SENATE COMMITTEES’ MEMBERS’ GUIDANCE

September 2018

Academic Services
INTRODUCTION

This guidance has been developed for members of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) committees. As members of the University’s senior academic governance committees, you play a very important role in supporting and enhancing the academic work of the University, and ultimately the student experience.

Committee Structure

DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEMBERS

The membership of a committee is detailed within the terms of reference. There are different types of members on a committee and the main types are detailed below:

**Ex officio member**: a member of a committee by virtue of their position. *For example, the Conveners of each College Quality Assurance Committee (or equivalent) are ex officio members of the Quality Assurance Committee.*

**Co-opted member**: a member selected for a committee, normally due to their expertise. Co-opted members normally serve for a fixed term as defined in the terms of reference. Co-opted members do not normally represent a specific constituency. *For example, up to two additional members may be co-opted onto the Committee by the Convener depending on expertise required (members will normally serve a three year term).*

**Member with specific responsibilities**: a member nominated or appointed to a committee because they have responsibility for a particular, relevant matter. *For example, the Colleges shall each nominate two senior members of staff within the College who have responsibility for learning and teaching.*
**Edinburgh University Students’ Association (Students’ Association) representative:** may also be an *ex officio* member (for example, the Students’ Association Vice President (Education) shall be an *ex officio* member of the Committee) or a member nominated by the Students’ Association to ensure appropriate representation/consideration (for example, the Students’ Association will also nominate a further representative in order to try to ensure that undergraduate and taught postgraduate issues can be appropriately considered).

**External member:** a member appointed from outwith the University. These members bring relevant skills and experience to the committee along with an external viewpoint on matters. *For example, the Committee shall appoint an external member from the Scottish Higher Education system with experience in quality assurance matters to attend the Quality Assurance Committee.*

**In attendance:** the Convener may invite individuals for specific meetings or agenda items. Note individuals who are “in attendance” at a Committee meeting are not members of the Committee.

**REPRESENTATION, DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION**

In general, those who are representing a particular constituency are College or Students’ Association representatives. As a representative member you play an extremely important role as a conduit between the committee and your constituency. Two-way communication is extremely important in supporting the work of the committee and will ensure that the views of staff and students across the University are taken into account and that important developments are disseminated.

Although other committee members may not necessarily represent a particular constituency, there is a responsibility on all members to disseminate relevant issues appropriately and also to bring relevant matters to the attention of the committee.

Clear arrangements have been put in place for Senate and the Senate Committees to adopt when consulting with Schools, Colleges, students and other stakeholders regarding changes to strategy, policy or procedure on learning, teaching and student experience matters. Further information about these arrangements can be found as Appendix 2.

**EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES**

All Senate committees have student representation through the Students’ Association. Students’ Association representatives are strongly encouraged to attend all committee meetings since the student voice is greatly valued by the University and informs the work of the Senate committees.

Students’ Association representatives are a link between the committee and the student body and should therefore report back on and discuss committee business in the relevant forums.

Students’ Association representatives may be asked by the Convener to provide information on the student opinion in relation to particular issues raised by the Committee. If it is not possible to do
this at the meeting, representatives should follow this up outwith the meeting by consulting further and reporting back.

Students’ Association sabbatical officers receive meeting training from the Students’ Association during their induction.

INDUCTION

If you are a new committee member, you will be invited to meet the Convener and Committee Secretary shortly before the first meeting of the academic year. You may wish to use this opportunity to find out what will be expected of you as a committee member; about the background and recent work of the committee; and the priorities and strategic direction of the committee. Academic Services staff will be available to provide ongoing advice and guidance on the academic governance framework if required.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of the Committee Member
The role of the Committee member is to contribute effectively to the business and outcomes of the committee, and to represent their constituency as appropriate. Full participation by all members is paramount to the success of the committee.

New Members

Specific Responsibilities and Expectations of Senate Committee Members
As set out in the terms of reference of each Senate committee, members have the following specific responsibilities and expectations:

All members of the committee:

- Are expected to be clear about the functions of the committee as prescribed in its terms of reference
- Are expected to uphold the “seven principles of public life”: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. See description of the “seven principles” at the following URL: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Governance/CourtMembersCode.pdf
- Are expected to be collegial and constructive in approach
- Should attend all meetings and participate fully in the work of the Committee and its Task Groups. In order to fulfil the representative role, it is vital that members prioritise attendance at Senate committee and task group meetings. This will involve looking ahead and consulting/gathering input in order to provide the broad spectrum of thoughts and opinions which are necessary for proper consideration of the area being discussed. Dates of meetings of Senate Committees are published well in advance for the following academic year, and every effort is made to set task group meetings in advance.
- Will need to take collective and individual ownership for the issues under the Committee’s remit and for the discussion and resolution of these issues. In taking ownership of the work of
the Committee, members must take steps to ensure that they are empowered to take decisions on behalf of academic and managerial colleagues.

- Are expected to be committed to communicating the work of the committee to the wider University Community.
- Are expected to assess the impact of proposed new or revised policies and practices on the ‘protected characteristic groups’ set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, subject to relevance and proportionality. Further details can be found at: www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/impact-assessment

**Practical Guidance**

**Ongoing**

- Ensure that committee dates, times and locations are in diaries
- Gather views of the constituency being represented (as appropriate)
- Submit reports as required by the remit
- Be clear about the functions of the committee and regularly consult the committee terms of reference
- Inform the Committee Secretary of any changes to contact details
- Keep the committee informed of relevant local issues
- Respect confidentiality and handle sensitive issues with discretion
- Disclose and, wherever possible, avoid conflicts of interest

**Before the meeting:**

- Contribute to any agenda items as requested by the Convener or Committee Secretary
- Consult your constituency regarding agenda items where appropriate
- Ensure any outstanding actions from the last meeting are completed and communicated to the Committee Secretary
- Submit any papers to the Committee Secretary by the agreed deadline including the coversheet (this will greatly help in the timely preparation and circulation of the agenda and papers)
- Read the committee documentation and note any points to raise, being aware of whether the item is for information, discussion or approval
- Submit apologies to the Committee Secretary if you are unable to attend the meeting (see below for further information)

**At the meeting:**

- Approve the minutes and raise matters of accuracy only on the minutes (remembering that they have been approved for circulation by the Convener)
- Carefully note what action is requested in the paper (e.g. for information, for discussion, for approval) as this will ensure that the meeting stays on course
- Keep to the topics on the agenda
- Play an active part in the meeting by contributing to the discussion and decision-making
- Note relevant actions
- Speak to papers as appropriate
- Support the Convener in ensuring that the meeting runs to time
• Avoid introducing items under Any Other Business without informing the Convener in advance

**After the meeting:**
• Follow up any assigned actions in a timely manner
• Communicate outcomes to the constituency being represented (for some agenda items there will be an agreed implementation/communication plan; in other cases, committee representatives should use their judgement regarding the appropriate way to communicate with their constituents).

**If you cannot attend the Meeting**
• Please let the Committee Secretary know as soon as possible
• Substitution of members (i.e. due to an inability to attend) will be at the discretion of the Convener of the Committee and will be managed via the Secretary to the committee
• Where a substitute is permitted to attend, arrange to brief them fully, provide all the necessary paperwork prior to the meeting, and arrange to receive feedback after the meeting
• If a substitute is unable to attend, please submit any comments on the agenda and papers to the Committee Secretary (where possible)

**OTHER ROLES**

**Role of the Convener**
The role of the Convener is to ensure the effective conduct of the committee (within the terms of reference), ensuring that business is being progressed, and facilitating meaningful discussion and sound decision-making. There are occasions when a non-contentious decision is required that cannot wait until the next meeting of the committee. These can be dealt with by Convener’s Action and will be reported to the next meeting of the committee, and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If the need for urgent consideration of major and/or controversial items is foreseen, the committee should explicitly delegate the matter to the Convener at the previous meeting. If the need is unforeseen, the Convener may wish to consult committee members by email before making a decision.

**Role of the Committee Secretary**
The role of the Committee Secretary is to support the effective operation of the committee (in accordance with the terms of reference), to record and communicate outcomes accordingly, and to create and maintain committee records. The Committee Secretary also provides guidance and support to the Convener and committee members.

**In Attendance**
Committees may wish to invite officers or others to be present at meetings ‘in attendance’. In some cases, it may be essential for a particular officer to be present at all meetings of the committee, but not appropriate for that officer to be a decision-making member of the committee. In other cases, it may be appropriate for the committee to advise officers that they are expected to be present at meetings only for discussion of those items of business which their advice will usefully inform.
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of reference describe the purpose and structure of a committee. Typically they contain the purpose and role; the remit; governance; constitution and operational arrangements. The powers and responsibilities of the Committee as recorded in the terms of reference are delegated from Senate. It is, therefore, vital that Senate Committees operate within their remit and operational arrangements.

Terms of reference are available on the Academic Services website:
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees

PREPARATION OF PAPERS

The paper author is the person who has written the paper which will be considered by the committee. Paper authors are required to:

- Liaise with the Committee Secretary to agree which papers will be brought to which meeting to inform the forward schedule of committee business
- Ensure concise, clear, well written papers are prepared.
- Be clear on:
  - what action is the committee being asked to perform
  - to whom the decision should be communicated
  - when implementation, if required, should take place
  - what measures of impact should be used by the committee
- Complete all sections of the coversheet, including an executive summary
- Meet the agreed deadlines for the submission of papers

Guidance for Senate Committee members on authoring papers and other aspects of Committee business is attached at Appendix 1. Senate Committee members who author papers should refer to this guidance.

DISTRIBUTION OF PAPERS

The Committee Secretary distributes committee papers electronically in the interests of sustainability. They may be emailed to members or posted on websites or wikis. Closed papers may be emailed directly to members. Coversheets for each item will indicate whether the item is for approval, for discussion or for information.

FLEXIBLE APPROACHES TO COMMITTEE BUSINESS

In order to progress committee business in a timely manner and to allow maximum time at meetings to discuss matters of strategic importance, committees may interact electronically. Committees may also ‘meet’ electronically to note formal items or items which are not considered to be of strategic importance or where there is an urgent need for a decision. The agenda and papers are circulated electronically, usually by email. The Committee Secretary to the committee will advise on what is
required and members should follow the instructions provided and ask for further guidance from the Committee Secretary as needed, who will be very happy to talk through the process.
A report on the business considered during the Electronic meeting is reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

The roles and responsibilities for members remain the same for electronic interaction. Members may be asked for comments on a matter relevant to the committee outwith routine meetings. In this case, members should ensure that they respond as requested as this greatly helps the Committee Secretary with progressing the matter. A response may be required, in which case a simple confirmation email is very helpful to the Committee Secretary and at other times by not responding it will be assumed that agreement is granted. Either way, you will be advised by the Committee Secretary on how to respond.

PUBLICATION OF AGENDAS, PAPERS AND MINUTES

In line with sector best practice and in the interest of ensuring transparency of committee operation and promoting communication, agendas, papers and minutes of open committee business will be made publicly available on the University’s website.

Open Committee Business
Open business means that it may be published freely. The majority of business discussed at Senate committees is open.

Members should note that agendas, papers and minutes of open committee business will be publicly available on the University’s website. As part of this, the names of committee members will be published online unless you request otherwise by contacting the Committee Secretary.

Closed Committee Business
Closed committee business is normally of a highly confidential nature and tends to relate either to individuals or strategically sensitive matters. In this instance, a Data Protection or Freedom of Information exemption will apply. It is good practice, wherever possible, to minimise closed business.

Reserved Business
Occasionally, members may be asked to leave a meeting depending on the manner of the reserved business under discussion. Reserved business is business which for reasons of confidentiality is not open to discussion by the whole Committee.

Records Management, Data Protection and Freedom of Information
Members should ensure that they have an awareness of the implications of information legislation. Key points to note are:
- Members should be aware that their notes could be subject to an information request. Good practice is to dispose of notes once actions are complete and to dispose of any papers after the meeting.
• If members receive an information request, they should always refer it to the Committee Secretary of the committee for action as soon as possible since there are timescales to be adhered to when processing a request.

Committee secretaries are trained in the implications of Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation for committee servicing. In practice, this means that they will be able to advise on the classification of committee business (open or closed) and write minutes in the appropriate manner and format. The paper template indicates categories that can/should be dealt with under closed business.

Further information is available on the Records Management website at:
www.ed.ac.uk/records-management

Further information on committee servicing: www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/freedom-of-information/guidance-policies/committee-servicing

**COMMUNICATION OF DECISIONS**

As stated above, Senate members have a responsibility to communicate decisions to the constituency represented. Academic Services will continue to use the Senate Committees Newsletter to communicate developments to stakeholders. The most recent Senate Committees Newsletter is available at the following URL: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/newsletter

At the end of each academic session, Academic Services will publish a list of all significant changes to regulations, policies and codes, and will bring them to attention of staff. See example of the list at the following URL: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/new-policies. Academic Services is happy to assist with communication / implementation of Senate Committee decisions, for example by holding briefing meetings for relevant stakeholders, or introducing items at School or College Committee meetings.

The equality impact of any significant changes to regulations, policies and codes must be assessed. Further information on Equality Impact Assessment is available here: http://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/impact-assessment

**TASK GROUPS**

The work of the Senate committees is supported by limited-life task groups. All task groups have a ‘parent’ Senate committee through which they formally report. The ‘parent’ Senate committee will assign each task group a specific body of work which will be outlined in a remit and membership that reflects the particular task in hand. Task group members need not necessarily be committee members. Since tasks groups are limited-life, members will be expected to contribute effectively to support the work of the group, which will likely be fast-paced. The work of task groups is outlined in an implementation plan through which progress is monitored.
All reports from task groups should include a communication and implementation plan. Where it appears likely that implementation will be complex or challenging, authors should consult key College administrative and academic staff, and relevant support services, when developing communication and implementation plans.

Further guidance on planning Senate Committee Task Groups is available as Appendix 3.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Academic Services has ultimate responsibility for the operation of the academic governance framework which includes the committee arrangements. Committee webpages contain useful information such as committee meeting dates and meeting papers.

Learning and Teaching Committee
Committee Secretary: Philippa Ward
Ext: 651 6083
Email: Philippa.Ward@ed.ac.uk
Website: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/learning-teaching

Researcher Experience Committee
Committee Secretary: Susan Hunter
Ext: 650 2160
Email: susan.hunter5@ed.ac.uk
Website: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/researcher-experience

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee
Committee Secretary: Theresa Sheppard
Ext: 651 4979
Email: Theresa.Sheppard@ed.ac.uk
Website: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/curriculum-student-progression

Quality Assurance Committee
Committee Secretary: Brian Connolly
Ext: 651 4481
Email: Brian.Connolly@ed.ac.uk
Website: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/quality-assurance

In the absence of any of the above named individuals, please direct your query to: academicservices@ed.ac.uk
GUIDANCE FOR SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON AUTHORING PAPERS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Description of Paper
The purpose of this paper is to remind the Committee of the guidelines on authoring committee papers and on managing the communication, implementation and evaluation of committee decisions, which the Senate Committees approved in September 2014.

Authoring succinct committee papers
As part of broader changes in its operation, in August 2014 Court introduced new guidelines on preparing Court committee papers. These guidelines aim to ensure that Court receives succinct stand-alone papers, in order to reduce the volume of papers and assist Court with its governance role. For further information on these Court changes see:

http://edin.ac/1uwsphQ

In producing committee papers (including task group reports) please could authors take account of the Court guidance on producing papers (Court and Committees - guidelines for authors) and on house style (House style - guidance notes).

Senate committee paper cover sheet
In addition to providing guidelines on producing papers / house style, Court also produced a template for authors to follow in producing papers (ie rather than complete a standard cover sheet, Court papers authors write their reports using standard headings and structures). Given the different nature of the Senate and Court business, Senate Committee paper authors do not need to follow the Court paper template. We have however revised the Senate Committees paper cover-sheet to take account of the headings in the Court paper template. The latest version of this cover-sheet is available at:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees

Communicating and implementing Senate committee decisions
In September 2014 the Senate Committees agreed to adopt the following approach to managing the communication and implementation of decisions:

- All papers that seek Committee approval for a decision should explain how that decision would be communicated and implemented. In many cases this is likely to be very straightforward (for example, “College representatives will be responsible for informing School Directors of Learning and Teaching or equivalent of change in policy”.)
- All reports from task groups should include a communication and implementation plan.
- Where it appears likely that implementation would be complex or challenging, authors should consult with key College administrative and academic staff, and relevant support services, when developing communication and implementation plans.
- Academic Services will continue to use the Senate Committees Newsletter to communicate developments to stakeholders.
- At the end of each academic session, Academic Services will publish a list of all significant changes to regulations, policies and codes, and will bring them to attention of staff. (For 2015 example see www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/new-policies)
- Academic Services continues to be happy to assist with communication / implementation of Senate Committee decisions, for example by holding briefing meetings for relevant stakeholders, or introducing items at School or College Committee meetings.

**Evaluating the impact of the implementation of committee decisions**
Where the Committee makes a significant decision, it would be appropriate for the Committee to decide when and how it would evaluate whether a decision has been implemented and the impact it has had. Approaches to evaluation can include:

- Committing to the Committee reviewing a new policy x years after implementation.
- Colleges to review whether Schools have consistently implemented a significant regulatory change.
- For major developments, conducting a formal review (eg including staff and student surveys) after x years

In September 2014 the Senate Committees agreed that, when committee papers seek Committee approval for significant developments, the papers should set out plans for evaluation.

**Equality Impact Assessment**
The equality impact of any significant changes to regulations, policies and codes must be assessed. Further information on Equality Impact Assessment is available here: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/impact-assessment](http://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/impact-assessment)
ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING WITH STAKEHOLDERS ON LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE MATTERS

1 The Learning and Teaching Policy Group has developed the following key principles and standard practices that Senate and the Senate Committees can adopt when consulting with Schools, Colleges, students and other stakeholders regarding changes strategy, policy or procedure on learning, teaching and student experience matters. Central Management Group approved these principles and standard practices at its meeting on 1 March 2017.

**Key principles**

- Senate and the Senate Committees should make their decisions on the basis of a proper understanding of the views of relevant stakeholders, while recognising that, given the diversity of the University’s academic community, effective consultation processes will not always lead to consensus.

- The nature of consultation activities should be proportionate to the scale of change that is being proposed and the likelihood of it proving contentious.

- Given the scale and diversity of the University, consultation arrangements will always rely predominantly on individuals with leadership or representational roles in Colleges and Schools representing the views of their constituencies and having authority to make decisions on their behalf on task groups and committees.

- All task groups on issues with direct implications for the student experience should include Student Association representatives.

- When consulting on issues which have an impact on staff, Senate Committees and task groups should recognise the University’s commitment to working in partnership with its trade unions and its obligations to consult and negotiate as appropriate.

- Once a consultation process has concluded and a decision made, it is important to provide feedback to those stakeholders who have engaged with the consultation processes.

**Approaches to consultation**

2. The attached Annex sets out a table with a range of possible approaches that Senate or a Senate Committee could take to consultation on a particular issue. In general, the more significant or contentious the proposal development, the more of the elements further down the table the consultation processes would need to involve. The Annex is indicative, and a degree of judgement will be required regarding the approaches to consultation required for each development. It is unlikely that any consultation process, however significant and contentious the development, would require all the approaches set out in the Annex.
Practical issues regarding the operation of consultation processes

3. Consultation processes – and particularly those lower down the table in the Annex – can be very onerous, both for the staff leading and supporting them, and for the stakeholders engaging with them. For some issues, it is not clear how contentious the proposals may be (and therefore how deep the consultation is required to be) until after the event. This uncertainty could lead colleagues to over-engineer consultation processes in order to avoid the risk of being accused of inadequate consultation. Were this to happen, the number of different developments that the Senate Committees could take forward would be unnecessarily constrained. As such, it is important to make a balanced judgement regarding the level of consultation.

4. The Senior College Academic Administrators, in consultation with their Deans, will take responsibility for selecting their Colleges’ representatives on task groups.

Issues with a staffing dimension

5. Given the University’s increased interest in issues such as developing robust evidence on the quality of teaching, and recognising student education as a key element in our staff recruitment, promotion and annual review processes, it is likely that some of the issues that Senate and its Committees address in the coming years will involve close interaction between academic and employment policy. When determining appropriate approaches to consultation on these issues, it will be important to establish at the outset whether advice and guidance is required from People Committee and what input and sign-off is required from Central Management Group and/or other relevant Court Committees with responsibility for employment policy matters.

6. When consulting on issues with a staffing dimension, in addition to general stakeholder consultation it is also important to recognise the University’s commitment to working in partnership with its trade unions and its obligations to consult and negotiate as appropriate before decisions are taken by the University which have an impact on staff.

7. When developing stakeholder consultation plans, University HR Services should be consulted on the appropriate way to ensure early sharing of information and meaningful consultation, and where appropriate, negotiation take place with the recognised trade unions.
### Annex – possible approaches for consultation on learning, teaching and student experience matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of proposed change</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Typical approaches to consultation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modest change / unlikely to be contentious</td>
<td>Modest change to existing academic policy or regulation</td>
<td>Discussion and decision at relevant Senate Committee</td>
<td>Relies on representatives of stakeholders having sufficient knowledge of the views of their constituencies to be able to represent them effectively.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Development of a new policy that appears unlikely to require significant changes to Schools’ practices, or development of policy required to address external regulatory requirements</td>
<td>Establish task group with representatives of relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>Allows for a broader range of relevant perspectives, including those of stakeholders who are not represented on the relevant Senate Committee.</td>
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<td>Consult relevant networks of staff (e.g., Senior Tutors network, Directors of Learning and Teaching network)</td>
<td>Will provide broad impression of Schools’ views on the issue, but will not highlight the extent of variation of views between different and may not take account of the views of some Schools (e.g., since not all colleagues attend network meetings).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Invite Colleges, Student Association and other stakeholders (e.g., support services) to consult with their constituencies and provide written submissions</td>
<td>Provides the relevant Senate Committee or task group more robust evidence regarding stakeholders’ views. However, College-level submissions may not always allow them to understand fully the variation of views between different Schools.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Invite relevant office-holders in Schools to consult with their constituencies and to provide their own written School submissions</td>
<td>Provides the relevant Senate Committee or task group with an understanding of the views of individual Schools, and provides assurance that all Schools are aware of and have discussed the proposed change. The relevant office-holders in the Schools would typically be academic leaders such as Director of Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relatively significant with the potential to be contentious</td>
<td>Development of a new policy that is likely to require extensive changes to many Schools’ practices, or which may raise significant issues of principle.</td>
<td>or Director of Learning and Teaching, but may in some circumstances be Directors of Professional Services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project leader (eg relevant Convener of Senate Committee or Task Group) to offer to attend all Colleges’ relevant Committees, and relevant Student Association meetings, to present and seek views on the issue</td>
<td>Provides valuable opportunity to raise awareness, gauge views, and dispel any myths about the proposed development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite Heads of Colleges and Heads of Schools to consult with their constituencies and to provide their own written submissions</td>
<td>Heads of Colleges and Schools will provide particularly valuable perspectives on proposed developments that are particularly contentious or that raise significant issues regarding management and resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project leader (eg relevant Convener of Senate Committee or Task Group) to offer to attend all Schools’ relevant Committees to present and seek views on the issue</td>
<td>Provides valuable opportunity to reach large number of staff to raise awareness of and dispel any myths about the proposed development, and to gauge views.</td>
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<td>Focus groups of staff and / or students</td>
<td>Allows the Committee / task group to hear directly from staff and students who are not in management or representational roles, eg particular categories of staff or students with a particularly relevant perspective on the issue (eg disabled students when developing policy regarding accessibility).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample-based surveys of samples of relevant categories of staff and / or students</td>
<td>Similar benefits to focus groups, but with the potential to produce more robust evidence.</td>
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<td>Very major institutional change</td>
<td>Proposals for significant changes to the University's academic year, or curriculum structures</td>
<td>Create project webpages with information about the proposals and how stakeholders can express their views on them</td>
<td>Makes the consultation process more transparent. Likely to be more relevant where the proposals are of potential interest to a large number of stakeholders and involve complex documentation.</td>
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<td>Open meetings for staff and / or students</td>
<td>Provides a high profile opportunity for all staff and / or students to express their views on the issue, giving a high degree of transparency to the consultation process. Typical approaches would be to hold one meeting per College.</td>
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<td>Surveys of all staff and students</td>
<td>Very transparent approach that will allow all staff and students to express their views.</td>
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GUIDANCE FOR PLANNING SENATE COMMITTEE TASK GROUPS

1. Initial scoping

College input should be sought at the initial stage of planning in relation to remit, membership, scope and timescale for delivery to ensure that any similar College activity or College-specific issues are taken into account.

2. Membership

The commissioning committee may give an initial steer on membership. However, there is likely to be some work for the administrator to do in discussion with the Senate committee convener, the convener of the task group, College Office and Edinburgh University Students’ Association staff. This can take some time, so start early.

All task groups must have student membership. This is an expectation of the QAA and SFC. So that the Students’ Association can allocate its resources, it is best to ask Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka for a nomination from among the sabbaticals for task group membership. Ideally, this should be done as a single request annually following confirmation of the following year’s task groups in June.

College Office staff should also be asked via a single, annual request to nominate task group members from their College.

As draft membership emerges, consult with Academic Services colleagues before inviting members so that individuals don’t receive several invitations. Invited members should be clear about their role e.g. representing a specific area, with responsibility for consulting with it.

2. Remit document

2.1 Outline remit

State reasons/drivers for establishing the task group and how it has been commissioned e.g. a committee of Senate, in response to X national initiative etc.

High level statement of what the task group aims to achieve.

2.2 Activity

Bullet points covering activity towards fulfilling the remit, e.g. ‘internal information-gathering’, ‘horizon-scanning’, ‘sub-groups to investigate issues X,Y,Z’, “desktop research”.

Activity must include undertaking an **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)** of the task group’s recommendations, highlighting issues raised by the impact assessment, and providing information about the steps taken to address them. The task group should take account of equality issues during its discussions, and not leave the EIA as an action to be undertaken by Academic Services once the task group has concluded.
2.3 Deliverables

What outputs the task group aims to deliver. Some of these may emerge as the task group’s work progresses, but there should be some intention of a tangible output from the start.

Any deliverables must take account of the relevant chapter of the UK Quality Code and must explicitly reference it. E.g. a task group on ‘Student Engagement in Quality Processes’ might produce a policy for the operation of staff-student liaison committees. Work on drafting the policy will include checking against the precepts of the relevant Quality Code chapter, and the final policy will state ‘this policy complies with the precepts of the UK Quality Code Chapter B5’.

There may be other legislative requirements which need to be addressed according to the scope of the task group.

Deliverables must include an implementation plan proposing responsibility for approval and delivery of each of the task group’s recommendations [see below].

2.4 Timescales

Timescale in which the task group will operate, including dates of interim (if any) and final report to relevant Senate Committee. Any significant timescale implications of the implementation plan to be mentioned here.

If implementation will require some task group members to form an implementation or advisory group beyond the end of the task group’s work, this should be stated here. This is particularly the case if the task group recommends follow-on work packages.

3. Committee approval of membership, remit, scope, deliverables and timescale

This information should be approved by the Committee at its first meeting in Semester 1, or (for task groups initiated mid-session) at the first available meeting.

4. Implementation Plan

An implementation plan must form part of the task group’s final report. This ensures that the task group’s expertise informs how the recommendations are taken forward. The task group is well placed to advise on risks and barriers to successful implementation and how they can be overcome.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Recommendation breakdown ie. steps required for delivery</th>
<th>Communication strategy</th>
<th>Transfer of recommendations to University policy/guidance</th>
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Recommendations should be broken down into the steps needed to deliver them. An apparently simple one-line recommendation can conceal a large amount of work to ensure delivery, possibly involving setting up an implementation group to deliver complex work packages, and it is vital that this is planned for at the outset and is feasible within available resource. College input is vital here, either through core task group membership or consultation as part of task group activity.

A strategy for communicating the task group’s recommendations to Schools, Colleges and support services should be devised. College input in particular should be sought here: Colleges will advise in particular on issues of timing of requests for action by Schools. In order to streamline communication from the Senate Committees about onward work required to implement recommendations, it is intended that Academic Services will coordinate communication across all task groups.

A plan for the transfer of task group recommendations into University policy or guidance should be developed: task group recommendations can lead to the development of new policy and/or the revision of existing material. There may also be a knock-on impact on other policies and guidance, which may or may not have been signalled in the task group’s report. This section should state what action is required e.g. new policy, amendment of existing policy, and who it is proposed will undertake this work.

5. Final report

Identify whether the final report should be sent to any other Senate committees in addition to the task group’s ‘home’ committee. Not all task group members will be members of Senate committees, so task group members should be notified when the final task group report is sent to the Senate committee.

6. Post-implementation Review

All Senate committees will carry out post-implementation reviews at appropriate points to determine the success or potential barriers to full implementation. The reviews will be actioned by Academic Services.