

**Minutes of the Meeting of Senate Education Committee
held via Microsoft Teams at 2.00pm on Wednesday 3 March 2021**

1. Attendance

Present	Position
Colm Harmon	Vice-Principal Students (Convener) – Ex Officio
Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (Vice-Convener) – Ex Officio
Sabine Rolle	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Lisa Kendall	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Stephen Bowd	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)
Judy Hardy	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Michael Seery	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)
Neil Turner	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, UG)
Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, PGT)
Mike Shipston	Head of Deanery, CMVM
Richard Andrews	Head of School, CAHSS
Iain Gordon	Head of School, CSE
Stuart Lamont	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Permanent Staff Member
Fizzy Abou Jawad	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice President Education
Sue MacGregor	Director of Academic Services – Ex Officio
Velda McCune	Representing Director of Institute for Academic Development – Ex Officio
Shelagh Green	Director for Careers & Employability – Ex Officio
Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services – Ex Officio
Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions – Ex Officio
Sian Bayne	Assistant Principal Digital Education
Philippa Ward	Academic Services (Secretary)
Apologies	
Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)
Paula Webster	Head of Student Data and Surveys
In Attendance	
Hazel Christie	Institute for Academic Development
Tim Drysdale	School of Engineering
Euan Murray	Learning Teaching and Web Services

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 27 January 2021

The following amendment was made to the minutes of the 27 January 2021 meeting of Education Committee:

Item 3.1 Expectations Around 2021/22 Teaching

The final paragraph was amended to read:

In light of its discussion, the Committee agreed that the University should be planning for students to be on-campus in 2021/22 (whilst recognising that provision will still need to be in place for students who find themselves unable to travel or needing to self-isolate). Members discussed a number of issues and challenges linked to 2m physical distancing, and noted that it might be beneficial to consider prioritising particular cohorts of students, such as Honours-level and PGT, for access to in person teaching. The Committee agreed that the University should retain flexibility to allow it to pivot at short notice if required.

The text of the associated edition of the Senate Committees' Newsletter was also amended.

3. Convener's Communications

3.1 Update on Academic Year 2021/22 Planning

The Convener advised members that the key planning issue at this stage was the estate capacity assumption. Further guidance was required from the Scottish Government in order to progress with planning. The University's Planning Group was meeting weekly, and decisions around timetabling and other key issues would need to be taken in the coming weeks.

4. For Discussion

4.1 Update on the Operation and Impact of the University's CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching

The paper provided an update on the operation and impact of the University's CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching. Members were advised that the story was largely a positive one, with all three pathways (IntroAP, PGCAP and EdTA) running very well. All programmes had been moved online in 2020. This had proved successful and was likely to lead to more digital delivery going forwards.

It was noted that there was some spare capacity on the PGCAP, and members were asked to encourage their constituents to enrol on this programme where appropriate.

The main barriers to further increases in participation were academic staff workloads and workload models. COVID-19 had increased pressures on staff and completion numbers were likely to be slightly lower than expected in 2020/21, and possibly in 2021/22, as a result.

Looking ahead, those involved in the development and running of the Framework were keen to support the Curriculum Transformation agenda. It was also noted that the University was working towards reaccreditation of the Framework in 2023: reaccreditation had been due in 2021, but due to COVID, the accreditation period had been extended by two years.

Education Committee discussed the following in relation to the Framework:

- The way in which the Framework might align with Curriculum Transformation. It would be important to undertake work to identify and understand the additional skills and capabilities colleagues would need to equip them for Curriculum Transformation. There may also be the potential to involve those enrolled on CPD programmes in driving forward the transformation agenda, for example, by involving them in the development of new graduate attributes.
- The benefits of making CPD as relevant as possible by focussing on the local context and equipping staff with the skills to drive change in their particular Schools or areas.
- The impact of workloads on participation in CPD – it was recognised that this was an issue that the Committee would need to return to when the Curriculum Transformation agenda had been progressed.
- The impressive upskilling of staff that had occurred over the past year in the context of the pandemic.
- The potential benefits of making the PGCAP even more flexible to make it more accessible to staff. Members were advised that there were plans to look at this in advance of the 2023 reaccreditation.
- The benefits of doing more to promote teaching sabbaticals.
- The broader context of continuing to undertake work to ensure parity of esteem for teaching and research.

4.2 The Hybrid Classroom

Members considered a paper and presentation provided by the Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services, and discussed a hybrid classroom pilot undertaken in the School of Engineering by Professor Drysdale.

The hybrid classroom facilitates synchronous physical and virtual teaching using video and audio collaboration technology. The Committee noted that the equipping of teaching spaces with a higher level of technology would require a commitment of resource by Information Services Group (ISG), Colleges and Schools. The cost of equipping teaching spaces with four different levels of technology (ranging from room microphones working through a fixed PC to Intelligent Audio) had been assessed. The pilot undertaken in the School of Engineering had used level 3 equipment. No teaching spaces were currently equipped at level 4, although it was anticipated that this level would be required for Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) programmes.

There was an appetite to invest in equipping teaching rooms at a higher level. However, it was recognised that any roll-out would take several years, and that in addition to providing equipment, there would need to be substantial investment in training and support to ensure that staff and students were able to take full advantage of the technology.

Members noted that while Collaborate currently offers integration with the Learn VLE, the same functionality does not currently exist for Teams and Zoom. However, work is being undertaken by ISG to provide Learn integration for these platforms, with the aim of having some level of integration in place for Semester 1 2021/22.

The Committee was advised that next steps in the move towards developing hybrid classrooms were:

- requesting funding;
- returning to campus;
- establishing governance for the roll-out of equipment;
- developing training;
- continuing with School pilots of the technology;
- undertaking research into practice elsewhere;
- and reviewing learning design for hybrid teaching.

In relation to the School of Engineering pilot, Professor Drysdale advised members that:

- the pilot had used approaches also used to manage the lecture recording roll-out, for example having student helpers available in teaching rooms;
- level 3 equipment, including intelligent microphones, had been used, resulting in substantial improvements in the overall experience;
- students had been very positive about the experience;
- the experience had been particularly beneficial for widening participation.

Members discussed:

- the value of sharing more widely some of the insights from the School of Engineering pilot and other pilots being undertaken within the University. Sharing some demonstration videos might be helpful in this respect.
- the potential for IAD to use the technology being described when teaching the University's academic staff, with a view to academic staff then copying these teaching practices.
- the potential value of this technology to activities other than teaching, for example to research and public engagement activities, and therefore the value of equipping more than just teaching spaces with the required technology.
- the desirability of doing long-term, strategic thinking about this matter, and not rushing to equip rooms with technology that later proved to be of limited use. Although equipping rooms at level 3 would be costly, it may represent much better value for money overall.

5. For Approval

5.1 Proposed Amendments to Academic and Pastoral Support Policy (Senior Tutor Role Description)

The Committee approved the proposed amendments to the Academic and Pastoral Support Policy, noting that it described the way in which the role was intended to operate and formalised what, in a number of areas, was already current practice.

However, members also noted that:

- there had not been broad consultation on the proposed changes;

- the changes raised significant workload issues (within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences in particular. These would be discussed with the Head of College.)
- for a Senior Tutor to fulfil the duties of the role as described, an excellent, underpinning student support structure was required. The recommendations of the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review had not yet been implemented, and at present, the resource required to implement the recommendations was not available. The Wellbeing Advisor roles recommended by the Review were considered critical to effective student support, and the Committee endorsed investment in these roles.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Curriculum Transformation

Members considered for information a paper taken to the 23 February 2021 meeting of University Executive, which provided a brief update on the work of the Curriculum Transformation Programme and the draft Board's membership and Terms of Reference. It was noted that Executive had approved the membership and Terms of Reference, taking into account comments around the size of the Board; competing workload pressures on staff; and the importance of inclusivity.

Education Committee:

- welcomed the level of seniority associated with the membership, but noted that there would be benefit in considering whether the membership was sufficiently diverse, particularly in the context of decolonising the curriculum.
- noted that there was currently no College-level involvement in the Board, only central and School-level involvement. The Committee agreed that Colleges should be represented on the Board.
- asked about governance arrangements and where the Board sat in relation to Education Committee and other University governance structures. It was agreed that clarification was required on this point.
- noted that there was no reference to PGR within the paper. The PGR representative for the College of Science and Engineering confirmed that PGR would be included in the scope of the Curriculum Transformation project, and more definition would be brought to this in due course.
- highlighted the importance of ensuring that all University staff members were provided with opportunities to contribute to discussions around Curriculum Transformation in meaningful ways.

The Convener would bring a further update and discussion paper on Curriculum Transformation to the May meeting of the Committee.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services
10 March 2021