b>Newcastle University</b>	50	50	40
<b>University of Nottingham</b>	50	50	40
<b>University of Sheffield</b>	50	50	40
<b>University of York</b>	50	50	40
<b>University of Birmingham</b>	50	40	40
<b>University of Cardiff</b>	50	50	40
<b>University of Liverpool</b>	50	50	(35-39) 40
<b>London School of Economics</b>	50		40

<b>University of Oxford</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>QMUL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>QUB</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Southampton</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>UCL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>University of Warwick</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>

**\* Benchmarking across 22 of 23 Russell Group Institutions, with no response being received from the University of Cambridge**

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **Consolidation of Programme and Course Approval and Management Information**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper asks the Committee to approve amendments to the Programme and Course Handbook Policy, along with several associated actions.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Maintenance of the University's policy framework is a priority for the Committee.

### **Action requested**

This paper asks the Committee to:

- Approve amendments to the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy
- Support the development by Academic Services (for subsequent approval by resolution) of a simplified Boards of Studies Terms of Reference document;
- Delete with immediate effect the Non-Credit Bearing Online Course Approval: Procedure for External Release

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The updated Policy will be made available on the Academic Services' website at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/learning-and-assessment> and will be communicated to key stakeholders.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

College Office colleagues need to make amendments to their existing guidance documents to remove any duplicated content.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

There are no key risks associated with the paper. The effective portfolio of academic programmes of study is critical to the risk of failure to provide a high quality student experience impacting on reputation, recruitment and retention.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

No major changes have been made to existing policy or practice. In order to reflect the combining of documentation a new Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is open.

### **Key words**

Programme, course, approval, management, Board of Studies

**Originator of the paper**

Tom Ward and Nichola Kett, Academic Services

12 September 2018

## **Background**

### **Curriculum and Student Progression Committee Meeting – 25 January 2018**

The Committee considered a paper which proposed consolidating existing documentation on programme and course approval, which consisted of both University policy and guidance in each College, into a single University suite of documents. This would support planned University-wide training for Conveners of Boards of Studies, and assist with other objectives e.g. compliance with Competition and Markets Authority requirements. The Committee approved the paper, and welcomed the plans to consolidate the documentation, which was expected to simplify processes further.

### **Board of Studies Convener and Secretary Training Sessions**

Three training sessions have been delivered and were well received. Attendees supported the consolidation of the documentation and the noted the lack of easily-accessible practical guidance as an issue.

### **Service Excellence**

The work undertaken to consolidate documentation supports the longer-term aims of the Programme and Course Information Management strand of the Service Excellence Programme <https://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/project/sas010>. It is likely that Service Excellence will lead to business changes that will require further policy changes in relation to aspects of programme and courses approval and management in due course. Having all relevant policy consolidated into a single document will make it easier to consider and facilitate such changes.

### **Internal Audit Recommendations**

In academic session 2017/18, an internal audit of the set up and withdrawal of academic programmes was carried out. The recommendations which have been addressed as part of the work to consolidate existing documentation are:

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
There should be a comprehensive workflow process for the set up and withdrawal of academic programmes.	Partially addressed by the consolidation of documentation. Service Excellence is expected to deliver a more fundamental solution
There should be a defined two stage approval process for the College stage of developing new academic programmes. This should be formalised in University policy. This should clearly specify that more detailed information (Degree Programme Specification, Business Case, Market Research etc) should not be provided until the second stage of the process.	All three Colleges have at least a two stage process, apart from for undergraduate programmes in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. Service Excellence will look at the stages for approval.
It should be a formal requirement that business cases are prepared on a University-wide template.	The revised Policy sets out standard expectations for the content of business cases for new programmes. The existing Fee Strategy programme proposal template already includes a standard template for business cases. It is possible that Service Excellence will lead to further standardisation.
<u>Advisory</u> Consulting with students: Consideration should be given as to whether Policy should be more definitive as to what is required.	Examples of how students can be involved have been added to the practical guidance and these will also be discussed at a Board

	of Studies Convenors and Secretaries Network event.
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## Updates to the Policy

### Overview

The consolidation exercise has resulted in documentation/links to documentation being provided in one web location <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum> (to be published shortly) in order to support effective course and programme approval and management. Documentation has also been simplified by combining one existing procedure into the Policy, along with content from the Boards of Studies Terms of reference into one document and removing duplicated content. Finally, practical guidance has been developed to support the implementation of the Policy.

### Board of Studies Terms of Reference

The contents of the Boards of Studies Terms of Reference, which was a separate document, has been integrated within the Policy. The 1966 Higher Education Act gives Court the following powers by resolution on the recommendation of / following consultation with Senate: "...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."

At present, the University's Boards of Studies Terms of Reference document (<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boardofstudies.pdf>) is a long and detailed document, which in some details are inconsistent with the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy. For example, it says that Boards can "approve minor changes to existing courses", whereas the Policy says that Course Organisers can do this. These inconsistencies have emerged over time as the Committee has decided to amend the Policy, but no steps have been taken to undertake the more onerous process of amending the Terms of Reference (which require approval from Senate and Court). Even if steps were taken to revise the Terms of Reference to reflect the current policy, it is likely that further inconsistencies will emerge in future, since there will be pressures to amend the Policy at short notice (e.g. to address Competition and Markets Authority requirements), and it may be unrealistic to amend the Terms of Reference on the same timescale.

It is not desirable to have two different documents which overlap in content, and which staff have to read in conjunction in order to understand how Boards should operate and what powers they have. It is particularly undesirable to have documents that are inconsistent with each other. In order to address this issue, The Committee is asked **to approve** the following way forward:

- **Support the proposal for University Court to regulate the small number of high-level Board of Studies matters as outlined in the Act and for responsibility for the regulation of other more operational matters to be delegated to the Committee.** If the Committee supports this proposal, approval will be sought from University Court as soon as possible for a simplified Terms of Reference that will set out basic principles in order to ensure good governance, but which will allow this Committee considerable flexibility to determine the operation and powers of Boards of Studies.
- **Support the immediate incorporation into the Policy** of the main aspects of the operation and remit of Boards that are currently set out in the Terms of Reference (where they are not already covered in the Policy), without making any material changes to the provisions in the Terms of Reference. This will be a major step towards consolidating and simplifying the documentation, since it would mean staff no longer need to consult the Terms of Reference. In the intervening period, there will continue to be some inconsistencies between the Policy, but no more than at present.
- **Once the new Terms of Reference are in place**, have a more fundamental review of whether the current position on operation, remit and membership of Boards of Studies remains appropriate, and amend the Policy to make any changes.

## **Business Case**

At present, the three Colleges' guidelines provide relatively similar guidance on business cases, whereas the University-level policy includes no provisions at all for Business Cases. The recommendations of the 2017-18 Internal Audit (see above) point to greater institutional consistency in business planning for new programmes. Similarly, the University's Recruitment Strategy, approved in 2016, recommended that the University "Strengthen the business case for new programmes and courses to systematically explain strategic rationale, engage with available market intelligence, and include robust student number projections, and an assessment of costs and minimum numbers required to ensure viability." In order to assist the University to give greater priority and consistency to the business case side of new programmes, the revised Policy includes a new section that sets out the key requirements for Business Cases for new programmes, and points to sources of support. This new section draws heavily on the current content of the Colleges' guidelines. The incorporation of this section in the University Policy should allow the Colleges to rationalise their guidelines.

## **Practical Guidance**

College Office contacts identified a lack of practical guidance on implementing the Policy as the main reason for the existence of separate College guidance. Boards of Studies training session attendees also noted that documentation on programme and course approval and management was located in many different locations. Therefore, additional web-based content was developed to support programme and course approval and management. Colleagues from College Offices, the Institute for Academic Development, the Timetabling Unit, the Careers Services, Academic Services and the Students' Association have been involved in developing content. A colleague from the Service Excellence Programme was given access to the SharePoint site where content was developed.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum> (to be published shortly)

## **Non-Credit Bearing Online Course Approval: Procedure for External Release**

The contents of this short Procedure have been incorporated into the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy with some minor changes to reflect current practice.

## **Non-Credit Bearing Continuing Professional Development**

The Policy has been updated to reflect non-credit bearing continuing professional development being within the remit of the Board of Studies as detailed in the Terms of Reference. Minimum information that should be presented to the Board for consideration has been proposed based on the information required for non-credit bearing online courses for external release.

## **Change to the deadline for approval of new courses**

Following feedback from a Boards of Studies training session, it transpired that the statement in the current version of the Policy that new courses could be approved 'prior to the semester in which they will run' was problematic due to logistical issues. Discussions were held with the Timetabling Unit and the proposed new approval timescale is detailed in the Policy.

## **Distance/Flexible PhD Programmes – Additional School Requirements Checklist**

This operational checklist has been removed from the Policy and is available as guidance on the website.

## **Competition and Markets Authority guidelines**

The section of the Policy relating to the management of changes to programmes has been updated to reflect changing understandings regarding how the Competition and Markets Authority is likely to view Universities' contractual obligations to students in the event of changes to programmes, taking account of recent cases, for example:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/university-improves-its-approach-to-dealing-with-course-changes>

Communications and Marketing and Legal Services are content with these changes.

### **Criteria for Proposals**

The requirement for programme proposals to demonstrate evidence of consideration of the University's Strategic Plan has been changed to the requirement that programme and course proposals demonstrate evidence of the relevant internal strategic context. This better reflects the range of strategies that may be relevant to courses and programmes. The content of the table has also been simplified.

### **Key issues to consider when developing proposals**

This operational content has been removed from the Policy as this type of content is covered within the practical guidance and College documentation.

### **Further Work**

Guidance on the Course Creation and Maintenance software used to view, create, amend and close courses in EUCLID will be reviewed in light of the development of the practical guidance. Additionally, attendees at a Board of Studies training session requested further guidance on what constitutes major and minor changes to an existing programme.

### **Summary of proposed next steps**

- Adopt the proposed revisions to the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy, and publish and communicate to Schools with immediate effect;
- With immediate effect, deleting the Non-Credit Bearing Online Course Approval: Procedure for External Release
- Encourage Colleges to review their guidance documents to remove material that duplicates that included in the revised Policy (eg regarding business planning)
- Develop a simplified Boards of Studies Terms of Reference document and present it to the Committee for comment on 22 November 2018, before seeking approval by resolution from Court (starting with the Court meeting on 1 December 2018);
- Once the simplified Boards of Studies terms of Reference document is in place, invite the Committee to have a more fundamental review of whether the current position on operation, remit and membership of Boards of Studies remains appropriate.

These steps will lead to substantial progress in simplifying and consolidating policy and guidance regarding programme and course development and approval. However, this is likely to be the first step on a longer journey, since the process of rationalisation of College document is likely to take time, and the Service Excellence Programme and Course Information Management project is likely to lead to proposals for changes to policy and business process.



# Programme and Course Approval and Management

## Purpose of Policy

This Policy outlines for staff and students the University's approach to programme and course approval and management (including design, development, approval, changes and closure, but not monitoring) [and how Boards of Studies operate](#).

## Overview

The Policy was developed following the publication of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

Applies to staff and students who are involved in programme and course design, development, approval, changes and closure and to both taught and research programmes [and all Boards of Studies and the staff and student members in every School/Deanery](#). ~~The University's Quality Framework covers annual and periodic monitoring and review.~~ This Policy covers all-credit bearing provision, [non-credit bearing online courses for external release, and non-credit bearing continuing professional development courses, including postgraduate research as well as taught courses and programmes, and online learning as well as on-campus provision](#).

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## Document control

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Approved:</b> 24.11.16	<b>Starts:</b> 22.09.16	<b>Equality impact assessment:</b> <a href="#">0324.0911.1846</a>	<b>Amendments:</b> <a href="#">24.11.16</a> <a href="#">20.09.18</a>	<b>Next Review:</b> <a href="#">2021/19/2022</a> 0
<b>Approving authority</b>	Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee <a href="#">and University Court for the associated resolution</a>				
<b>Consultation undertaken</b>	Staff in Schools, Colleges and support departments (including those who formed the Working Group), students, Project Board				
<b>Section responsible for policy maintenance &amp; review</b>	Academic Services				
<b>Related policies, procedures, guidelines &amp; regulations</b>	<a href="#">Curriculum webpages</a> (Academic Services) <a href="#">Enhanced Course Descriptor Guidance</a> <a href="#">Non-Credit Bearing Online Course Approval: Procedure for External Release</a>				
<b>UK Quality Code</b>	Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval				
<b>Policies superseded by this policy</b>	Draft University Level Principles for Programme and Course Design, Development, Approval, Changes and Closure <a href="#">Non-Credit Bearing Online Course Approval: Procedure for External Release</a> <a href="#">Board of Studies Terms of Reference</a> <b>(subject to approval from Court)</b>				
<b>Alternative format</b>	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 650 2138.				



# Programme and Course Approval and Management

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# Programme and Course Approval and Management

## Introduction

The University is required to have strategic oversight of and to consistently apply effective processes for the design, development, approval, changes and closure of programmes and courses. Programmes and courses are defined in the University’s [glossary of terms](#).

This Policy, and the [curriculum](#) pages of the Academic Services website, constitute the University’s approach to and management of the processes for design, development, approval, changes and closure of programmes and courses. Supplementary College level guidance provides additional information on local practice such as timescales, specifics roles and responsibilities, and templates.

[College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science—undergraduate | postgraduate](#)  
[College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine](#)  
[College of Science and Engineering](#)

## Programme and Course Design and Development

Programme and course **design** is a creative activity which may result in innovative ideas for higher education provision. It is followed by a process of **development** which leads to the creation of a programme or course. This is where the content, modes of delivery, structure and components of the programme or course (including assessment and feedback methods and the means by which students will be engaged with the curriculum) are considered and, for programmes, developed into a coherent programme of study. This development process may also be used to enhance an existing programme, for example in response to the outcomes of programme monitoring and review. Programme [and course](#) design and development is carried out at the School or subject area level.

## Criteria for Key Issues to Address in Proposals for Credit-Bearing Courses and Programmes

Programme and course proposals must demonstrate the following (please note: some aspects are not directly relevant for postgraduate research programmes):

Programmes	Courses
Purpose	
Learning outcomes (LOs) necessary to meet that purpose.	
Mechanisms by which students demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the LOs.	
Organisational aspects such as workload, volume and nature of assessment in order for students to meet LOs.	
Details of the level of award and credits	Details of the credit level and credits
The programme as a whole is coherent	The relationship of the course to programme(s) and how the course delivers and assesses the learning outcomes set out in the Degree Programme Specification (not applicable for standalone courses).
<a href="#">Minimum entry requirements for entry to the programme</a>	
Where other Schools are involved and/or impacted: evidence of consultation; consideration; communication of impact; and support for the proposal. Confirmation of primary responsibility should be defined at the outset (there can only be one owning School).	
Consultation with relevant support services (e.g. Library, <a href="#">Information Services GroupS</a> ) and (where relevant) any external providers/contacts (e.g. employers, alumni, business, industry or professional contacts)	



# Programme and Course Approval and Management

Programmes	Courses
<p><b>Evidence of consideration of Internal Reference Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Course and programme proposals should take account of the relevant internal strategic context. This may include: a School strategy; a College strategy; the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy; and/or the University's Strategic Plan.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Degree and Assessment Regulations</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The University of Edinburgh's Strategic Plan 2016-2021</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Curriculum Framework</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Graduate Attributes Framework</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Work-based and Placement Learning Policy (as appropriate)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Online Distance Learning Policy (as appropriate)</a></li> </ul> <p><del><b>Evidence of consideration of Internal Reference Points:</b></del></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del><a href="#">Degree and Assessment Regulations</a></del></li> <li>• <del><a href="#">The Curriculum Framework</a></del></li> <li>• <del><a href="#">The Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles Policy</a></del></li> <li>• <del><a href="#">The Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy</a></del></li> <li>• <del><a href="#">The Graduate Attributes Framework</a></del></li> <li>• <del><a href="#">Work-based and Placement Learning Policy</a></del></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Evidence of consideration of External Reference Points (as appropriate for courses):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">QAA Subject Benchmark Statements</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)</a></li> <li>• Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements</li> <li>• Employers and Industry</li> </ul> <p><del><b>Evidence of consideration of External Reference Points (as appropriate):</b></del></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del><a href="#">QAA Subject Benchmark Statements</a></del></li> <li>• <del><a href="#">Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)</a></del></li> <li>• <del>Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements</del></li> <li>• <del>Employers and Industry</del></li> <li>• <del>Designing courses to be accessible so they do not present any unnecessary insurmountable barriers to students with protected characteristics</del></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Accessibility</b> Designing courses and programmes to be accessible to all students and to avoid <del>so they do not present</del> any unnecessary <del>insurmountable</del> barriers to students with protected characteristics</p>	
<p><b>Student involvement</b> Students must be proactively involved at the earliest practicable point in programme and course design, development, approval, changes and closure processes. Their involvement should be proportional to the activity taking place and representative and could include student feedback from the quality assurance processes (course evaluations, student surveys, Staff Student Liaison Committee minutes etc.). The opportunity to be involved must allow for representation <del>of from</del> students with <a href="#">a range of backgrounds and characteristics</a>. <del>protected characteristics</del> Consultation should involve students academically closest to the proposed changes, <del>and be in line with the</del> <a href="#">Edinburgh University Students' Association and University Student Engagement Statement</a>.</p>	
<p><b>For Online Distance Learning</b> <a href="#">Online Distance Learning Policy</a></p>	
<p><b>Evidence of expertise from outside the programme-</b> In programme approval, the involvement of individuals external to the University is required to offer independence and objectivity to the decisions taken.</p>	



# Programme and Course Approval and Management

Key issues to consider when developing proposals include:

- Business case: potential student demand (market analysis); potential for funding; scale; resource implications (e.g. staffing, requirements for IT, library or other facilities, requirement for External Examiners).
- Curriculum, syllabus, assessment methods, feedback opportunities, timeline and profile of learning and assessments (aligning with the University's academic year), moderation methods.
- Whether a course is core, compulsory, optional and the implications this has for its assessment and for award and classification decisions.
- Whether the course or programme is compliant with the University's Curriculum Framework and academic year.
- How the course/programme/award fits into the subject or discipline environment.
- Sustainability, social responsibility, and internationalisation.
- Delivery method: campus-based, online, teaching team, lectures, tutorials, laboratories, practicals, field work, placements, year abroad, timing of delivery.
- Awards: proposals for programmes that involve new qualifications should include information about exit awards and whether the qualification can be awarded at Ordinary/Honours level or, for taught postgraduate degrees, includes the award of named diploma or certificate.

## Documentation for Proposals

Programme and course proposals must ensure a transparent and auditable 'paper-trail' providing a rationale for decisions. Documentary evidence must include the following:

Programmes	Courses
For taught programmes: <a href="#">Degree Programme Specification</a> (the final version is posted on the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study)	<a href="#">Course creation, approval and maintenance information (EUCLID)</a>
Details of the structure of the programme (informs the Degree Programme Table once the programme is approved)	More detailed documentation requirements will be in College Guidance.
<a href="#">Distance / Flexible PhDs — Checklist (see Annex)</a>	
<a href="#">Business case - Fee Strategy Group programme proposal template.</a> <a href="#">Also needs to be submitted for approval to Fee Strategy Group</a> for proposals for non-standard tuition fee arrangements <a href="#">and all taught postgraduate programmes.</a>	
More detailed documentation requirements will be in College Guidance	

Following approval of a programme: (1) complete [New Programme Request Form](#) and (2) create [Degree Programme Table](#).

## Business Case for New Programmes

All proposals for a new programme, at all levels of study, must be accompanied by a business case.

A Business Case should include all forecast student numbers, costs and income for the first year of the programme and four subsequent years.



## Programme and Course Approval and Management

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The Business Case should include:

- Projected student enrolments for year one and four subsequent years
- Projected costs and income for these years, including proposed tuition fee arrangements (tuition fee arrangements not applicable for undergraduate programmes)

Factors to consider in preparing your Business Plan include:

- How the programme contributes to School(s)-/ College(s) or University strategic Plans, and / or the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy
- How does the programme fit within any existing School or College suite of programmes and how does it relate to active areas of research work?
- How many programmes have been launched within the school in the past 5 years within your subject area and how many existing programmes have been closed?
- Can any existing courses from current programmes be used and of so are there sufficient spaces to accommodate additional students?
- How do you intend on growing the programme over the coming years?
- How will the programme be sustainably resourced (e.g. staffing such as tutors including new and reallocation of existing staff (academic or professional services), additional teaching, laboratory facilities, Library and Computing service provision etc.?)
- Would students on the programme be eligible for any scholarships?
- Does the number of FTE staff per student ratio look realistic given the forecast student numbers?
- If the programme is shared across Schools/Colleges what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure suitable programme management (both academic and administrative)
- If the programme is a joint or collaborative programme with an external institution the case must include all relevant documentation such as the memorandum of understanding. Further advice for such partnerships can be sought from contacts on the Collaborations wiki

The Business Case should incorporate the outcomes of market insight, which should address at least some of the following:

- Who is the target market and how will the University specifically market the programme to them?
- What is the forecast market size - how many new students would this programme attract and on what basis are you estimating this?
- Where are these students likely to come from? UK/ EU / Overseas?
- What is the demand for graduates with the qualification?
- What competitor programmes exist, what is the going rate for their fees, what are their unique selling points, and what is the unique selling point of the proposed programme?

The Business Case should also incorporate a marketing strategy. Factors to consider when writing your marketing strategy include:

- Which global and local markets do you think this programme will appeal to?
- What are the proposed tuition fees for both home and overseas students and how does this compare with your competitors?
- What are the possible career destinations for your graduates?
- Would employers be receptive to employing students who have completed this programme? Are there any opportunities for employer endorsements?]



# Programme and Course Approval and Management

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Communications and Marketing can provide assistance and support for conducting market research (market pulse and competitor analysis). <http://www.ed.ac.uk/communications-marketing/market-insight>

Guidance regarding conducting a competitor analysis and gauging market demand is available on internet at [LINK](#)

Colleges may provide additional guidance and support for developing business cases and conducting market research, and about how the review of Business Cases relates to the academic approval processes for new programmes.

## **Key Committees Responsible for Programme and Course Approval, Changes and Closure**

### **School Boards of Studies**

See below for information regarding the membership, remit and operation of Boards of Studies

### **College Committee**

Each College should produce a clear Terms of Reference setting out the remit, membership and operation of their Committee(s) responsible for programme and course approval and management.

### **Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee**

The membership, remit and operation of CSPC are detailed in the [Committee's Terms of Reference](#).

## **School Boards of Studies**

The constitution, composition, and number of Boards of Studies are regulated by Court Resolution No 18/2015. The following are the key points:

### **Purpose and Remit**

- Each School has at least one Board of Studies which considers proposals for new, changes to, and/or closure of existing courses, programmes and awards. They cover all credit-bearing provisions, non-credit bearing online courses for external release, and non-credit bearing continuing professional development courses. They also keep teaching, learning and assessment methodologies under review and offer advice on the School's portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- Boards of Studies ensure that proposals are academically appropriate and supported by evidence and documentation. They ensure that all interested parties in the University are aware of proposals.
- Boards of Studies annually approve UNISTATS (formerly Key Information Set) Learning, Teaching and Assessment course information and Degree Programme Accreditation information, recording this approval in the Board of Studies' minutes.
- Boards of Studies have responsibility for the formal oversight of programme and course handbooks. In practice the approval of handbooks can be delegated to members of staff within a School as part of an approvals process that ensures accuracy of information and all handbooks are approved prior to the commencement of a course or programme. Boards of



## Programme and Course Approval and Management

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Studies need to have formal oversight of the approvals process and would be expected to record that handbooks had been approved at the relevant Board of Studies meeting.

- Boards of Studies consider and report ~~its~~their views on any other academic matter to the appropriate College(s) and/or Colleges committee(s), whether independently or in response to a College or University request.

### Composition

- The Head of the relevant School appoints a Convener and Deputy Convener, who must both be academic members of staff, for each Board of Studies in the School. The Convener and Deputy Convener are eligible for appointment for a period of three years and may be re-appointed. In the absence of the Convener at any meeting, the Board of Studies is chaired by the Deputy Convener. The Convener or Chair of the meeting shall have both a deliberative and a casting vote. The Convener of a Board of Studies cannot also convene the College committee to which the Board reports.
- Boards of Studies consist of academic and administrative staff in the University and other people appointed by the relevant College(s). All staff involved in the teaching of a degree programme should be a member of the relevant Board of Studies.
- Each Board of Studies is composed of the teaching members and student representatives of the relevant discipline areas.

Each Board of Studies has at least one student member from a relevant discipline. ~~Student representatives:~~ Student members need to represent the range of subjects covered by the Board and to be linked to the appropriate School Representation structure. If student members are unable to attend, it is appropriate for them to send an alternate student representative or provide comments to the Board of Studies in advance. For student members, the School ~~should~~can invite the School Convener, School Undergraduate Vice Convener, and/or School Postgraduate Vice Convener who was elected in the Edinburgh University Students Association (the Students' Association) elections in the first instance. If they are unable to attend, other possible student members are other Student Representatives who have attended the Students' Association's representation training.

- Each Board of Studies has at least one external member from another Board of Studies within the University. This may be a representative or representatives from other Schools with subject areas with strong links to the Board of Studies' discipline areas.
- The Head of School and the Director of Teaching or equivalent in a School, are members of each Board of Studies in their School.
- 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.
- At the beginning of each academic session each School produces an agreed list of the members of its ~~list of members of Board(s) of Studies is maintained by the School.~~
- Quorum: 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. ~~Colleges may have particular requirements detailed in their guidance.~~

### Governance

List of Members and Composition: At the beginning of each academic session each School produces an agreed list of the members of its Board(s) of Studies and makes this available online and/or sends it to their College Office. This membership needs to align with the Board of Studies Terms of Reference and must include relevant student and external members. It can include



## Programme and Course Approval and Management

members from other areas of the University, for example from other Schools or from relevant support services.

- Boards of Studies may make nominations for representation of their members on relevant College committees.
- Boards of Studies shall report direct to the relevant College committee(s) as necessary, but at least annually.
- Boards of Studies shall liaise with relevant School and College committees and with specific managers and offices in respect of issues or instances where matters of academic policy intersect with management issues.

### Operation

- Boards of Studies must meet at least once in each academic year. This meeting cannot be a virtual or electronic meeting.

Timing of Meetings: The timing of Board of Studies meetings should align with the School and College committees to which the Board reports, and any other key dates.

- Boards of Studies shall hold such meetings as the Convener may call, including electronic or virtual meetings.
- The Convener must call a meeting of the Board when at least one-fifth of its members request this meeting in writing.
- Boards of Studies may appoint sub-committees which at the discretion of the Board may report either to the Board or direct to the relevant College(s) or College committee(s).
- A College may nominate another committee to operate as a Board of Studies. All provisions of these Terms of Reference apply to that committee when it is functioning as a Board of Studies.
- The Head of School or ~~his or her~~their nominee will be responsible for ensuring the provision of secretariat support for the Board of Studies.

### Key Issues to Consider when Scrutinising Proposals for Credit-bearing Courses and Programmes

When reviewing proposals, Boards of Studies and College Committees should consider:

- Whether the proposals adequately address the Key Issues set out above;
- Whether the proposals are academically rigorous and would lead to a high quality student experience;
- Whether the documentation is complete;
- Whether the business case is robust (Note that in some cases Schools / Colleges will consider the business case via a separate route to the Board of Studies / Committee).

### Credit-Bearing Programme and Course Approval, Changes and Closure – Levels of approval

The University programme and course approval, changes and closure processes ensure institutional oversight of standards and quality. Authority is delegated by the University, via the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC), to Colleges and, where appropriate, to School Boards of Studies. Colleges may elect to wholly delegate the authority to approve all major changes to existing credit-bearing courses, proposals for new courses, and closure of courses to Schools but must retain a method of oversight, particularly to ensure that decisions are taken independently of the home subject area of the course. Colleges must retain



## Programme and Course Approval and Management

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authority to approve major changes to existing programmes and new programmes, and the closure of programmes. All programmes and courses are approved indefinitely unless otherwise stated.

### Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

The remit and operation of CSPC are detailed in the Committee's Terms of Reference.

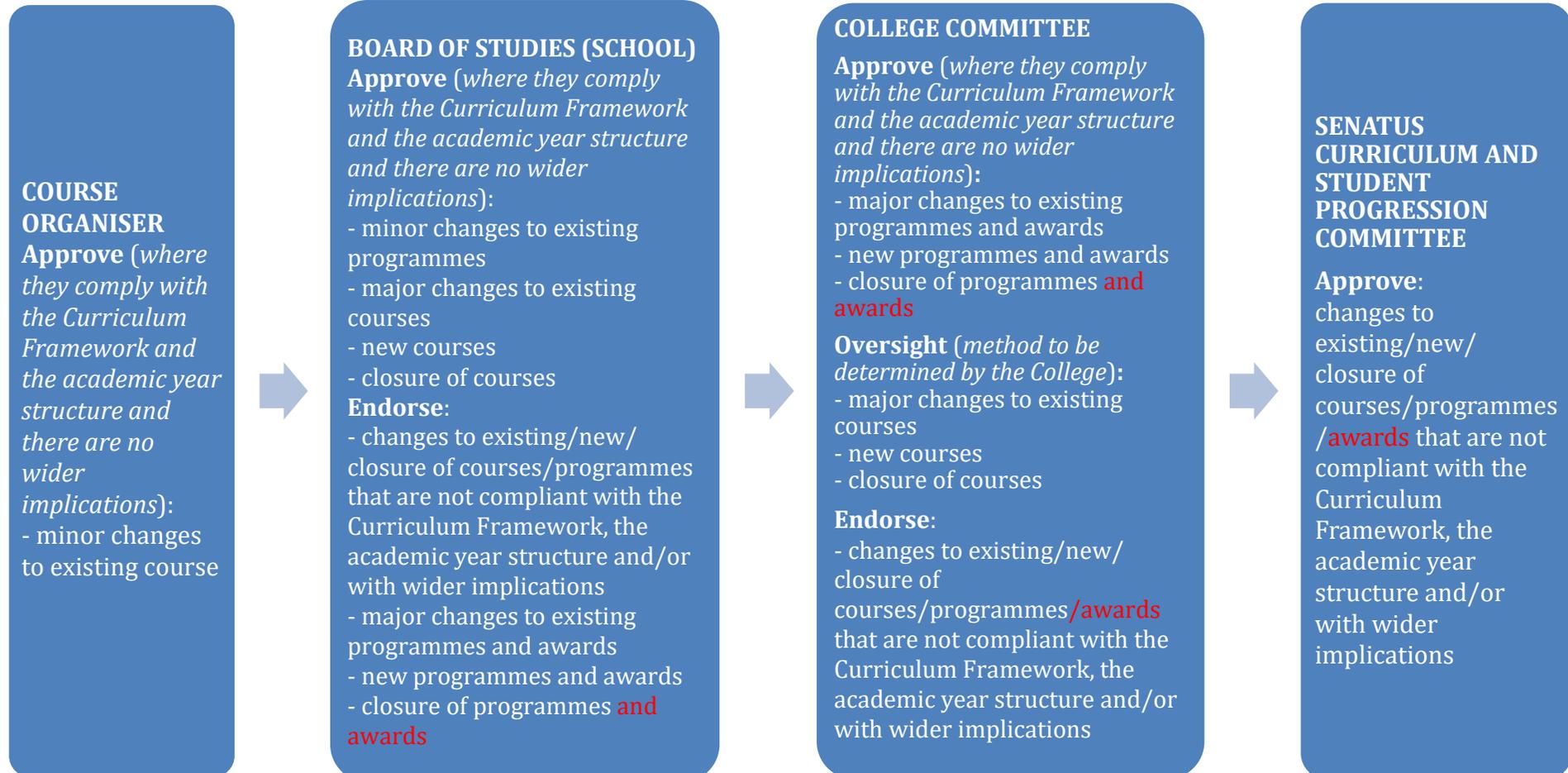
### College Committee

Each College should produce a clear Terms of Reference setting out the remit and operation of their Committee(s) responsible for programme and course approval and management.



## Programme and Course Approval and Management

Minimum Levels of Approval (all stages prior to where a decision is approved should be completed)



## Minor and Major Changes to Existing Programmes

Changes to any of the following are **major** and require College approval:

- The name of the programme: any change made to the name of a programme, other than to correct spelling or syntax, is considered a 'major change' and requires a new programme to be proposed and approved.
- The overall content of the programme: major change to the content of a programme is defined as the addition or closure of courses or major changes to existing courses (see below 'Minor and Major Changes to Existing Courses') comprising 20% of the total credit volume of the programme, or at least 50% of the credit volume in any single year of the programme.
- The overall approach to assessment for the programme.
- The structure of a programme: major change to the structure of a programme is defined as a change in the balance of credits between different components of the programme (e.g. between core/option courses or dissertation/taught courses) comprising 20% of the total credits of the programme, or at least 50% of the credits in any single year of the programme.
- The mode of study – part time, full time or intermittent
- The place of study - on campus or distance learning
- The period of study
- Collaboration or change of partner
- The home School or College

All other categories are regarded as **minor** change and therefore can be approved at School level.

## Minor and Major Changes to Existing Courses

The categories outlined below are regarded as **major** changes:

- Name of the course\*
- Level of the course\*
- Credit value\*
- Learning outcomes
- Balance of assessment types and their weightings (components of assessment)
- Home subject area\*

\* Will result in a new course being created

Changes to all other categories, which generally cover course content and administrative aspects, (e.g. course descriptions, transferable skills, reading lists/learning resources, Course Organiser and Secretary, and delivery information) are regarded as **minor**. As a minimum, Course Organisers can approve these changes (with the exception of changes to the Course Organiser and Course Secretary) although Schools may choose to add an additional level of approval for these changes, for example, to ensure programme coherence. Decisions regarding changes of Course Organiser and Course Secretary are management decisions made by the School in line with normal practices.

## Programme and Course Approval, Changes and Closure – Responsibilities

~~This Policy covers academic aspects of programme and course design, development, approval, changes and closure. The responsibility for consideration of the business case and resourcing aspects resides with the School (or Deanery in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine)~~

and/or College and takes place in consultation with other support services as appropriate. Information on the requirements for business case and resourcing aspects will be detailed in College level guidance.

### ~~Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee~~

~~The remit and operation of CSPPC are detailed in the Committee's Terms of Reference.~~

### ~~College Committee~~

~~Each College should produce a clear Terms of Reference setting out the remit and operation of their Committee(s) responsible for programme and course approval and management.~~

### ~~School Boards of Studies~~

~~The University's Board of Studies Terms of Reference sets out the purpose, role, remit, governance, operation and composition of Boards of Studies. The text below provides some supplementary guidance on specific aspects of the Terms of Reference (ToR).~~

~~List of Members and Composition: At the beginning of each academic session each School produces an agreed list of the members of its Board(s) of Studies and makes this available online and/or sends it to their College Office. This membership needs to align with the Board of Studies Terms of Reference and must include relevant student and external members. It can include members from other areas of the University, for example from other Schools or from relevant support services.~~

~~Quorum: 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. Colleges may have particular requirements detailed in their guidance.~~

~~Student representatives: Student members need to represent the range of subjects covered by the Board and to be linked to the appropriate School Representation structure. If student members are unable to attend, it is appropriate for them to send an alternate student representative or provide comments to the Board of Studies in advance. For student members, the School should invite the School Convener, School Undergraduate Vice Convener, and/or School Postgraduate Vice Convener who was elected in the Edinburgh University Students Association (the Students' Association) elections in the first instance. If they are unable to attend, other possible student members are other Student Representatives who have attended the Students' Association's representation training.~~

~~Timing of Meetings: The timing of Board of Studies meetings should align with the School and College committees to which the Board reports, and any other key dates.~~

~~Key Information Sets and Accreditation Information: Boards of Studies are responsible for the annual approval of Key Information Set Learning, Teaching and Assessment course information and Degree Programme Accreditation information.~~

### **Timescales for approval of proposals for new/changes to existing for-credit courses and programmes and changes to existing courses and programmes**

It is important that accurate information regarding programmes is available to applicants when they submit their applications, and to offer-holders when they decide whether to accept offers. As such,

Colleges need to approve new programmes and significant changes to existing programmes sufficiently early that accurate and complete information can be included in the relevant corporate publications. Failure to meet these timescales will result in Schools / Colleges having to undertake additional communications with applicants and offer-holders. It may also create additional obligations towards those applicants and offer-holders, and expose the University to reputational and financial risk.

It is also important that accurate information regarding courses is available well in advance of the academic session, to enable students to make informed decisions regarding their choices of courses and to prepare for their studies.

Schools / Colleges should therefore normally approve proposals within the following timescales.

	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Postgraduate</b>
<b>New programmes</b>	November, for the admissions cycle starting the following September (ie <u>20-21</u> months in advance of entry of students onto the programme)	By April, for the admissions cycle starting in October, for entry the following September (ie 16 months in advance of entry of students onto the programme) – to allow for inclusion in Print School-level Brochures.  In principle, if the programme is not to be included in the Print School Brochures, Schools could approve new programmes later than this (eg as late as July for programmes opening for applications in October). However, in practice, this is rarely advisable since it leaves little time for recruitment.
<b>Major changes to existing programmes</b>	Aim for same timescales as for new programmes, although it can be possible to approve changes as late as August, for the admissions cycle starting in September, as long as the Print Prospectus entry has anticipated these changes.	Aim for same timescales as for new programmes, although it can be possible to approve changes as late as September for the admissions cycle starting in October, as long as the entry in the Print School Brochure has anticipated these changes.
<b>Programme closure to new entrants</b>	Timescales as for new programmes. In exceptional circumstances, a programme may be closed later, providing no applications have been received.	Timescales as for new programmes. In exceptional circumstances, a programme may be closed later, providing no applications have been received.
<b>New courses</b>	<u>By the end of March for the following session unless in exceptional circumstances and providing that students</u>	<u>By the end of March for the following session unless in exceptional circumstances and providing that students</u>

	<a href="#"><u>are able to take the course (e.g. the course can be resourced, timetabled and students are able to sign up), in which case P</u></a> prior to the Semester in which they are to run.	<a href="#"><u>are able to take the course (e.g. the course can be resourced, timetabled and students are able to sign up), in which case P</u></a> prior to the Semester in which they are to run.
<b>Changes to or closure of existing courses</b>	<p>Where this would constitute a major change to published information about -the future structure and content of a programme, the same timescales apply as for major changes to existing programmes</p> <p>Otherwise, Schools should aim to make changes by the end of March, for the following session (although minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August, for example to take account of issues raised during the course review and monitoring)</p>	<p>Where this would constitute a major change to published information about the future structure and content of a programme, the same timescales apply as for major changes to existing programmes</p> <p>Otherwise, Schools should aim to make changes by the end of March, for the following session (although minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August, for example to take account of issues raised during the course review and monitoring)</p>

### Arrangements for publishing information on approved courses and programmes

Programme and course information is entered into EUCLID, which feeds information to the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS), and forms the definitive record of programmes and courses. In addition to these publications, Schools / Colleges are responsible for publishing accurate, complete and up to date information on approved courses and programmes in other corporate publications for recruitment purposes. The timescales for publication are as follows:

<b>Publication</b>	<b>Type of information</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
EUCLID Course Descriptor	Detailed information regarding the course	Annual update to be complete by end of March, prior to publication of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) for the next session. Minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August.
Degree Programme Specification	Summary information including programme learning aims and objectives and how they are demonstrated and achieved	Annual update to be complete by end of March, prior to publication of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) for the next session.

Degree Programme Table	Information regarding the curriculum structure for the programme	Annual update to be complete by end of March, prior to publication of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) for the next session.
Key Information Sets (UG only)	Information regarding aspects of programmes including types of assessment and contact time.	End June, for the UCAS applications opening in September that year with entry the following September
Undergraduate Prospectus (Print)	<p>General subject/discipline overview, year by year breakdown of courses studied (relevant to the whole subject area), additional costs, and approach to learning and assessment, along with careers outcomes.</p> <p>Details of any professional accreditation, placements and careers opportunities.</p> <p>Location of study.</p> <p>Any significant changes to programmes anticipated, the details of which cannot yet be confirmed.</p>	Annual update to be complete and returned to Communications and Marketing by December for publication in March – for UCAS applications opening in September that year with entry the following September
Undergraduate Degree Finder (Online)	<p>Subject information as above for print prospectus.</p> <p>In addition, for programmes:</p> <p>Overview of the programme.</p> <p>Details of courses studied each year.</p> <p>Details of any professional accreditations, placements and careers opportunities.</p> <p>Location of study.</p> <p>Approach to learning and assessment.</p> <p>Any significant changes to programmes anticipated, the details of which cannot yet be confirmed.</p>	Timescales in line with Undergraduate (Print) Prospectus. Amendments approved after the December deadline can be made up to early August, before UCAS applications open.

	Entry requirements. Additional costs.	
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)	Brief summary regarding the reasons for studying the programme, along with brief information about career opportunities	Annual update to be undertaken by end of March for UCAS applications opening in September that year with entry the following September
Postgraduate School-Level Brochures (Print)	Programme level information including: summary description and structure; breakdown of compulsory and optional courses offered. Careers opportunities and additional costs Entry requirements	Annual update to be complete by July for publication in September to apply to applications for entry the following September.
Postgraduate Degree Finder (Online)	Programme title, award and study modes.  Programme description (PGT only) Programme structure (PGT and PGR) Learning outcomes (PGT only) Career opportunities (PGT only) Online learning (PGT only) Work placements / internships (PGT and PGR) Research profile (PGR only) Training and support (PGR only) Facilities (PGR only) Entry requirements Additional costs Scholarships and funding	Annual update to be complete by the end of September for applications opening on 1 October for entry the following September (note however that agreement for any changes to entry requirements must be secured early in line with Student Recruitment and Admissions policy)

### Changes to programmes – responsibilities to students, offer-holders and applicants

If, after starting to accept applications for a programme of study, a School or College approves any changes to the programme or to courses within it which lead to a divergence from that described in the published information regarding the programme, the School or College owning the programme is responsible for amending the published information at the earliest possible opportunity. This applies irrespective of the School which owns the individual courses that are changing.

If the approved changes are significant – ~~that is, they constitute ‘major’ changes to the programme (in the terms set out above), the professional accreditation / recognition status of the programme changes, or the location at which the programme is taught changes significantly (for example, the location of the owning School changes from one campus to another)~~ – the School or College is also responsible for:

- Informing all students, applicants and offer-holders about the changes at the earliest possible opportunity;
- Where students / applicants / offer-holders request this, seeking to offer a suitable replacement programme for which they are qualified at the University, or, if the University is unable to offer a suitable replacement programme, seeking to refer students / applicants / offer-holders to a comparable higher education institution offering a suitable replacement programme;

While it is not possible to provide a comprehensive definition of what may constitute a 'significant' change in a programme of study for these purposes, the following are examples of significant changes:

- 'Major' changes to the programme (in the terms set out in the section above)
- Any removal from the programme of courses that published information had indicated would definitely be available, and any introduction of new mandatory courses which reduces a student's choice
- The professional accreditation / recognition status of the programme changes
- The location at which the programme is taught changes significantly (for example, the location of the owning School changes from one campus to another)

In the event that students, offer-holders or applicants choose to withdraw as a result of significant changes to a programme, the University may also consider making an appropriate refund of tuition fees and deposits paid prior to notification of the change.

Student Recruitment and Admissions and Academic Services are able to provide Schools and Colleges with advice regarding whether any changes to a programme should be treated as 'significant' for these purposes.

### **Programme Closure – Responsibilities to Students**

Only in the most exceptional circumstances may a programme on which students have applied for, been offered a place on, have been accepted on, or are matriculated on be closed. In the event of such a decision the situation must be resolved in line with the University's admissions [Terms and Conditions](#). No programme may be withdrawn until the University's obligations to those students have been reasonably and fairly fulfilled. In addition, the University can have obligations to applicants to programmes even if no offer has been made. These obligations should also be considered before making a decision regarding programme closure.

In the event of closure of a programme, Schools must ensure appropriate management and resourcing of the final student cohorts in the programme to be closed. Collaborative partners must also be informed in a timely manner.

### **Collaboration/Partnerships**

In addition to following the normal development and approval processes for for-credit courses and programmes, all for-credit courses and programmes that involve collaboration with another institution require additional development and approval stages.

Details about the University's collaborative agreements and arrangements, and guidelines for developing [and approving](#) collaborative provision, are available from the Governance and Strategic Planning website: [Collaborative Activity](#)

### **Introducing New Degree Qualifications and deleting Degree Qualifications**

New degree qualifications, with degree titles not already used by the University, need to be approved by CSPC, on the basis of a proposal from the relevant College committee. CSPC asks the University Court for any necessary degree Resolution and adds the degree qualification title to the list of degrees in the annual Court Resolution on undergraduate or postgraduate degree regulations. The Resolution to create the degree qualification needs to come into effect before the University opens the programme for applications. The Secretary to CSPC can advise on whether a degree needs a Court Resolution. For example, an MA or BSc for a new discipline does not need a Resolution. [Colleges report the closure of degree qualifications to CSPC for approval and reporting to the University Court, for the annual degree regulations Resolution.](#)

### **Distance / Flexible PhDs**

[Guidance on what Schools can consider](#) ~~When~~ developing proposals for Distance / Flexible PhDs [is available at https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum](https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum), ~~Schools should consider the Checklist attached as an Appendix, along with the main body of this Policy.~~

### **Non-credit Bearing Provision – General Points**

[Boards of Studies are responsible for approving all new or revised non-credit bearing courses for external release and non-credit bearing continuing professional development courses. Approval processes are different to those for credit-bearing provision and are detailed below.](#)

[While the standard requirements and processes for credit-bearing courses and programmes do not all apply to non-credit provision, many of the principles do.](#)

### **Non-credit Bearing Online Courses for External Release (including Massive Open Online Courses, MOOCs)**

[Course teamsproposers must design and plan courses in consultation with Information Services Group, taking account of resourcing and establishing an appropriate timeframe.](#)

[Course teamsproposers must complete documentation which includes course aims, purpose and estimates of teaching support required for each course instance. Course documentation must be signed off by the appropriate Head\(s\) of School to provide confirmation that adequate resources are in place for delivery.](#)

[Academic aspects of the course are considered by the appropriate Board\(s\) of Studies for approval. Timely consideration by the Board may be required to meet the established timeframe for release.](#)

[For Massive Online Open Courses \(MOOCs\) only: a MOOC proposal form \[LINK\]\(#\) is also required for any new MOOC. The proposal form and course documentation is considered by the MOOC Strategy Group who must be assured that the School has adequate resources in place for the creation and delivery of the course, that adequate risk analysis has been carried out and that the relevant statutory requirements are met. The MOOC Strategy Group is authorised to trigger the release of the course, once all course materials have been developed and the appropriate Board\(s\) of Studies has approved the academic aspects of the course.](#)

### **Non-credit Bearing Continuing Professional Development Courses**

[Boards of Studies are responsible for considering and approving proposals for new or revised non-credit bearing continuing professional development courses. Proposals should detail the course aims, purpose and resourcing requirements as a minimum.](#)

## Programme and Course Management – Responsibilities

### Programmes

The Head of College is formally responsible for degree programmes. Within this overall responsibility each programme, and course within it, is owned by a particular School which ensures its management. The Head of School or Director of Teaching delegates responsibility for the management of a degree programme to a Programme Co-ordinator or Director (or equivalent).

### Courses

Course Organisers are responsible for individual courses within a School. The Head of School or Director of Teaching appoints Course Organisers to take responsibility for individual courses. The scope of the Course Organiser's remit varies according to local School organisation, but in outline the Course Organiser is responsible for:

- general course management
- assessment and feedback
- advising and supporting students on course-related matters
- monitoring and reviewing courses
- agreeing minor changes to courses

[Course Organiser: Outline of Role](#)

### Staff Support and Development

Training and support is available for those involved in programme and course design, development, approval, changes, and closure from the [Institute for Academic Development](#).

204 ~~September~~ ~~November~~ 2018~~6~~

## Appendix – Distance / Flexible PhD Programmes – Additional School Requirements

In deciding whether to set up a distance learning programme, or accept students once a programme has been established, the School should consider the following in addition to addressing the issues in the main body of the Policy:

Is distance learning research methods and generic skills training available online? If not, how will students access it?	
Availability of orientation programme	
Availability of training for potential supervisors of distance PhD students	
Have potential supervisors undergone training in supervising distance learning students?	
Supervision arrangements, including arrangements for joint supervisor/local advisor	
Is the technology available in the department to support supervising distance students?	
Is there a cohort, or likely to be a cohort in place?	
How will the School support a community and stimulating academic environment? Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— How to enable access to residential PhD student communities, research seminars or research groups</li> <li>— Technology-based solutions for capturing and streaming</li> </ul>	
Is English language support available on an online basis?	
What are the arrangements for conducting annual reviews and the viva?	
Will there be a requirement for study visits?	
— By the applicants to Edinburgh?	
— By the supervisor to the site of study?	
— If so, who is responsible for paying travel fees?	
— Will this be written into the student contract/memorandum of agreement?	
— Will the requirement be compatible with UKVI visa requirements?	
How will any student issues related to the distance learning nature of the programme be addressed?	
Do any potential funding bodies permit students to study by distance? (Note that some funding bodies require students to be resident where they are studying)	

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **Mitigating the academic impact on students of the Spring 2018 industrial action while maintaining academic standards – reflecting on the effectiveness of guidance and concessions**

### **Executive Summary**

Members of the University and College Union (UCU) undertook industrial action during February to April 2018. At an Exceptional Meeting held on 13 April 2018, the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee approved temporary guidance and concessions for Schools to mitigate the academic impact on students of the Spring 2018 industrial action while maintaining academic standards and the value of the University's awards. The Committee had agreed that, once the industrial action ended, it would reflect on how these temporary arrangements operated in practice, for example whether they have been as effective as anticipated in maintaining academic standards.

This paper provides an analysis of a range of evidence regarding the effectiveness of those arrangements. The key points from this analysis are that:

- Schools appear content that the guidance covered all relevant issues, although if future iterations of the guidance are required in future it may be helpful to include further guidance regarding:
  - the handling of disruption to dissertation supervision; and
  - alternate ways of covering content associated with cancelled teaching activities.
- In practice, the majority of the mitigation was achieved via prior to the Boards of Examiners stage (eg by modifying assessment, extending deadlines or providing teaching in alternate forms), meaning that in practice only a minority of the impact on students needed to be mitigated through action at Boards of Examiners;
- Boards of Examiners have made only modest (if any) use of some of the options available to them, meaning that the effectiveness of all those measures has not been fully tested;
- Colleges and External Examiners are content that Boards' actions to account for disruption were appropriate and robust, based on careful consideration of the interests' of students, and did not compromise academic standards;
- When required, the options available to Schools in the absence of External Examiners operated appropriately – but it is not clear whether these arrangements would have been sufficient to have enabled all Boards to have operated had a much larger number of External Examiners been absent as a result of the industrial action;
- While a minority students have used the National Student Survey or Postgraduate Taught Student Experience survey to raise concern regarding the impact of the industrial action on their studies, the relatively low number of academic appeals associated with

the industrial action suggests that few students were dissatisfied with the way that Boards of Examiners took account of the impact of the industrial action.

- Feedback from some Schools and from the NSS and PTES responses suggests that, in the event of future industrial action, the University should review the arrangements for communications with students.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

It will support the University's mission to provide the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning.

### **Action requested**

The Committee is invited to:

- Discuss the analysis and to identify any learning points for the University to take into account in the event of any future industrial action;
- Formally recognise the exceptional amount of time and effort employed by many staff, both academic and professional services, in mitigating the impact of the industrial action (including preparation for Boards of Examiners meetings).

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

N / A – the Committee is not being asked to approve a course of action.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

N / A – the Committee is not being asked to approve a course of action.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The proposed guidelines aimed to assist the University to manage the risks associated with maintaining academic standard while minimising the academic impact of the industrial action on students. By reflecting on the effectiveness of these measures, the Committee will assist the University to ensure that, in the event of any future industrial action, any steps to mitigate the academic impact on students are effective as possible while maintaining academic standards are as effective as possible.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

There is no need for this paper to be accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment since the Committee is not being asked to approve a change to policy or practice. The analysis set out in the paper did not identify any evidence of differential impact of the guidance and concessions on different student groups.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

Open

### **Key words**

### **Originator of the paper**

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services. 12 September 2018

## **Mitigating the academic impact on students of the Spring 2018 industrial action while maintaining academic standards – reflecting on the effectiveness of guidance and concessions**

### **1 Background**

In January 2018, members of the University of Edinburgh branch of University and Colleges Union (UCU) voted in favour of strike action and action short of a strike. The UCU subsequently asked Edinburgh members to take full-day strike action over a 4-week period:

- Week 1: Monday 26 February, Tuesday 27 February, Wednesday 28 February
- Week 2: Monday 5 March, Tuesday 6 March, Wednesday 7 March, Thursday 8 March
- Week 3: full week of strike action from Monday 12 March
- Week 4: Monday 19 March, Tuesday 20 March

The UCU also asked members to undertake action short of a strike, including:

- working to contract;
- not covering for absent colleagues;
- not rescheduling lectures or classes cancelled due to strike action; and
- not undertaking any voluntary activities.

The UCU also requested that External Examiners resign from their positions at USS participating institutions.

On 13 April 2018, the UCU announced the suspension of the industrial action.

### **2 Guidance and concessions**

A sub-group convened by Gavin Douglas (Deputy Secretary, Student Experience), with representation from Colleges, the Students' Association, Academic Services, Student Systems and Administration, and Communications and Marketing, took responsibility for monitoring the academic impact on students of the action, identifying ways that the University could minimise the academic impact on students while maintaining academic standards, overseeing student communications, and providing advice and guidance to Schools and Colleges. Having issued initial guidance to Schools in February / March 2018, the sub-group developed proposals for comprehensive guidance for staff with responsibility for Boards of Examiners, learning and teaching and research students, and student recruitment and conversion activities. This guidance incorporated a small number of temporary concessions to the Assessment and Degree Regulations to provide a greater degree of flexibility for Schools to manage teaching, learning and assessment while the impact of the industrial action on students is addressed. At an Exceptional Meeting held on 13 April 2018, the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee approved the comprehensive guidelines and associated concessions, which are available at:

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/industrial\\_action\\_exam\\_board\\_guidance\\_v\\_23052016.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/industrial_action_exam_board_guidance_v_23052016.pdf)

Academic Services issued the guidance to Schools and Colleges on 16 April 2018, and Student Systems subsequently issued guidance regarding how the Assessment and Progression Tools can support the guidance. Academic Services and Colleges subsequently covered the guidance at Boards of Examiners briefing sessions in April / May 2018. In addition, Academic Services and Student Systems delivered separate training / briefing for four Schools in CAHSS.

### **3 Reflection on effectiveness of the guidance and concessions**

#### **3.1 Did the guidance provide Schools with all the advice that they required?**

The Boards of Examiners briefing sessions were extremely well-attended, and feedback from these events and subsequent feedback via Colleges suggested that in general Schools welcomed the guidelines and found that they covered all the relevant issues and were sufficiently detailed to support robust and reliable decision-making whilst maintaining rigorous academic standards. Academic Services received very few requests for advice and guidance from staff in Schools regarding the interpretation and application of the guidance, which also suggested that the guidance provided Schools with all the advice that they required.

Feedback from Schools / Colleges did however suggest that it may have been helpful to have provided further guidance on two issues:

- **Taking account of disruption to dissertation supervision.** Discussion at these briefing sessions indicated that staff anticipated their Boards would find it particularly challenging to take account of the impact of the industrial action on Honours dissertations, and CAHSS subsequently supplemented the guidance by recommending that Schools ask all supervisors to complete a similar declaration to the course template (which the sub-group had developed to enable Schools to report to their Boards regarding the nature of any disruption to teaching, assessment, marking or moderation processes for any courses) to indicate how the supervision had been affected and what mitigation measures were put in place.
- **Alternate ways of covering missed content.** The guidance indicated that Schools may set assessments covering content that is associated with cancelled teaching activities, as long as that content has nonetheless been covered in a reasonable alternate way, for example through additional teaching activities or through material in reading lists and on VLEs. Feedback from one School suggested that it would have been helpful to have further guidance / examples of appropriate practices regarding alternate ways to cover missed content.

#### **3.2 Did the guidance enable Boards of Examiners to operate?**

The guidance included options to assist Schools to enable their Boards to operate during a period of industrial action, for example to meet requirements for quorum. In practice, since the UCU announced the suspension of the industrial action prior to the start of the May / June Boards of Examiners meetings, no Schools reported that they were facing issues regarding the operation of their Boards, with the exception of a small number of issues regarding the absence of External Examiners – see below. It therefore appears that, other than the options within the guidelines relating to External Examiners, Boards will not have needed to consider utilising the relevant sections of the guidance.

#### **3.3 Did the guidance enable Schools to put appropriate alternate arrangements in place in the event that External Examiners were not available to participate as a result of the industrial action?**

The guidance included temporary arrangements for Schools regarding issues such as setting examination papers, overseeing the moderation of assessed work, and holding Board of Examiner meetings in the absence of External Examiners (eg because an External Examiner has resigned and not been reappointed or replaced). Measures included using University academic staff from outside the School / College as substitutes for External Examiners (both to bring discipline-specific expertise, and to ensure that Boards operate appropriately – ‘independent moderators’ and ‘internal external’ examiners). These guidelines included a small number of concessions from normal University regulations.

In practice, few of these measures were needed because, while at least 30 External Examiners had announced their intention to resign as a result of the industrial action, the industrial action was suspended before the crucial period for External Examiner involvement and most of the Externals that had resigned subsequently agreed to recommence their work after the end of the industrial action.

However, two Schools did operate 'independent moderator' or 'internal external' examiner arrangements (three independent moderators and one internal external). The reports submitted by these members of staff indicate that they had discharged their responsibilities very diligently, and that they were satisfied with the operation of assessment arrangements. While it appears that, in this small number of situations, the substitution of independent moderators and internal externals for External Examiners did enable the University to be satisfied with the academic standards and appropriate operation of the Boards of Examiners, it is not clear whether these arrangements would have been sufficient to have enabled all Boards to have operated without External Examiners.

The University's Policy on External Examiners for Taught Programmes, and standard College appointment letters, do not specify a notice period for External Examiners that resign from their posts. Some institutions do specify notice periods (eg 3 months is common), and in autumn 2018 the Senate Quality Assurance Committee will be invited to consider introducing a formal notice period as part of its scheduled review of the Policy on External Examiners for Taught Programmes.

### **3.4 *Did the guidance enable Boards of Examiners to account for disruption when making course, progression and award decisions?***

#### **Feedback to Academic Services**

No Schools have reported to Academic Services or Colleges that their Boards of Examiners were unable to award credit, or make progression or award decisions, as a result of disruption associated with the industrial action. In addition, while the Committee had established a subgroup to consider possible concessions for pre-Honours students where a Board is unable to determine the progression status of a pre-Honours student, Academic Services did not receive any requests for concessions. This suggests that the guidance provided all Boards with sufficient options to enable them to account for the disruption.

#### **Analysis of use of Assessment and Progression Tools functionality**

Analysis of assessment outcomes recording in the Assessment and Progression Tools functionality, and of overall course results, suggests that in practice Boards of Examiners did not need to use some the options within the guidance at all and made relatively limited use of some others:

- While the guidance highlighted that in the event of severe disruption to assessment, Boards could declare a course a 'null sit' or award credit on aggregate (and Student Systems created new EUCLID outcome code for these options) – in practice Boards recorded no Null Sits or credit on aggregate due to industrial action.
- While the guidance indicated that Boards could award a 'Pass' where they did not have sufficient evidence to award a mark and grade, Boards only awarded 10 Pass grades for impacted courses.
- The proportion of component and assessment marks disregarded was higher in 2017-18 than 2016-17 (0.8% of component marks disregarded compared to 0.5%; 0.5% of assessment marks disregarded compared to 0.2%), which suggests that Boards made some modest use of the provision in the guidance to remove the weighting for affected components of assessment (although the increase could also be related to the additional number of Schools utilising the APT tools in 2017-18).

### **Feedback from Colleges and Schools**

Feedback to date from Colleges (taking account of minutes of Boards of Examiner meetings) and from a range of Schools (including feedback via the annual QA process) indicates that in general:

- For the majority of courses that were disrupted, Schools mitigated the impact of the disruption (in line with the guidance), and, where that happened, Boards of Examiners did not otherwise need to account for that disruption. Approaches to mitigation taken by Schools included:
  - Rescheduling teaching activities;
  - Covering the relevant content in alternate ways (eg by covering missed content in subsequent scheduled teaching sessions, or providing material in alternate format such as Learn);
  - Extending assessment deadlines;
  - (Perhaps more frequently) adjusting assessments so that they did not assess course content that had not been covered adequately due to the industrial action.
- The sub-group had developed a template to enable Schools to report to their Boards regarding the nature of any disruption to teaching, assessment, marking or moderation processes for any courses – feedback from CAHSS suggests that this was widely used and that Schools found it helpful. While the guidance to Schools (and to students) indicated that Schools were responsible for informing Boards of Examiners of any impact upon courses they are responsible for, and that students did not need to submit Special Circumstances because of the industrial action, one School appears to have relied on students reporting any disruption to their studies.
- In the minority of cases in which it was not possible to address in full the impact upon assessment of any disruption, Boards considered the nature of impact on students and the range of options available. Feedback from Schools, Colleges, and External Examiners (see below) suggests that Boards carried out these responsibilities diligently and with careful consideration of the interests of students, in line with the guidance. Of the options available to Boards, the most commonly used were adjusting or removing the weightings for affected assessment, and making marking adjustments (ie standard setting). In line with the analysis of APT data (see above), feedback from Colleges suggests that Boards did not make use of the option of declaring courses a null sit.
- In addition to taking account of any disruption due to the industrial action, Boards of Examiners also took account of disruption caused by the extreme weather (snow) during Semester Two.
- It is clear that a large number of staff (both academic and professional services) committed exceptional amount of time and effort to mitigating the impact of the industrial action (including preparation for Boards of Examiners meetings).
- Several Schools commented that they felt there was scope to improve communications to students, for example to provide greater clarity regarding who was responsible for communicating with students, and regarding expectations for communicating with students following Boards of Examiner meetings.

### **3.5 *Did the guidance have any adverse impact on academic standards?***

#### **Feedback from External Examiners**

An initial analysis of undergraduate External Examiner reports submitted in summer 2018 (covering session 2017-18) indicates that:

- External Examiners appear content that Boards accounted for any disruption in a fair and rigorous way, and without reporting any adverse impact on academic standards. In some cases External Examiners felt Boards and School staff had been exceptional in their handling of the issue, eg
  - “I felt the consideration of possible effects of strike action was commendable, consistent and fair, and demonstrated a genuine concern for the student experience.”
  - “I thought that considered and fair decisions were arrived at, with appropriate amounts of discussion. In particular, following the significant disruption associated with the strike, staff showed professionalism and sensitivity around the various issues arising and thoroughness in considering remedies.”
  - “Mitigation in response to the UCU Industrial Action in spring 2018 was handled in an exemplary manner. A strike impact form was submitted by each course organiser and the relative level of disruption assessed, plus comparisons made with previous years. Extensions were granted where appropriate and adjustments made to written examinations...”
  - “The department is to be commended for the thorough and fair way that it dealt with problems caused by the strike. The information provided to externals was excellent, and the department used the externals judiciously to provide a further level of assurance that everything had been done to make sure that the students were not disadvantaged.”
  - “I was very impressed to hear of the procedures put in place (strike impact form for each course) and adjustments made in order that students not be unfairly penalised as a result of the action. This was undertaken with phenomenal care.”
  - “This year, with the difficulties arising from industrial action, I was very impressed by x’s careful and diligent consideration of possible effects of the strike on students... The head of department and all staff should be commended for their care and thoughtfulness in this difficult situation.”
  - “The administrative staff in particular are to be commended because of the disruption to this process caused by the strike.”
- While in general External Examiners were content with the way that Boards and Schools had mitigated the impact of the industrial action, one External Examiner observed that “...In some cases, I felt that the mitigation strategies were perhaps too convoluted, and could themselves have unforeseen effects by tampering with the 'DNA' of the courses.”
- In some cases Board meetings were longer and more complex as a result of the need to address the disruption from the industrial action. In addition, a small number of External Examiners reported that they received samples of students’ work later than normal, or experienced other logistical difficulties, as a result of the industrial action.
- In a small number of cases, course developments previously recommended by External Examiners had not taken place due to the industrial action
- Some External Examiners commented positively on the template forms for reporting disruption to courses eg “The forms developed to describe issues and actions arising in response to strike action were very clear and helpful. I don't know whether these were the same as used across the wider University, but if not they could be a model.”
- One External Examiner indicated that there were a high number of firsts and that “This is probably because there was less material to be examined as the material that was missed in the strike action was not assessed.” (However the School responded that other factors may also have led to this change in distribution of grades.)

At this point of the year, very few postgraduate External Examiners have submitted their reports for 2017-18 (the deadline is not until end October). It is therefore not yet possible to consider any themes raised by PGT External Examiners in relation to the industrial action.

### **Analysis of course result profiles**

An initial analysis of course result data in the UG and PGT Data Dashboards suggests that the results for 2017-18 are broadly in line with patterns and trends visible in previous sessions, and there is no obvious evidence that the industrial action (and Boards of Examiners' action to take account of disruption to students' studies) has been associated with any substantive changes in course profiles. However, further analysis would be required once all course results are available (eg PGT dissertation and UG resit results) to allow for meaningful comparison between 2016-17 and 2017-18 profiles.

### **3.6 *What feedback have students provided regarding the effectiveness of the University's approach to mitigating the academic impact of the industrial action on students while maintaining academic standards?***

#### **Analysis of academic appeals**

Approximately 15 students' academic appeals during 2017-18 refer to the industrial action as a substantive ground for appeal. This accounts for c. 8% of appeals submitted during 2017-18. Since the number of appeals is relatively low as a proportion of all appeals and as a proportion of all the students whose studies were disrupted by the industrial action, it appears that the vast majority of students did not have concerns regarding how Boards of Examiners took account of the disruption. While some of these appeals are still being considered, of those that have been concluded to date none have been upheld on grounds that related to the industrial action. For those cases concluded, in general Schools were able to provide adequate documentation demonstrating how their Boards of Examiners took account of the impact of industrial action.

#### **Analysis of survey responses**

The 2018 National Student Survey (NSS) ran from 8 January to 30 April 2018, and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) ran from 2 April to 15 June 2018.

An initial analysis of the NSS free-text comments suggests that the industrial action did not emerge as a major or coherent theme. In the majority of Schools (including some Schools that experienced significant disruption due to the industrial action), the free-text responses to the NSS include few if any comments regarding the industrial action, whereas in a small number of Schools (c. 3-4), this is one of the key themes raised by respondents. Where respondents do comment on the industrial action, the most common themes relate to the disruption to their studies (eg loss of contact time, loss of dissertation support), and issues regarding School or University's communication with students regarding the industrial action. Since the survey closed well before Boards of Examiners had met, respondents have not commented on whether they were satisfied with how Boards took account of any disruption.

An initial analysis of PTES free-text comments suggests that the industrial action is a more prominent theme than for NSS respondents, with most respondents expressing dissatisfaction with issues relating to it. The most frequently raised themes include loss of contact time or course content, issues regarding School or University communications, and requests for the University to refund tuition fees and / or provide compensation. Other themes include issues regarding course / programme organisation associated with the industrial action, the institutional response to the industrial action, impact on the dissertation / project stage of the programme, and delays in receiving feedback on assessment. This initial analysis does not however suggest that students have concern regarding how Boards took account of any disruption – in practice, while the survey closed later than the NSS, it was still early enough that most respondents' Boards of Examiners would not have met.

#### **4 Using the annual quality review process to review what impact the industrial action may have had on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment**

The Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) adjusted the annual quality review framework for 2017-18 to prompt Schools to review what impact the industrial action may have had on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. When QAC reviews School quality reports at its 20 September 2018 meeting, it will analyse what these reports say regarding the impact of the industrial action.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **Senate Committee input into 2019-22 Planning Round**

### **Executive Summary**

The paper summarises out how the planning round for 2019-22 will operate, and how the Senate Committees will be able to input into it. The paper also seeks the Committees' views on some initial thoughts on priorities for the student experience, learning and teaching, which we are asking Schools, Colleges and support groups to engage with during the planning round.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Aligns with the University's strategic objective of Leadership in Learning.

### **Action requested**

The Committee is invited to discuss some initial thoughts on priorities for student experience, learning and teaching for the planning round.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Section 1 explains the arrangements.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Yes. The paper will assist the University to use its resources strategically.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

No. Since the paper aims to generate ideas rather than to recommend a specific course of action, it is not necessary to undertake a risk analysis.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

No. Since the paper aims to generate ideas rather than to recommend a specific course of action, it is not necessary to undertake an equality and diversity assessment.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

For inclusion in open business

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, 11 September 2018

## Senate Committee input into 2019-22 Planning Round

### 1 Overview of 2019-22 planning cycle

- In August / September 2018, the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) identified key strategic themes in Schools' annual quality reports and in Teaching Programme Reviews (TPRs) and Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPRs) held in 2017-18;
- At their meetings in September 2018, the Senate Committees will have an initial opportunity to identify student experience, learning and teaching issues that Schools / Colleges / support groups should take account of in the planning round;
- In autumn 2018 (exact timelines to be determined by University Executive), Governance and Strategic Planning will circulate to Schools / Colleges / support groups an initial indication of the strategic planning round priorities;
- At their meetings in November 2018, the Senate Committees will have a full discussion of issues that should be taken account of in the planning round, including identifying:
  - Strategic priorities for student experience, learning and teaching with significant resource implications that Schools / Colleges and support groups should take account of in their plans;
  - Changes that the Committee has initiated or plans to initiate which would require support groups, Colleges or Schools to allocate significant additional resources;
  - Changes in the external environment (eg regulatory changes) which would result in significant additional work for the University; and
  - Major institutional projects that the Committee would like to make a case for, which would require significant support from support services which could not be accommodated within existing resources.
- In late 2018 / early 2019 (exact timelines to be determined by University Executive), Governance and Strategic Planning will publish the detailed planning guidance.
- In Semester Two, the Committees will undertake a broader discussion of their priorities for the coming session – and will submit their plans to the 29 May 2019 Senate meeting for approval.

## **2 Reference points for identifying student experience, learning and teaching issues for the 2019-22 planning round**

Key reference points when identifying issues for the planning round include:

- The results of the 2018 National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and the 2017 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
- The most recent Career Destination data (relating to 2016-17 graduates)
- The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning\\_teaching\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning_teaching_strategy.pdf)
- The strategic themes identified in Schools' quality reports, and in TPRs and PPRs held in 2017-18 (see Annex)
- The student experience action plan under development by the Principal's Direct Reports Group for agreement by the University Executive

## **3 Initial thoughts on priorities for student experience, learning and teaching that Colleges, Schools and support groups should engage with during the planning round**

Taking account of these reference points, and initial discussions at the Principal's Direct Reports Group, the Senior Vice-Principal has suggested the following as an initial statement of priorities for student experience, learning and teaching. The expectation is that these will be addressed explicitly in College Plans (and that Colleges will in turn require them to be addressed in the School-Level planning discussions that inform College Plans) and in Support Group Plans (and similarly in internal Support Group planning discussions).

- Enhancing the sense of shared community linking academic staff and students, and developing more effective ways of listening and responding to students' views;
- Keeping a tight focus on improving the timeliness and quality of feedback on assessment in the light of disappointing National Student Survey results;
- Recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching and learning and ensuring that all teaching staff have meaningful conversations about teaching and other student experience themes in their annual reviews, while engaging with consultation regarding the Principles that should underpin the University's future approach to these issues;
- Ensuring all Schools recruit, support and develop their tutors and demonstrators in line with the University's Policy;
- Respond to insights from the University's first staff survey regarding the staff experience in relation to student experience, learning and teaching.

## **4 For discussion**

The Committee is **invited to discuss** these initial ideas for priorities for student experience, learning and teaching, and to suggest any other priorities to take into account in the planning

round. The Committee will then have a more substantive opportunity to input into the planning round in November 2018.

## **5 Process for seeking resources for major developments**

If the Senate Committees identify any major developments with implications for the Colleges or support groups, the Senior Vice-Principal will invite the relevant College or support group to consider including a bid for this in their planning round submissions.

## **Annex: Key themes identified in Schools' quality reports, and in TPRs and PPRs held in 2017-18**

### **Student support**

Recommendations from teaching/postgraduate programme reviews (T/PPRs) identified the need to build academic communities, extend peer mentoring, support student transition and clarify expectations of the Personal Tutor system. Student feedback on satisfaction with the Personal Tutor system has dropped across a large number of Schools. In response, Schools are carefully considering the reasons for this and have planned actions. However, no strong sense of why satisfaction has dropped has been identified and a need to think more fundamentally about the Personal Tutor system is recognised.

### **Learning and teaching accommodation**

Schools are continuing to identify challenges with accessing suitable learning and teaching accommodation. Comments in School annual quality reports primarily related the lack of availability of large lecture theatres and classrooms to accommodate growing student cohorts. T/PPR recommendations primarily related to the provision of study and social space for students, noting the importance of students establishing and maintaining a sense of identity with their School.

### **Pressure on staff time/resourcing**

As student numbers increase, staff identified challenges with, for example, effectively delivering the Personal Tutor system, providing quality feedback to students on assessments within the required timescales, and providing effective supervision for dissertations. Recommendations from T/PPRs related to the resourcing of programmes and courses should student numbers expand, investing in teaching to allow for forward planning, and rewarding and recognising teaching.

### **Supporting and developing academic staff, including postgraduate tutors and demonstrators.**

T/PPR recommendations focussed around career development, training and support, with a particular reference to training and support to ensure the effective use of virtual learning environments.

CSPC: 20.09.18  
H/02/27/02

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The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **Edinburgh University Students' Association Priorities 2018-19**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper provides an introduction to the Students' Association Vice-President Education's priorities for 2018-19.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper aligns with the strategic objective of 'Leadership in Learning'.

### **Action requested**

For information and discussion.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

To be agreed if specific actions arise from the paper.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

To be considered if specific actions arise from the paper.

**2. Risk assessment**

To be considered if specific actions arise from the paper.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

The ideas discussed in the paper aim to encourage and support equality and diversity. Equality and diversity implications will be considered further if specific actions arise from the paper.

**4. Freedom of information**

This paper is **open**

### **Originator of the paper**

Diva Mukherji, Students' Association Vice President Education  
10 September 2018

## **1. Promoting a diverse curricula.**

Student groups are increasingly discussing the need for a curriculum which represents voices from various backgrounds, and one wherein students are exposed to a host of different perspectives. Aligning with the work the LTC task group will be conducting, understanding how students interpret a 'diverse curriculum' will be essential in how this work will occur at school-level.

- Creating institutional guidelines which promote diversifying the curriculum as a necessity, while ensuring autonomy to subject areas to interpret the way in which it'd be most appropriate to a discipline.
- Hosting workshops with students to understand what those in various academic areas want to see within their curriculum.
- Raising awareness on the importance of diversity and representation in academic spheres with staff and students.
- Encouraging this is a prioritized guideline for when pre-honours courses are being audited.

## **2. Creating inclusive teaching environments.**

We need to ensure that all teaching spaces are comfortable spaces for students from different backgrounds, and that we're able to challenge various view points and opinions in a healthy environment. This includes ensuring students can access necessary support services, both academic and pastoral.

- Emphasizing the importance of the mental health training for all Personal Tutors, and ensuring all Personal Tutor's undertake the training.
- Structuring the PT role more clearly, distinguishing the role as an academic and pastoral role, and emphasizing the role PT's play in academic development for students.
- Clarifying to both staff and students the role of the PT, so both groups have a better understanding of what that relationship entails.
- Developing microaggression training, to equip staff with the tools necessary to minimize the impact of microaggressions may have on students from various social backgrounds.
- Continue working to reduce the BME attainment gap.
- Understanding the experiences of widening participation students and increasing levels of support throughout their studies.

## **3. Developing alternative approaches to learning.**

Encouraging the use of innovative teaching and learning pedagogies which centre student engagement in their academic journey. By ensuring students have opportunities to critically engage with their studies, we can collectively build wider learning communities.

- Create frameworks encouraging co-curricula, and a closer relationship between staff and students in course development.
- Support the development and enhancement of peer learning and mentoring schemes.
- Mainstreaming innovative and forms of assessment which appropriately assess learning outcomes.
- Utilizing better forms of feedback, focusing on how students can constructively implement feedback in future assessment.
- Ensuring students are guided to optimize their experience of taking outside courses, to enhance the first and second year experience.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **Annual review of effectiveness of Senate Committees**

### **Executive Summary**

As part of the annual review of the Senate Committees, members of the four Senate Committees were asked to complete a questionnaire over the summer 2018. The questionnaire sought to gauge the effectiveness of the composition, support, engagement and impact of the Senate Committees. The results of the questionnaire are summarised in the attached paper, along with some suggestions for addressing some specific issues.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

This paper aligns with the University strategic objective of leadership in learning.

### **Action requested**

The Committee is invited to discuss the outcome of the questionnaire and consider whether it wishes to recommend any changes to its operation.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The summary of the annual review will feed in to the externally-facilitated review of Senate and its committees conducted in 2018/19.

The report from the externally-facilitated review will be communicated to the Senate Committees in early 2019/20.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

If the Committee wishes to identify any changes to its operation as a result of the questionnaire, Academic Services will review the resource implications of implementing them.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

The paper will assist the University in ensuring that its academic governance arrangements are effective and will enable the University to manage a range of risks associated with its academic provision.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

The results of the questionnaire highlighted the need for equality and diversity of the committee membership to be addressed. This issue should be considered by the Committee when considering action to take after discussing the results.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

Open

**Key words**

Governance, committees

**Originator of the paper**

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services  
Theresa Sheppard, Academic Policy Officer

September 2018

## **Annual review of effectiveness of Senate Committees**

### 1. Background

The 2017 version of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance states that institutions are expected to review the effectiveness of their Senate and its committees annually and to hold an externally-facilitated review every five years:

“49. The governing body is expected to review its own effectiveness each year and to undertake an externally facilitated evaluation of its own effectiveness and that of its committees, including size and composition of membership, at least every five years. As part of these processes or separately, the effectiveness of the academic board (also known as Senate, Senatus Academicus or academic council) is expected to be reviewed similarly. These reviews should be reported upon appropriately within the Institution and outside. Externally facilitated reviews should be held following any period of exceptional change or upheaval (allowing suitable time to see the effects of changes made), the usual timetable for externally facilitated review being brought forward if necessary in these circumstances.”

In line with the requirements of the Code, Academic Services conducted an annual review of Senate and its committees over the summer 2018.

An email was sent to all Senate Committee members which included a link to an online questionnaire. The questionnaire invited participants to indicate their opinion of the effectiveness of the composition, support, engagement and impact of the Senate Committees. 25 committee members responded in total (around 45 per cent of the overall membership).

**The Committee is invited to discuss the findings of the questionnaire and to consider whether to recommend any changes in practice, taking account of the suggestions set out below.**

The University is planning to undertake an externally-facilitated review of Senate and its committees during 2018-19 and the results of the questionnaire, including follow-up discussion by committees, will be submitted to the external facilitator as part of the review documentation. While it was originally planned for the results of this questionnaire to be submitted to Senate in October, it is now recommended that they be considered by Senate members at a later stage within the context of the report on the externally-facilitated review.

### 2. Key issues

Senate Committee members were asked to indicate their level of support for a series of statements about the operation of the committees, and these statements were grouped together by a common theme. The responses of committee members to these statements are summarised in Section 3.

Free text boxes gave committee members the opportunity to comment in detail about the issues and to make suggestions. The main themes to emerge from these comments are summarised in Section 4.

Overall, the results of the questionnaire showed patterns emerging which were broadly consistent for all four committees, which is why the results are summarised as a group, rather than having been divided up by committee (which would involve attempting to analyse very small data).

The questionnaire included a set of demographic questions which were analysed in relation to the responses; the sample was too small to draw any meaningful conclusions, however.

Overall, the results of the questionnaire indicated that members were satisfied with a range of aspects relating to the operation of their committee.

While the key themes are set out in detail below, the Committee is invited to discuss the following principal issues to emerge from the results:

**a) Place of the Committees within the overall governance of the University**

Several committee members indicated that they were unsure of how their committee's remit related to governance structures in Schools and Colleges, with a request for clarity around the links between the committee structures (see Section 4.1).

*This issue will be highlighted at the externally-facilitated review of Senate in Semester 1, which will examine the place of Senate and its Committees within the University's overall governance structure. Furthermore, Colleges could be asked to demonstrate how their committee structures link to the Senate Committees.*

**b) The need for Committees to manage implementation of decisions and evaluate their impact**

Comments suggested that it was challenging for committees to manage the implementation of decisions and evaluate their impact, particularly given the size and structure of the University (see Section 4.2). Suggestions for improvement in this area included better communication with Heads of Schools, and fewer items on the University-wide agenda, which would allow committees to focus in depth on specific issues.

*All Task Group reports and proposals for Senate Committees are obliged to include an implementation plan, which is a component of the standard cover sheet for committee papers. In addition, the Committees do routinely evaluate the impact of significant changes. However, implementation planning and evaluation could be strengthened, and Academic Services will emphasise the importance of this to Task Groups for the forthcoming year.*

**c) Volume of papers and agenda items**

Several respondents observed that there was a high volume of papers to read for the committee meetings, which was a barrier to meaningful participation (see Section 4.3); comments in this regard related in particular to Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC).

*The nature of some types of committee business can in some circumstances necessitate long and detailed papers, and the nature of CSPC's work can lead to particularly long Committee documentation. While the guidance for committee members on producing papers emphasises the importance of succinct papers, Academic Services will continue to emphasise the importance of this when engaging with authors of papers.*

**d) Induction of new members**

Some responses highlighted the need for inductions for new members, which would inform them of their responsibilities (see Section 4.4).

*Members of the four committees are offered an induction on an annual basis, and the members' handbook is also made available. Further suggestions for effective ways of informing members of their responsibilities are welcomed.*

**e) Equality and Diversity issues**

Responses indicated that, while members felt that committee membership was as diverse as it could be given the need to include specific roles and expertise on the Committee, more could be done to ensure diversity in membership (see Section 4.6).

*The composition of the Senate Committees is largely determined according to defined role-holders (e.g. defined Assistant or Vice-Principals, Director of a defined support service or*

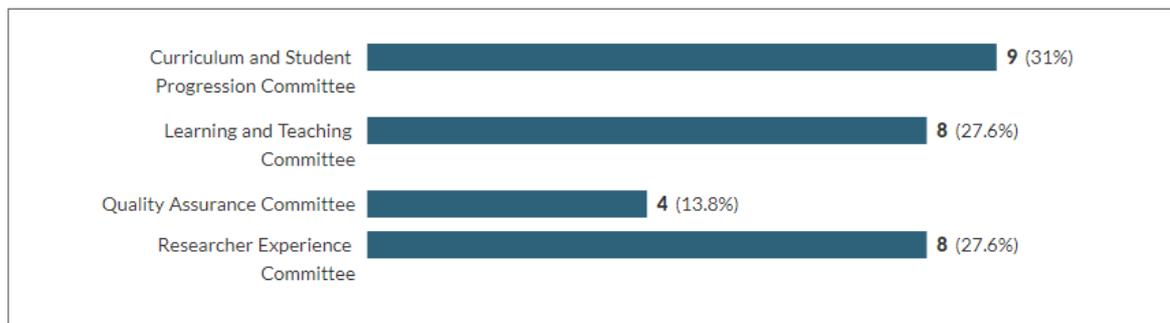
*delegate) or as representative of a particular stakeholder (e.g. a College or the Students' Association). The membership of these committees is therefore largely a consequence of decisions made elsewhere to appoint individuals to particular roles.*

*In practice, in recent years all the Committees have had a gender balance broadly in line with the relevant population (when the inevitable volatility associated with small populations is taken into account). It is less clear whether the committee membership is representative in terms, for example, of ethnicity or disability, since Academic Services does not hold data on these characteristics of its committee members. The Committee may wish to consider whether Academic Services should collect this information in the future. While it is useful to understand the diversity of the committee member population, there would be limited actions open to us on the basis of this information, in view of numbers of ex officio members on committees. The need for a diverse range of demographics could be taken into consideration when appointing co-opted members, however.*

### 3. Summary of quantitative responses

The following shows the response levels by committee:

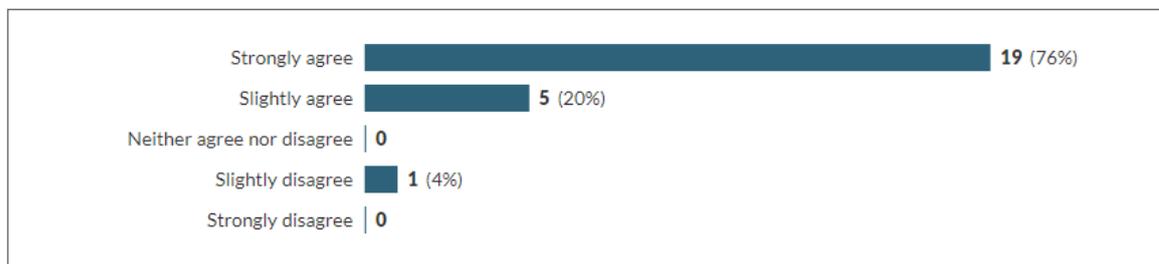
**1** Please indicate the Senate Committee(s) of which you are a member



#### *Remit and Governance*

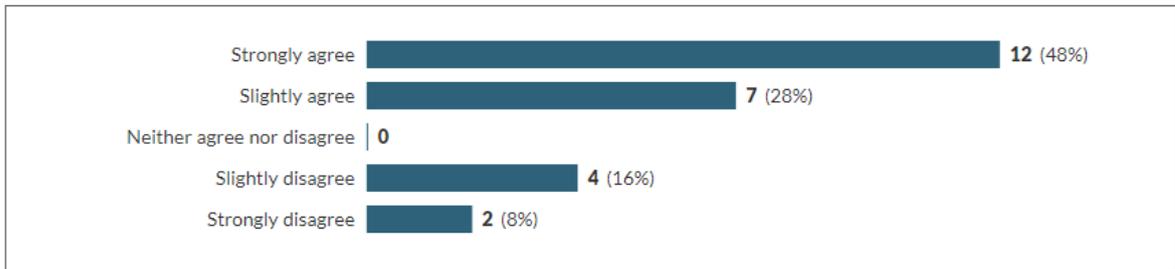
The majority of respondents (96 per cent) indicated that they were clear about their committee's remit.

**2.1** I am clear about the Committee's remit

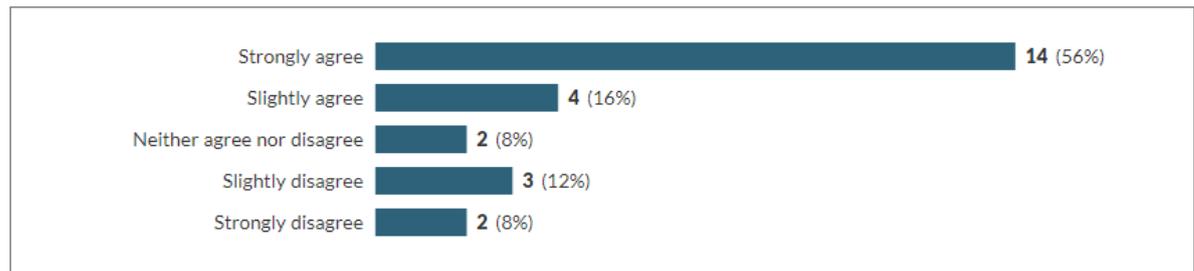


While the majority of respondents was aware of how their committee fitted into the overall governance structures of the University, (Senate and Court, and Schools and Colleges) several indicated that this was not the case:

2.2 I am aware of how the Committee reports to Senate and Court

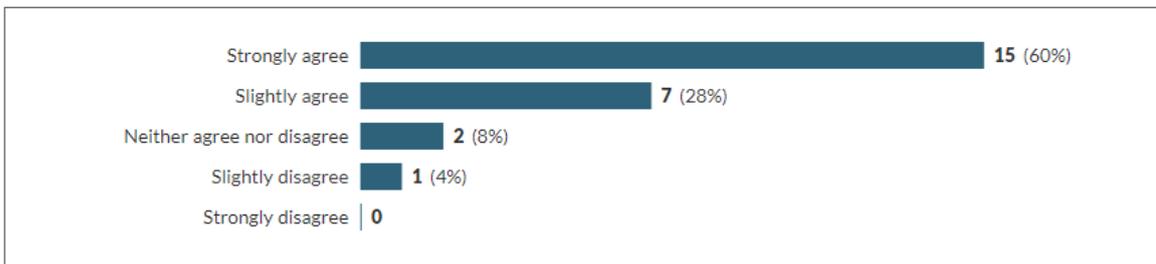


2.3 I am aware of how the Committee's remit relates to governance structures in Schools and Colleges

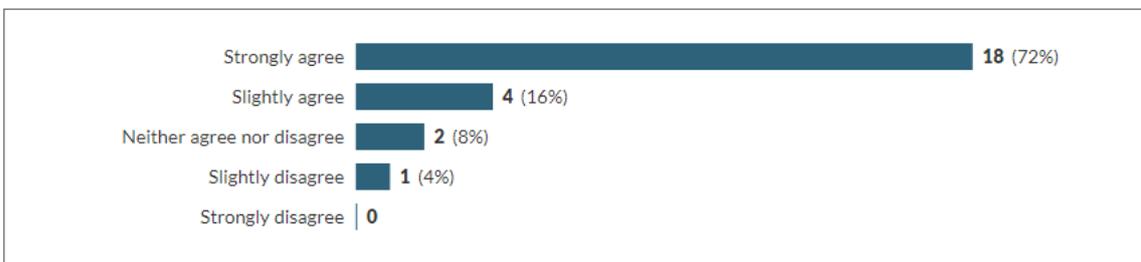


The majority of respondents thought that their committee handled its business effectively, was flexible enough to adapt to changes in priorities, and used Task Groups effectively:

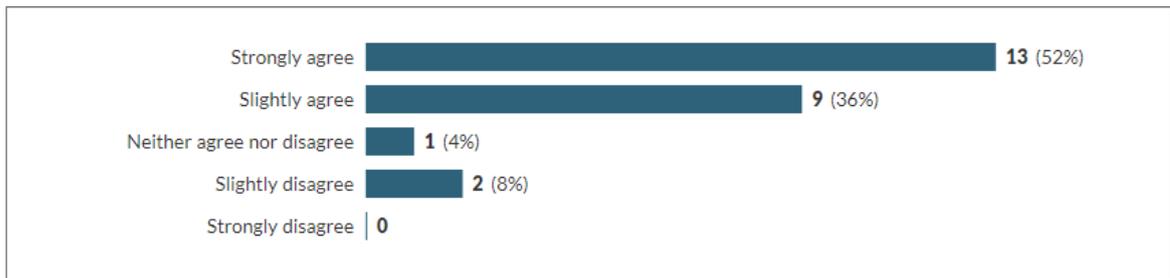
2.4 The Committee manages its business effectively



2.5 The Committee is flexible enough to adapt to changes in priorities



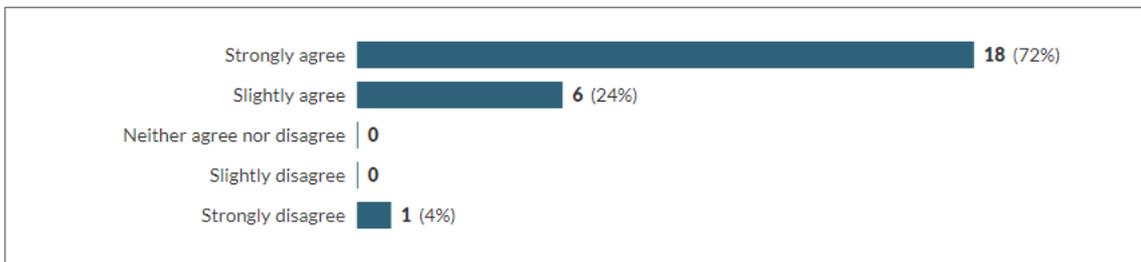
2.6 The Committee uses Task Groups effectively



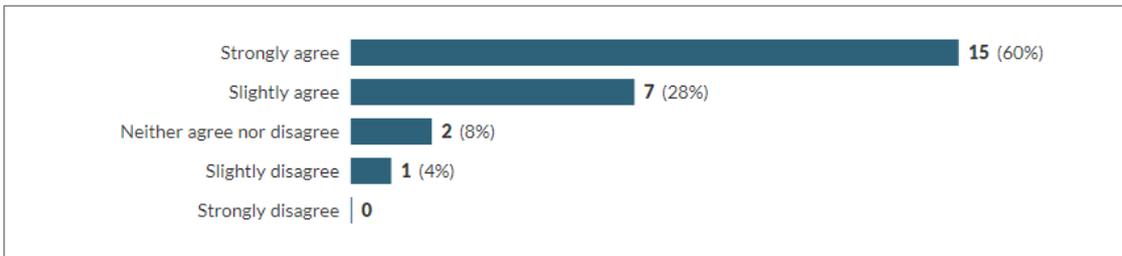
*Responsibilities and Participation of Committee Members*

The majority of respondents (96 per cent) felt that they were clear about what their responsibilities were as members, and the majority (88 per cent) indicated that they participated fully in committee business:

3.1 I am clear what my responsibilities are as a Committee member

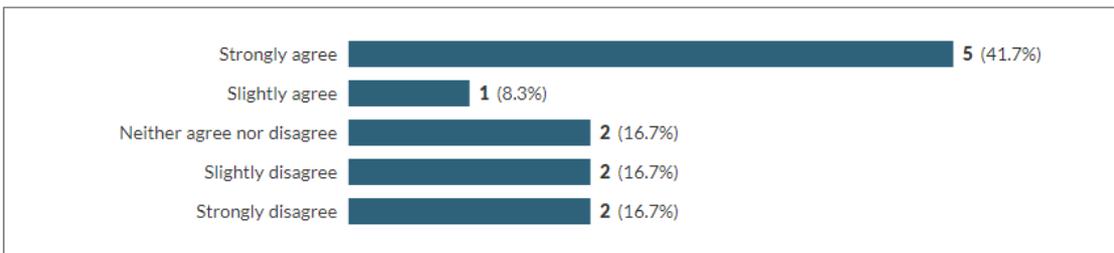


3.2 Members participate fully in Committee business



Members who were new in 2017/18 were asked if they were happy with the induction they received and responses were varied:

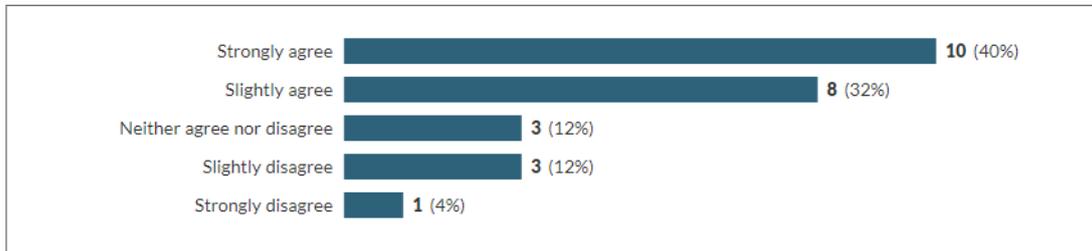
3.3 (For new members in 2017/18) I am happy with the induction I was given to the Committee and its business



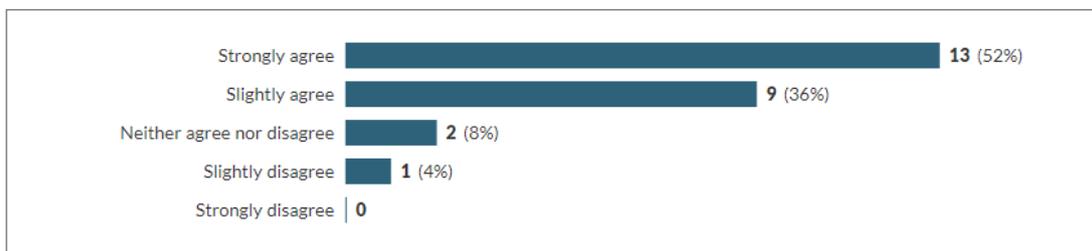
*Composition and Support of the Committees*

The majority of respondents indicated that the current composition of their committee enabled it to fulfil its remit, that the size of the committee was appropriate in order for it to operate effectively, and that committee operations were supported effectively.

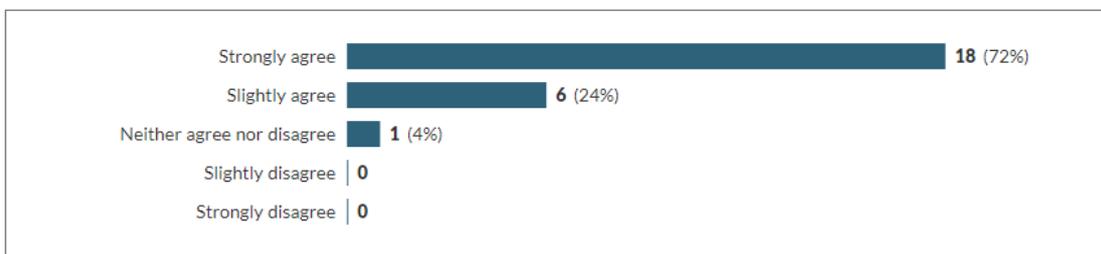
4.1 The current composition of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit



4.2 The size of the Committee is appropriate in order for it to operate effectively

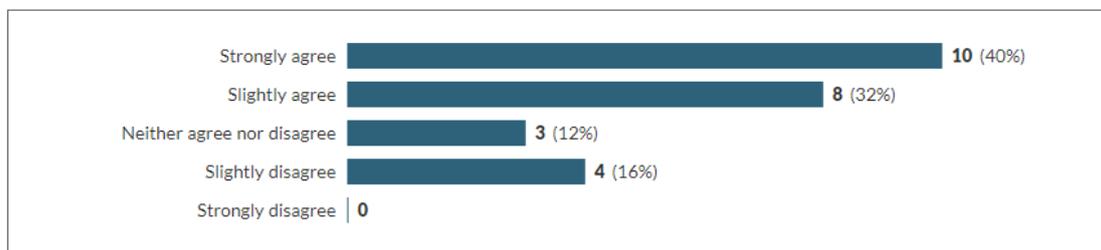


4.3 The Committee operations are supported effectively



While most of the respondents agreed that the volume and format of committee papers enabled them to make decisions, opinions were more divided on this subject:

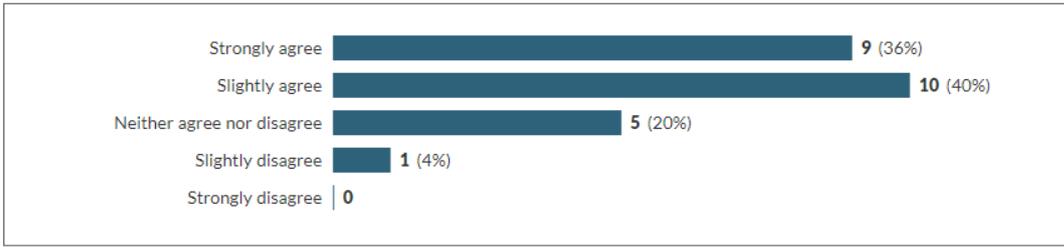
4.4 The volume and format of Committee papers enable me to make decisions



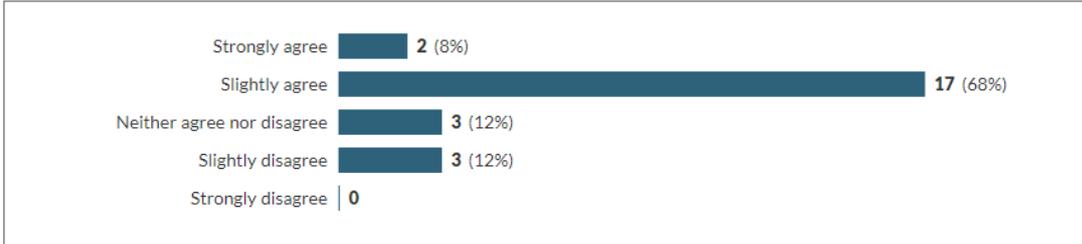
*Engagement and Impact*

While respondents mostly agreed that their committee engaged and communicated effectively with stakeholders, made adequate plans to ensure that its decisions were implemented effectively, and evaluated the impact of its decisions, the responses indicated that there was room for improvement in this area.

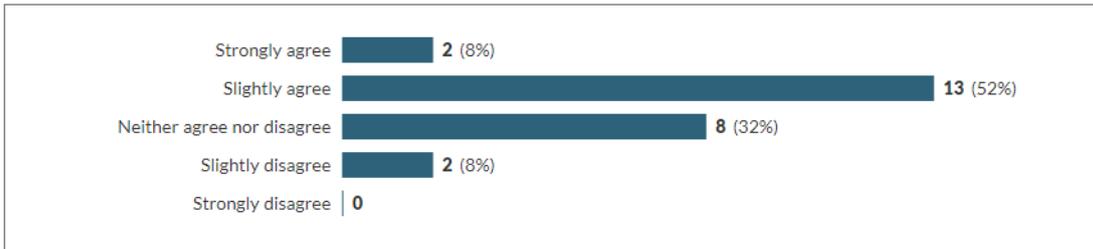
5.1 The Committee engages and communicates effectively with stakeholders, such as Schools, Colleges and the Students' Association



5.2 The Committee makes adequate plans to ensure that its decisions are implemented effectively



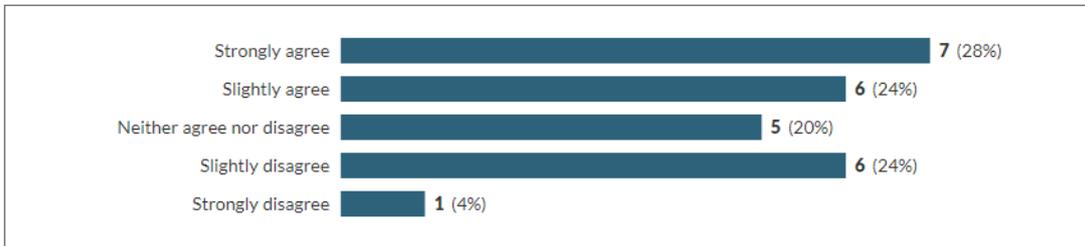
5.3 The Committee always evaluates the impact of its decisions



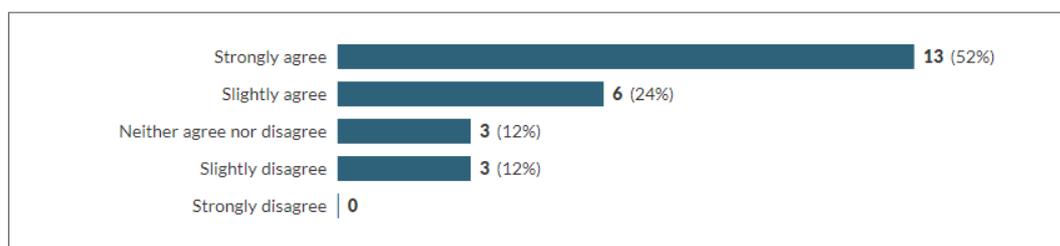
### Equality and Diversity

Opinion was divided among respondents as to whether the composition of the Committee was suitably representative of the diverse University population, while the majority was satisfied that equality and diversity considerations were adequately addressed when discussing committee business.

6.1 The composition of Committee members is suitably representative of the diverse University population



6.2 I am satisfied that equality and diversity considerations are adequately addressed when discussing Committee business



#### 4. Summary of free text comments

##### 4.1 *Place of the Committees within the University's governance structure*

Comments around the place of the committees within the University's overall governance structure demonstrated uncertainty around the link between the Committee and School/College governance infrastructure (from 20 per cent of respondents). A particular issue highlighted was the challenge in aligning School/College committees with the central governance apparatus; it was observed that there was no clear link between central university governance and Schools/College, with one member noting that CSPC was not mirrored at School/College level, meaning that consultation and dissemination of information were a challenge. A request was made for clarity around how the Senate Committees mapped on to School/College committees.

##### 4.2 *Communications and implementation of committee business*

Members' comments around the communications of the Committees indicate that it is not always clear to members how committee decisions are converted into practice, with the size of the University being mentioned as a barrier to communication of decisions. 12 per cent of respondents disagreed that their committee made adequate plans to implement its decisions. 32 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed that the committee always evaluated the impact of its decisions, with 8 per cent disagreeing with this. Observations were made that the committees had little power to ensure that decisions were implemented and that a receptive culture was required in Schools and Colleges in order for committee decisions to be effective.

Suggestions which were made with regard to communication and implementation included better evaluation of committee activity, with one response suggesting having fewer items on the University-wide agenda, meaning that more attention could be given to implementation and evaluation of individual initiatives. Greater focus on communication with Heads of Schools, which would allow messages to cascade to colleagues, was also mentioned.

##### 4.3 *Participation in committee business*

Several members indicated that the volume of the committee papers and number of items on the agenda made engagement with business, and consideration of issues in depth, challenging (this was raised in particular by members of CSPC), with 16 per cent of respondents disagreeing that the volume and format of committee papers enabled them to make decisions. The suggestion was made that the agenda could be prioritised, to ensure that the most important issues were raised in the meeting, and that a comfort break be included. One member of QAC suggested that subgroups of readers could be employed for certain items of business. It was also noted that student committee members may not always feel comfortable in challenging ideas in the committee forum.

#### *4.4 Induction of new members*

Some members reported that they had not received an induction (33 per cent), and other comments indicated that induction sessions for new members were helpful.

It was suggested that a summary of the responsibilities of members would be a useful resource for new members, to ensure that they understood the operation of the committee and how they were to represent their constituents.

#### *4.5 Membership of committees*

With regard to the composition of the Committees, a member of CSPC suggested that it would be useful to have more Heads of School members, while a member of REC highlighted the need for sustained involvement by post-doctoral researchers.

It was also suggested that committee membership should be reviewed to ensure that it was enabling the remit to be fulfilled, and that joint sessions or workshops between committees would be helpful when considering overlapping issues.

#### *4.6 Equality and Diversity*

While the responses demonstrated that equality and diversity was adequately considered when discussing committee business, comments indicated that the membership composition should be monitored to ensure that a range of protected characteristic voices was included.

Opinions about whether the membership was suitably representative of the diverse University population were more divided (28 per cent of respondents disagreed that the composition of committee members was suitably representative of the diverse University population). Comments implied that the membership was as diverse as it could be in view of the need to include specific roles, while acknowledging that more could be done to improve diversity.

With regard to committee discussion, one member felt that more could be done to ensure that decisions were taken which took account of differing student perspectives, while it was also suggested that there could be greater representation of students on the committees.

The University of Edinburgh

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

20 September 2018

## **Knowledge Strategy Committee Report**

### **Executive Summary**

Report of the Knowledge Strategy Committee meeting on 25 May 2018.

### **Action requested**

Members are invited to note the Report.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Not applicable.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

1. **Resource Implications (including staffing)**  
None
2. **Risk Assessment**  
Not included
3. **Equality and Diversity**  
Due consideration has been given to the equality impact of this paper.
4. **Freedom of Information**  
This paper is **open**.

### **Originator of the paper**

Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services  
September 2018

# REPORT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

25 May 2018

## 1 Near Future Teaching Project

Professor Siân Bayne, Assistant Principal Digital Education, presented a project to co-design the future of digital education at the University, drawing on consultation exercises held with staff, students and school pupils and horizon scanning to develop four different educational future scenarios. The next stages of the project will involve testing the scenarios with student, academic expert and school pupil panels, proposing recommendations and translation into policy and action. The project is scheduled to conclude in December 2018.

The Committee welcomed the presentation and project, with the following points raised in discussion:

- Equity of access to information technology – globally and locally;
- Consulting outside already interested parties to those who perceive information technology more negatively;
- Appropriate levels of technology use and links to wellbeing;
- Seeking employers views; and
- Using the outcomes to design teaching within the Edinburgh Futures Institute.

## 2 Web Strategy

Melissa Highton, Assistant Principal Online Learning, introduced a strategy to address the University's use of web technologies to enhance student experience, disseminate research and engage the wider public. It was noted that the University's web estate consists of 1,709 websites, with [www.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ed.ac.uk) counted as a single website. Almost 50% of the websites carry 'amber' risk indicators including security, technology and accessibility concerns. Work is underway to contact website owners and resolve the risk indicators, although 500 websites presently have no identified owner, reflecting the historically highly devolved nature of the web estate.

## 3 Distance Learning at Scale Programme Business Case

A business case for the Distance Learning at Scale programme to establish a small number of large scalable online courses in areas of strength for the University, including data science and business education. The business case was endorsed, with the following points raised in discussion:

- Building on the University's success in provision of Massive Open Online Courses;
- Existing online masters courses may be relatively small but many are highly valued and of continuing benefit;
- Benefits for on-campus students in making available new learning technology;
- Implications for student statistics such as the retention rate, depending on categorisations used by bodies such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

## 4 Authentication and Authorisation Services Review

The summary recommendations of a review of the University's authentication and authorisation services were noted, including changes to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation and improve security.

## 5 IT Network Replacement Project – Student Residences

A proposal to incorporate the externally operated Accommodation, Catering and Events student residences data network and telephony service into the University campus network

within the current Campus Network Replacement project was approved, with the associated increased capital cost endorsed. The opportunity to improve the student experience was welcomed, with members discussing alternative study locations when the Main Library is full and noting the intention to include student residences leased on a long term basis by the University within the scope of the project.

## **6 Learning Analytics Policy**

Following earlier approval for an institutional statement of Principles and Purposes for Learning Analytics, a draft institutional policy on Learning Analytics was approved. It was noted that the draft Policy had been developed in light of the General Data Protection Regulation.

## **7 Main Library Occupation Levels**

Data on the occupancy of the Main Library prior to the first and second semester examination diets was noted, confirming that the building is regularly full during these periods. Members requested further information on occupancy rates across the year as a whole, discussed facilities for student parents, the availability of refreshment facilities with 24/7 library opening and the potential for study spaces in other buildings.

## **8 Lecture Recording Policy Update**

The findings of the policy consultation and final draft Lecture Recording Policy were noted. The following points were raised in discussion:

- 75% of the 400 teaching rooms will have lecture recording equipment installed by September, with 100% coverage by the end of the next academic year;
- Subsequent monitoring of the number of opt-outs granted, particularly on core courses; and,
- Achieving a balance between a lecture that is engaging for students present and those watching at a later date.

*This paper was originally presented to Senate on 30 May 2018. It outlines agreed plans and priorities for Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee in 2018-19 and is provided here for information.*

## Annual Report of the Senate Committees 2017-18

### 1. Executive Summary

This report outlines the achievements of the Senate Committees, and their use of the powers delegated to them by Senate, for academic year 2017-18, along with their proposed plans for 2018-19.

### 2. Introduction

The four Standing Committees of Senate (hereafter referred to as the Senate Committees) are the Learning & Teaching Committee, Researcher Experience Committee, Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, and Quality Assurance Committee. Links to the Terms of Reference and memberships of the Senate Standing Committees:

Learning and Teaching Committee: [Link](#)  
 Researcher Experience Committee: [Link](#)  
 Curriculum and Student Progression Committee: [Link](#)  
 Quality Assurance Committee: [Link](#)

The report sets out the Senate Committees' achievements for the year 2017-18. It also proposes their proposed plans for 2018-19. These proposals have arisen from Committee discussions, and discussion at the Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG, which is composed of the Conveners of the four Committees, along with relevant Assistant Principals, College Deans, and other key staff). The proposals are designed to assist the University to take forward its Learning and Teaching Strategy (see 4.1.1 below).

### 3. Key Committee and Task Group Activities in 2017-18\*

Name of Committee or Task Group	No. of meetings
<b><i>Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)</i></b>	<b>5</b>
Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Working Group	3
Lecture Recording Policy Task Group	5
Digital Education Task Group	6
Research-Led Learning and Teaching Task Group	1
University-Wide Courses Task Group	1
Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum Task Group	1
Careers, Employability and Graduate Attributes Task Group	3
<b><i>Researcher Experience Committee (REC)</i></b>	<b>5</b>
Continuing Professional Development for Doctoral Supervisors Task Group	2
PGR Personal and Professional Record Task Group	2
<b><i>Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)</i></b>	<b>6</b>
Assessment and Progression Tools Task Group	3
Authorised Interruption of Studies Policy Task Group	2
PGT Assessment and Progression Task Group	3

<b>Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)</b>	<b>5</b>
School Annual Quality Review Sub-Group	1
Personal Tutor System Oversight Sub-Group	3

\* Includes meetings scheduled for the remainder of the session.

The remits and memberships of the task groups are available at:

[www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/learning-teaching/task-groups](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/learning-teaching/task-groups)  
[www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/researcher-experience/task-groups](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/researcher-experience/task-groups)  
[www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression/task-groups](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression/task-groups)  
[www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/quality-assurance/task-groups](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/quality-assurance/task-groups)

#### **4. Senate Committees' Achievements 2017-18**

At its meeting on 31 May 2017, Senate approved the Standing Committees' plans for 2017-18. The Committees' progress in relation to those plans is set out below. This summary does not take account of business conducted at the final cycle of Senate Committee meetings of 2017-18 (the Learning and Teaching Committee's 23 May 2018 meeting, the Quality Assurance Committee's 24 May 2018 meeting, the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee's 31 May 2018 meeting, and the Researcher Experience Committee's meeting on 27 June 2018).

In general, the Committees have made good progress in delivering their plans for 2017-18. In addition, they have addressed some significant areas of work not included in the original plans. One of the key themes for the Committees this session has been 'simplification', with significant progress in rationalising the number of different policies / guidance documents, and implementing streamlined quality assurance processes.

##### **4.1 Activities cutting across the four Committees**

###### **4.1.1 Oversight of implementation of University Learning and Teaching Strategy**

In 2016-17, the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee approved the University's new Learning and Teaching Strategy, see:

[http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning\\_teaching\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning_teaching_strategy.pdf)

At its meeting on 15 November 2017, the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) agreed the main strategic priorities for institutional action in 2017-18 and 2018-19. The Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG) has subsequently overseen the development of an implementation plan for these strategic priorities. LTC will evaluate progress in relation to the Strategy at its meeting in September 2018.

###### **4.1.2 Senate task group to consider how to implement the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 in relation to Senate's operation**

Following a consultation during Semester 1 2017/18, in February 2018 Senate endorsed recommendations for changes to the composition of Senate which will enable the University to implement the Act. The Senate task group has coordinated the consultation and development of those recommendations, and has subsequently considered proposals for the practical operation of the planned new Senate model.

#### **4.1.3 Student Administration and Support strand of Service Excellence Programme**

All the Senate Committees have received regular updates regarding the Service Excellence Programme (SEP). In addition, the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) has commented on the policy dimensions of the SEP proposals regarding Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions (see 4.4.2) and Study Away.

#### **4.1.4 Implementation of University Recruitment Strategy – Portfolio Development, Innovation and Review**

The University's Student Recruitment Strategy Group has overseen this strand of the implementation of the University's Recruitment Strategy. To support the implementation of the Strategy, the Senate Quality Assurance Committee has strengthened the emphasis on reviewing sustainability of courses and programmes as part of annual and periodic quality review, and the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) is in the process of strengthening guidelines on business planning for the development of new programmes.

#### **4.1.5 Engagement with further development of Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)**

While the University's current position is not to participate in the TEF, the Senior Vice-Principal has continued to lead the University's engagement with the development of the TEF and to update LTC on developments. The Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG) has set up a group to assist the University to monitor the development of the TEF and its implications for the University.

#### **4.1.6 Policies and Codes – Ongoing programme of review of policies**

All the University's academic regulations, policies and guidelines are reviewed according to an agreed schedule (typically on a 3 or 4 year cycle), in order to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Academic Services is responsible for coordinating these reviews. In some cases, substantive reviews of content are required (for example, see 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.4.4, 4.4.5), whereas in other cases only technical updates are reviewed. The Annex sets out all reviews of policies undertaken this session. All scheduled reviews have been undertaken as planned, with the exception of several which have been rescheduled for next session to align with the timescales of associated projects, and one relatively minor review which has been delayed until next session for other reasons.

### **4.2 Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)**

#### **4.2.1 Assessment and Feedback - strands of work regarding the quality of assessment, grade descriptors, and the Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) project**

The Committee's Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group has overseen a range of activities this session. For example, four programmes underwent LEAF audits in 2017/18 using a new jointly-run model where the Schools carry out the desk based research elements and the Institute for Academic Development continues to support the student feedback and reporting elements. New guidance on feedback and assessment was launched in semester 1, and good practice in relation to assessment and feedback was shared at Directors of Teaching Network events.

#### **4.2.2 Develop a policy to support the University's Lecture Recording service**

Following Court's agreement to introduce a reliable and comprehensive lecture recording system, the Committee established a task group to develop a policy to support the new system. During 2017-18, the task group has drafted and consulted widely on a policy. It plans to seek approval from the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee for the policy in May 2018, with a view to introducing it from 2018-19, to coincide with further roll-out of the new system and its integration with the timetable system.

#### **4.2.3 *Develop an institutional vision on Digital Education***

In 2016-17 the Committee established a task group, convened by Prof Sian Bayne (Assistant Principal Digital Education) to develop an institutional vision for digital education. This 'Near Future Teaching' project has used futures methodologies and participative design thinking to gather input from a wide community of students and staff via 17 events and around 70 short 'vox pop' interviews, during the last year. The project task group will develop the detailed vision in partnership with the service design agency Studio Andthen by the end of 2017-18, then present the project outcomes and visions to the Committee and other stakeholders early in 2018-19, including holding a project event.

Project outputs to date and more detail on process are on the web site:  
<http://www.nearfutureteaching.ed.ac.uk>

#### **4.2.4 *Research-led Teaching and Learning***

During 2016-17, the Committee established a task group, convened by Prof Sarah Cunningham-Burley (Assistant Principal Research-Led Learning) to develop the University's approach to research-led teaching and learning. Following four meetings over 2016-17 and 2017-18, the task group plans to submit its final report to the Committee in May 2018.

#### **4.2.5 *Develop a framework for the development and embedding of University-wide courses in the curricula and student experience***

During 2016-17, the Committee established a task group, convened by Prof Sarah Cunningham-Burley (Assistant Principal Research-Led Learning) to develop the University's approach to University-wide courses. The group submitted its final report to the Committee in November 2017, setting out a range of recommendations including the idea of developing a single, common University-wide course for all students. The report highlighted the need for programmes and timetables to have sufficient space to allow students to access this type of course, and suggested ways better to publicise existing course options. The Committee agreed to consult Schools on the central recommendations during Semester Two of 2017-18.

#### **4.2.6 *Develop an institutional policy on Learning Analytics***

In May/June 2017, LTC and Knowledge Strategy Committee approved a set of Principles and Objectives for Learning Analytics. During 2017-18, a task group has developed a more detailed policy setting out how the University will handle practical issues such as data governance, consent and security. While the development of this policy has been slower than planned due to uncertainty around the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation, a draft policy is now ready and will be brought to the May meetings of LTC and KSC for approval.

#### **4.2.7 *Other actions***

- The Committee has overseen the implementation of the University's first Student Partnership Agreement;

- The Committee considered the results of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2017, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2017 and the 2016/17 Semester 2 Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs);
- The Committee has supported the Students' Association in introducing a programme-level approach to student representatives ('class reps') in Schools, with a view to reducing the number of class reps, while offering a higher quality and more consistent representative system. Feedback to date suggests that Schools are making good progress in preparing to move to this new system. The Committee will consider a report on progress at its May 2018 meeting;
- The Committee discussed the wide range of University projects that are raising strategic issues around aspects of the undergraduate curriculum, and considered the merits of taking a more coordinated and strategic approach to developing the UG curriculum;
- The Committee established a new task group on using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity, which will begin its work before summer 2018;
- The Committee established a short-life task group on careers, employability and graduate attributes, which is due to report to the Committee in May 2018;
- The Committee explored the future of computer-based examinations;
- The Committee endorsed new strands of work to strengthen the University's understanding of retention and continuation rates for different student groups, and to develop minimum standards for Virtual Learning Environments;
- The Committee advised on the development of the University's Widening Participation Strategy, and on the development of Distance Learning at Scale.

#### **4.3 Researcher Experience Committee (REC)**

##### ***4.3.1 Excellence in Doctoral Training and Career Development programme***

This programme of work includes three strands: doctoral supervisor training and support; mentoring and well-being; and the development of a personal and professional development record for PGR students. During 2017-18, the Committee has made progress on all these strands.

The Committee has established a task group to develop proposals for enhancing training and support for doctoral supervisors. This group is in the process of exploring the possibility of establishing a CPD framework and online training resources, and reviewing the current requirement that all supervisors must attend training every five years.

In relation to the mentoring and well-being strand, the Committee has considered a report on student well-being strategies, and the Institute for Academic Development and the Students' Association have recently appointed a six-month post (to October 2018) to explore peer mentoring models for postgraduate research students.

The Committee has also established a task group to develop proposals for the development of a PGR personal and professional development record. The Committee supported the recommendations of the group, which reported in December 2017; implementation will be considered as part of the Service Excellence Programme.

#### **4.3.2 Review the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students**

REC has reframed the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students as a streamlined and non-mandatory document, having held focus groups with supervisors and researchers to understand what they would like from it. The Committee will be invited to approve the new document in June 2018 with a view to making it available for 2018-19.

#### **4.3.3 Review the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators**

During 2016-17 REC established a task group to review the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators. During summer 2017, the group completed its work and, following approval from REC and LTC, launched a new policy (replacing the Code) in September 2017. The new Policy aims to promote consistency and equality of treatment of Tutors and Demonstrators, for example by making it explicit that tutors and demonstrators must be paid for all contact time, and any other required work, and mandatory training. The Policy also clarifies that full-time PGR students should work as tutors and demonstrators (or in other University employment) for no more than an average of 9 hours per week. During 2017-18 Academic Services and HR have taken steps to highlight the requirements of the new Policy to Schools, and Academic Services has also produced FAQs for students. The Committee will review the implementation of the Policy by December 2018.

#### **4.3.4 Monitor and guide the development of the planned Enlightenment Scholarships scheme**

Following Central Management Group's approval of the introduction of these new doctoral Scholarships (the implementation of which was managed by a group reporting to CMG), REC has established a management group to oversee the next stages of implementation. The first scholars (seven across four Schools) are expected to start their studies in September 2018.

#### **4.3.4 Enhance support for Early Career Researchers**

The Committee has guided and endorsed the development by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) of a new 'Taking Control of your Research Career' programme of workshops, online learning and peer support devised to help Early Career Research staff (in some disciplines referred to as 'postdocs') make better decisions and take action to enhance their employability in a range of career areas. To date, IAD has expanded the workshop programme and developed a suite of online resources. The next step will be to develop the peer and line manager support element and embed the programme in Schools and research centres.

#### **4.3.5 Other actions**

- The Committee has discussed the outcomes of the 2017 Postgraduate Research Student Experience Survey (PRES), and facilitated discussion of the findings at College and School level;
- The Committee continues to monitor the implementation of its plans (which include action on online training for PGR students, supervisor training, and access to hard-copy library materials) to enable the University to make distance PhD study a standard part of the University's offerings – it will consider a progress report in June 2018;

- The Committee has considered draft guidance for the practical operation of PhDs with Integrated Study (this will be explored further by a task group in 2018-19);
- The Committee has overseen the completion of work to put formal Memoranda of Understanding and Agreement in place for Associated Institutions of the University;
- The Committee has contributed to an evaluation of the annual progression review monitoring system.

#### **4.4 Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)**

##### ***4.4.1 Assessment and Progression Tools project***

In 2016-17, the APT tools, which support the assessment process from the recording of individual assessment marks through to the calculation of course, progression and overall degree classifications, were rolled out to 18 Schools. The tools provide students with access to their course assessment structures through EUCLID student view, along with summative assessment marks, and Boards of Examiners have access to management reports. In 2017-18, the task group is overseeing the roll-out of the system to the remaining Schools, and the resolution of critical and non-critical system issues.

##### ***4.4.2 Evaluate the impact of the revised Special Circumstances Policy and Coursework Extensions regulation***

The Student Administration and Support sub-programme of the Service Excellence Programme includes a project relating to Special Circumstances, Extensions, and Concessions (SCEC), which aims to develop standard processes and workflow for special circumstances and coursework extension regulations. In addition to commenting on proposals from SEP, CSPC has also considered feedback from stakeholders regarding specific aspects of the revised Special Circumstance Policy and Coursework Extensions regulation (both of which were introduced in 2016-17). As a result of this feedback, CSPC has extended the acceptable grounds for coursework extensions to include exceptional employment commitments, and has also agreed to make specific reference both to exceptional caring responsibilities and experience of sexual harassment or assault as acceptable grounds for coursework extensions and Special Circumstances requests.

##### ***4.4.3 Develop an institutional policy for Authorised Interruption of Studies encompassing both taught and research students***

The University's 2016-17 review of support for disabled students recommended that the University develop an institutional policy for Authorised Interruption of Studies, and the Committee established a task group to develop this policy. The group has consulted stakeholders on a draft policy, and plans to present a final draft to CSPC for approval in May 2018.

##### ***4.4.4. Review policy regarding resubmission of PGT dissertations and associated dissertation supervision support, and PGT assessment/progression arrangements***

This task group has considered a range of significant and inter-related aspects of assessment policy for PGT programmes. Following consultation with stakeholders, the group plans to report to CSPC in May 2018. The report is anticipated to include specific recommendations to change University policy in order to allow resubmission of PGT dissertations in defined circumstances (bringing the University in line with typical

arrangements in the sector), and to clarify the roles of dissertation supervisors. The report is likely to recommend a further phase of work in relation to the more complex issue of PGT assessment/progression arrangements.

#### **4.4.5 Review Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy, to take account of recent Competition and Markets Authority rulings, and to provide additional information on business planning and on implementation**

Academic Services is working with Colleges to consolidate the existing range of policy and guidance on course and programme design and development documents (which include a range of University and College documents) into a coherent University suite of documents. These documents will take account of recent CMA rulings and provide additional information on business planning. Academic Services plans to present these documents to CSPC for approval in September 2018. In addition, Academic Services and the Institute for Academic Development have introduced training and support for Boards of Studies conveners and administrators, which will assist Schools in understanding how to comply with CMA requirements.

#### **4.4.6 Other actions**

- The Committee held an exceptional meeting on 13 April 2018 to agree how the University should mitigate the impact of the industrial action on students while maintaining academic standards;
- The Committee approved a new set of guidelines for the moderation of taught assessment;
- The Committee considered an overview of current practices and preventative measures in relation to academic misconduct, and recent Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) recommendations in relation to contract cheating, and agreed to develop proposals for further activities to promote good academic practice and to address academic misconduct;
- The Committee reviewed the University's approach to degree classification algorithms in the light of a recent Universities UK report, and agreed to a small number of changes to the University's practices; and
- The Committee clarified its policy regarding the requirement to hold Boards of Examiners meetings in January/February to confirm course results for Semester One.

### **4.5 Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)**

#### **4.5.1 Oversee institutional activities in response to 2015 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)**

In its autumn 2015 ELIR, the University achieved the highest possible judgement: "effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience". QAC has continued to monitor progress against plans, addressing the main areas for development identified by the ELIR, clustering these plans under five themes: Postgraduate Research Student Experience; Personal Tutoring System; Student Representation at College and School Level; Assessment and Feedback; and Staff Engagement in Learning and Teaching.

#### **4.5.2 Continued implementation and monitoring of the streamlining of the quality assurance framework**

In 2015-16, following extensive consultation with Schools and Colleges, QAC approved proposals to streamline quality assurance processes and reduce the burden on colleagues,

while deriving maximum benefit from quality activity. In 2016-17, QAC began to implement these new streamlined processes for annual quality reviews (which involve a revised annual report template, and stronger focus on the programme as the key level for reflection), and for periodic reviews (Teaching Programme Reviews and Postgraduate Programme Reviews). In 2017-18, QAC completed the implementation process. It also evaluated the impact of the new annual quality review processes - feedback received from Colleges and Schools was generally positive.

#### **4.5.3 *Oversee and evaluate the effectiveness of Personal Tutor system***

See 5.3, below.

#### **4.5.4 *Review of progress on collaborative undergraduate programmes with Zhejiang University***

In April 2018, the University sent a panel to visit the joint Edinburgh/Zhejiang Institute to carry out a review of the operation of the collaborative programmes in Integrative Biomedical Sciences (which started running in 2016-17).

#### **4.5.5 *Thematic review of support for student parents/student carers/mature students***

This review is currently underway. The Committee considered an interim report at its meeting in April 2018, and is due to receive a final report at its first meeting in 2018-19.

#### **4.5.6 *Other actions***

- The Committee approved a new succinct Policy (consolidating a range of existing documents) setting out the University's approach to gathering, learning from and responding to the student voice;
- The Committee advised the University on how to respond to consultations regarding a revised UK Quality Code;
- The Committee explored patterns and trends in relation to undergraduate degree classification outcomes, and agreed some actions to encourage Schools to review patterns and trends in relation to their programmes.

### **1. Overview of delivery of core functions in 2017-18**

Senate has delegated to the Committees a range of its powers. These powers are set out in the Committees' terms of reference (see Section 2, above). The following is a summary of the main powers that the Committees have exercised during 2017-18 (in addition to the project-based activities set out in Section 4, above):

#### **5.1 *Strategies / regulations / policies / codes***

The attached Annex sets out any new strategies / regulations / policies / codes that the Committees have approved (the more substantive of which are covered in Section 4 above), along with changes to existing documents.

#### **5.2 *Approval of curriculum changes***

While the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) has delegated to Schools and Colleges authority for approving the introduction of new programmes and

courses, and changes to and closure of existing ones, CSPC's approval is required for programme and course developments that are not compliant with the University's Curriculum Framework or the academic year structure, and/or which have wider implications. This includes collaborations with other institutions which do not operate under the University's normal regulations.

In 2017-18, the Committee approved proposals in relation to seven different degree programmes, including four collaborative programmes.

### **5.3 Quality Assurance**

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) oversees the operation of the University's processes for the annual quality review of all credit-bearing provision along with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). This involves Schools reviewing their provision and each producing an annual report on key themes and actions from in-year monitoring, review and reflection, and Colleges providing annual reports outlining their action plan for the support of teaching excellence and capacity building. QAC established a subgroup to review Schools' 2016-17 reports, which operated under the new streamlined arrangements (see 4.5.2). The subgroup was satisfied with all Schools' reports, subject to recommending that 13 Schools take some additional action. The Committee also discussed the Colleges' reports, which raised a range of issues that required institutional action.

QAC also conducted the annual quality review of student support services. It agreed to move the timescales of the reporting process so that, from summer 2018, they would be more closely aligned with the overall University planning cycles. During the transitional year, 2017-18, the Committee conducted the review process on a lighter-touch basis than usual.

In addition to overseeing the annual quality review process, the Quality Assurance Committee oversees the operation of the Teaching Programme Review (TPR) and Postgraduate Programme Review (PPR) processes, under which each academic area is subject to a review conducted by a visiting panel (including discipline experts external to the University) every six years. QAC is responsible for determining the framework for and schedule of reviews, and then approving the reports of reviews, and reviewing Schools' responses to the reviews. Seven Teaching Programme Reviews (TPR), and four Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPR) have taken place in 2017-18. In addition, the Committee oversaw a review of collaborative undergraduate programmes with Zhejiang University (see 4.5.4), and undertook a light-touch review of Student-Led Individually Created Courses (SLICCs). All the reports submitted to date confirm that areas have effective management of the quality of the student learning experience, academic standards, and enhancement. The Committee identified key general themes from TPRs and PPRs for development and further action at University level, such as the provision of space (both for students and staff), and the career development of academic staff.

QAC continued to monitor trends and patterns regarding Student Conduct, Student Appeals and Complaint Handling. It noted some early signs of a plateauing in the volume of academic appeals, following an upward trend in recent years, and also an increasing number of student conduct cases related to allegations of sexual violence. There were no discernible trends in relation to the student complaint cases.

QAC's Personal Tutor System Sub-Group is tasked with QA oversight of the Personal Tutor (PT) system. Since the last Senate report, the Group has met on two occasions to approve the School Personal Tutoring Statements for 2017-18 and to consider the operation of the PT system in relation to the most recent National Student Survey (NSS), and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results. While the group was broadly content with the Tutoring Statements, it asked nine Schools to make some amendments to their Statements

before publishing them. It also identified a range of actions for Schools and Colleges in relation to the operation of the PT system.

## 5.4 Student concessions

The Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee has responsibility for considering some of the more exceptional categories of student concessions, for example to allow a student to extend or interrupt their study beyond what is permitted by the Degree Regulations, or to graduate without the required number and/or level of credits for the degree programme. To date this session, the Committee has approved 15 concessions.

## 2. Senate Committees' Priorities for 2018-19

The following are the Senate Committees' proposed plans for 2018-19. The Committees will seek to deliver as many of these as possible, while adjusting them as necessary to take account of any changes in the internal and external environment. The majority involve the completion of projects started in 2017-18, with relatively few new activities planned.

### 6.1 Proposed activities cutting across the four Committees

Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Students' Association to promote and implement the Student Partnership Agreement*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the changes in Senate's composition associated with the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Administration and Support strand of Service Excellence Programme – likely to raise various new strands of activity for Senate Committees, for example regarding academic policy and regulations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take steps towards aligning with the new UK Quality Code, with a view to full alignment prior the University's next ELIR</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with further development of Teaching Excellence Framework*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies and Codes – Ongoing programme of review of policies</li> </ul>

\* Already underway in 2017-18

### 6.2 Learning and Teaching Committee

Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversee implementation of University Learning and Teaching Strategy*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new institutional policy to support the University's Lecture Recording service*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an institutional vision for Digital Education (the 'Near Future Teaching' programme)*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distance Learning at Scale project – contribute to learning, teaching and student experience dimensions *</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee and guide work to support students' Careers, Employability and Graduate Attributes*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor implementation of the Student Mental Health Strategy*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee and guide the implementation of recommendations from the task group on research-led learning and teaching*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee implementation of recommendations from the University-wide courses task group, taking account of the Spring 2018 consultation process*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment and Feedback - strands of work regarding the Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) project, and the role of curriculum design in facilitating quality assessment and feedback models*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the University's understanding of retention and continuation rates for different student groups*</li> </ul>

\* Already underway in 2017-18

### 6.3 Researcher Experience Committee

<b>Activity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellence in Doctoral Training and Career Development programme (focusing on supervisor training and support, and student mentorship and wellbeing)*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee the introduction of the Enlightenment Scholarships scheme*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the implementation of the new Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance support for Early Career Researchers (make more visible, enhance and structure provision, strengthen partnerships)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop guidance for the operation of PhD by Integrated Study programmes*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify the status of students during the period following the submission of the thesis for assessment</li> </ul>

\* Already underway in 2017-18

### 6.4 Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

<b>Activity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the Assessment and Progression Tools project*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Service Excellence Programme to oversee the implementation of any significant policy changes associated with the current programme of work (e.g. Study Away and Special Circumstances, Extensions and Concessions strands)*</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review policy regarding resubmission of PGT dissertations and associated dissertation supervision support, and PGT assessment/progression arrangements (complete any elements outstanding from 2017-18 and oversee introduction of any changes in policy)*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Code of Student Conduct</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Support for Study Policy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop common institutional guidance for managing undergraduate degree programme transfers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen support for course and programme design and development – consolidate the existing policy and guidance into a single University suite of documents, and roll-out training and support for Boards of Studies conveners and administrators*</li> </ul>

\* Already underway in 2017-18

## 6.5 Quality Assurance Committee

<b>Activity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Students' Association to enhance the Class Representation System*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee and evaluate the effectiveness of the Personal Tutor system*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee institutional activities in response to 2015 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee initial preparations for the University's next ELIR</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed mid-course feedback for undergraduate students, and develop appropriate mechanisms for evaluating its operation*</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic review to support the implementation of the University's Widening Participation Strategy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review good practice identified in quality review processes in relation to developing academic communities</li> </ul>

\* Already underway in 2017-18

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**Annex – new regulations/policies/codes, and reviews of and amendments to existing regulations/policies/codes, approved by Senate and its Committees during 2017-18**

<b>Senate Committee</b>	<b>Name of document</b>	<b>Type of change (New / Revision / Deletion / Technical Update / Reviewed and no changes made)</b>
Senate	Student Partnership Agreement	Introduction of new document
Learning and Teaching	Lecture Recording Policy*	Introduction of new policy
Learning and Teaching	Learning Analytics Policy*	Introduction of new policy
Learning and Teaching	Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators	Introduction of new policy (replacing existing Code)
Learning and Teaching	Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators	Deletion of existing document (replaced by new Policy)
Curriculum and Student Progression	Taught Assessment Regulations*	Revision of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees*	Revision of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Undergraduate Degree Regulations#	Revision of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Postgraduate Degree Regulations#	Revision of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Authorised Interruption of Study Policy*	Introduction of new policy
Curriculum and Student Progression	Authorised interruption of study or extension of study- postgraduate research*	Deletion of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Study*	Revision of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Special Circumstances Policy	Revision of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures*	Revision of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Programme and Course Handbooks Policy*	Revision of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Course Organiser: Outline of Role*	Revision of existing document

Curriculum and Student Progression	Resits and Supplementary Assessments Guidance	Deletion of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Curriculum Framework- Structure for Teaching and Assessment	Deletion of existing document
Curriculum and Student Progression	Academic Timetabling Policy*	Revision of existing document
Quality Assurance Committee	Student Voice Policy	Introduction of new policy (replacing documentation relating to Learning from and Responding to the Student Voice)
Quality Assurance Committee	Policy on Learning from and Responding to the Student Voice	Deletion of existing document
Quality Assurance Committee	Code of Practice on Learning from and Responding to the Student Voice	Deletion of existing document
Quality Assurance Committee	EUSA and University Student Engagement Statement	Deletion of existing document (incorporated into Student Partnership Agreement)
Quality Assurance Committee	Student Staff Liaison Committee Operational Guidance	Revision of existing document
Quality Assurance Committee	External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy	Revision of existing document
Quality Assurance Committee	Thematic Review Guidance	Revision of existing document
Researcher Experience Committee	Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students*	Revision of existing document

\*Subject to Committee approval May/June 2018

#Subject to approval by Court via resolution June 2018