



Academic Services
March to April 2019

Senate Committees' e-Newsletter

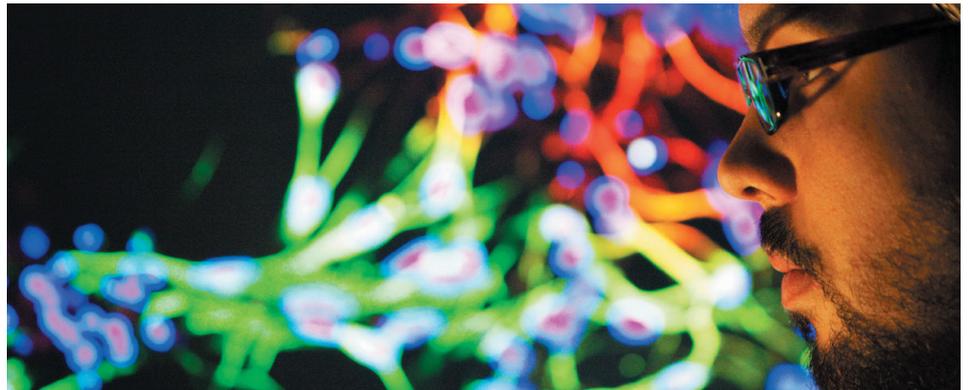
Introduction

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Senate Committees' Newsletter for 2018/19. This publication aims to keep the University community better informed about discussions and decisions occurring within Senate (the University's supreme academic body) and its Standing Committees (the four Committees to which Senate has delegated its authority in particular areas). We hope you find it interesting and informative.

Review of the Senate Committees

Senate has agreed that the University should review the structure of its four, standing committees. A Task Group, convened by the Senior Vice-Principal, is conducting this review and has made some initial proposals for changes to the structure and membership of the Senate Committees.

The Senate Committees and other key stakeholders have commented on options, and final recommendations will be taken to the May 2019 meeting of Senate.



This newsletter is produced by Academic Services.

Please direct any queries or suggestions to Philippa.Ward@ed.ac.uk.

Further information on Senate and its Standing Committees is available at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees>.



March / April 2019

Meetings covered by the March / April 2019 Edition

Date	Committee
27 February	QAC
13 March	LTC
18 March	REC
21 March	CSPC

Report from Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC)

Responsible for undergraduate, taught postgraduate and other forms of academic provision, apart from postgraduate research and higher degrees.

Documentation for the meeting held on 13 March is available at <http://edin.ac/1tHNcjB>

Key topics considered included:

Task Group on Using the Curriculum to Promote Inclusion, Equality and Diversity (<https://edin.ac/2FNCWQ5>, Paper C)

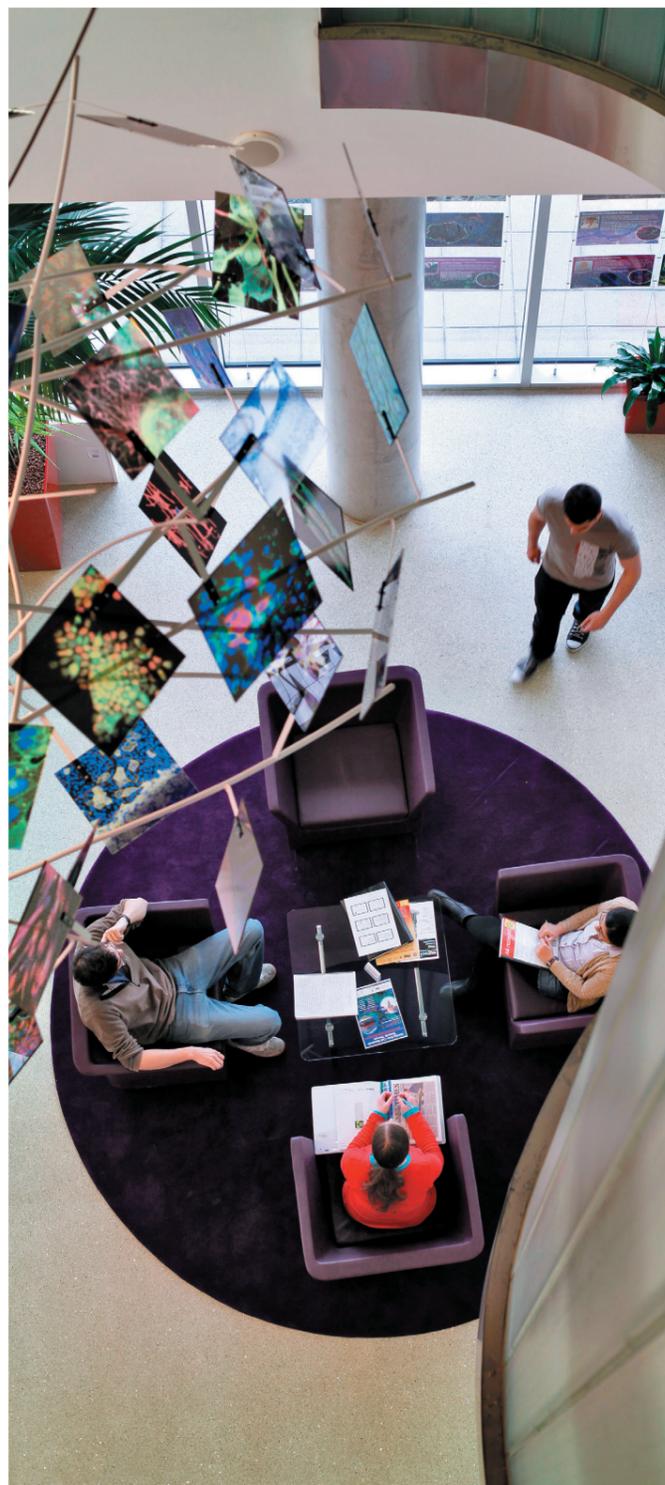
LTC discussed and approved the final report of the Task Group, which was set up to consider ways in which institutional action can assist in promoting inclusion, equality and diversity in the curriculum. The final report includes a detailed action plan, and a large number of practical examples to assist staff in understanding what change might look like. LTC discussed the importance of finding ways of having ongoing, open conversations about what a diverse and inclusive curriculum means, and the fact that this will look different in each College and Subject Area. Members agreed that it was important to understand the idea of 'curriculum' in a broader, pedagogical sense than solely the content of course reading lists.

Student Support Review (<https://edin.ac/2FNCWQ5>, Paper D)

The Service Excellence Programme is in the early stages of a project to review existing student support, with a jointly-led design group consisting of LTC members. This review will encompass Personal Tutor provision, student support teams and other professional services staff. The project will start by evaluating the current student support arrangements and benchmarking and researching other practices, and will then move into the phase of developing options over the summer. Final decisions and recommendations will be made by the end of December 2019, with a view to implementing these in September 2020. The project team itself will be small, consisting of a Project Manager, 2 full-time Service Excellence Partners, and a part-time academic lead. It will also rely heavily on engagement from LTC and colleagues across Colleges and Schools.

Teaching and Academic Careers Project (<https://edin.ac/2FNCWQ5>, Paper G)

This project aims to review processes for recognising, rewarding and supporting teaching, alongside other parts of the academic role. In November 2018, the University Executive agreed a set of Principles to guide the project, and also confirmed that there should be a combined path allowing academic staff in both teaching and research roles to progress from Grade 7 to Grade 10, without the need for a separate teaching track. Further information about how the project task group is implementing these Principles is available at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/teaching-and-academic-careers>. Members discussed the need for clarity about the types of achievement that will be relevant to establishing grounds for promotion on the basis of excellence in teaching.



Potential Curriculum Review Project (<https://edin.ac/2FNCWQ5>, Paper H)

The University has recently appointed a new Vice-Principal (Students). Once in post, one of the tasks for the post-holder will be to consider the viability of a curriculum review project. LTC considered a summary of work carried out in recent years that may be of relevance to curriculum review, should such a project be taken forward.

Service Excellence Programme - Student Administration and Support

The Service Excellence Programme provided LTC with an update on their Student Administration and Support project, presenting a proposed future model with a strong student focus. The model involves the creation of student hubs at various points across the campus to allow students to access information without needing to understand a wide range of different University structures. The model will require clear responsibilities at University, College and School level if it is to be effective.

Student Experience Action Plan (<https://edin.ac/2FNCWQ5>, Paper J)

LTC was provided with an update on the Student Experience Action plan, which the Deputy Secretary Student Experience has now condensed into a set of financial estimates. Given the scale of the proposed changes, these will need to be prioritised for funding purposes.

For further information about any LTC matter, please contact Charlotte.Matheson@ed.ac.uk



Report from Researcher Experience Committee (REC)

Responsible for postgraduate research degree training, higher degrees and provision for the training of other, early career researchers.

Documentation for the meeting held on 18 March 2019 is available at <http://edin.ac/1Q528n5>

Mental Health Training for Supervisors

REC received an update from the Director of Student Wellbeing on the mental health training offered by the University. In the context of increasing numbers of students declaring mental health issues at application and seeking support during their time at the University, training had originally been developed for Personal Tutors. The training has been adapted and is now also available to postgraduate research supervisors and student support staff.

Supervisor Continuing Professional Development Task Group

(<https://edin.ac/2UfEoVi>, Paper C)

This task group, part of the Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development Programme, submitted its final report to REC. REC approved the report which contains recommendations on formalising the current practice of requiring supervisors to attend briefings every five years, and developing the University's supervisor briefing / training provision, including online provision. A sub-group will be set up to guide the implementation of the recommendations.

Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

(<https://edin.ac/2UfEoVi>, Papers F & G)

The Committee supported a change to the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees to enable resubmission of MSc by Research dissertations. This brings MSc by Research degrees in line with all other postgraduate degrees offered at the University in allowing a resubmission attempt. REC also supported changes to the regulations to clarify the options available for examiners regarding resubmission of PhDs. The Postgraduate Assessment Regulations will be considered by Curriculum and Student Progression Committee for approval at its May 2019 meeting.

Service Excellence Programme – Postgraduate Research update

REC provided the Service Excellence Programme with feedback on proposals specific to postgraduate research. Proposals include improvements to the Annual Progression Review Monitoring system, and moving towards electronic thesis submission. REC was supportive of the outline proposals.

For further information about any REC matter, please contact stuart.fitzpatrick@ed.ac.uk



Report from Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

Responsible for the University's academic quality assurance framework.

Documentation for the meeting held on 27 February 2019 is available at <http://edin.ac/1MUwq8L>

Enhancement Led Institutional Review 2020

(<https://edin.ac/2TPoQCN>, Paper C)

The Committee discussed the preparations for the University's 2020 Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR). A key development of the ELIR process since the University's last review in 2015 has been the introduction of Contextualised Themes which the reviewed institution must identify for the review team to focus on ahead of the review. The themes should be existing or planned activities linked to strategic priorities, and should therefore help ensure that the University gets the greatest value from the review process. The University has identified the following as potential Contextualised Themes for the 2020 ELIR: Teaching and Academic Careers; Student Voice and Community; Student Support; Student Skills and Employability; Widening Participation.

Annual College Quality Reports

(<https://edin.ac/2TPoQCN>, Paper D)

The Committee considered the annual College Quality Reports for 2017-18. A number of themes were noted for Committee forward planning, and actions were identified for key stakeholders across the University. In particular, the provision of accurate and accessible data for quality assurance and strategic planning, and the need to improve response rates for Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs) were identified as ongoing concerns for many Schools.

External Examiner Reporting System (EERS)

(<https://edin.ac/2TPoQCN>, Papers E & F)

The Committee considered an analysis of data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) covering postgraduate taught programmes for the academic year 2017-18. The report noted a high number of commendations across the University and a low number of issues that required attention. Of the commendations, the main theme commended across all three Colleges was 'good practice and innovation', mainly related to the range, quality and diversity of teaching, learning and assessment. Of the issues raised, the main theme was 'the provision of information to examiners', mainly related to meeting date changes and miscommunication of date changes.



Report from Curriculum & Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

Responsible for the academic regulatory framework, apart from those aspects which are primarily parts of the Quality Assurance Framework.

Documentation for the meeting held on 21 March 2019 is available at <http://edin.ac/2y83LlO>

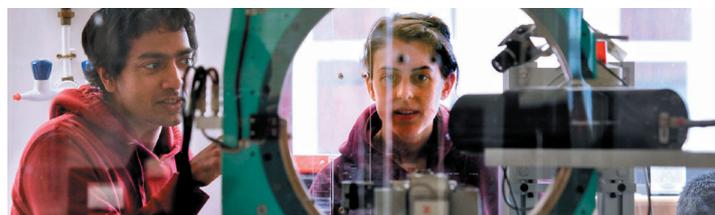
Key points discussed included:

Wednesday Afternoon Teaching (<http://edin.ac/2FKWwEO>, Paper A)

CSPC discussed current adherence to the Shared Academic Timetabling Policy and Guidance, and in particular, the requirement that only in exceptional circumstances will the University schedule core lectures or classes on Wednesday afternoons. The Committee noted that some courses include teaching on Wednesday afternoons, and that this teaching is disproportionately weighted towards PGT activity. The Committee has agreed that the Wednesday afternoon constraint should only be relaxed where Colleges have approved exemptions.

Academic Year Dates (<http://edin.ac/2FKWwEO>, Paper B)

The Committee discussed analysis by the Head of Timetabling and Examination Services which demonstrates that the 2020/21 December examination diet could be delivered over a 10-day period (rather than the 11 days initially planned), provided that the University can secure additional estate provision of 400-500 seats. In view of the truncated revision and examination period projected for Semester 1 2020/21, the Committee agreed this approach. While it would provide students with one additional day for revision, the revision period would nonetheless be relatively short. The Committee therefore also agreed to encourage Schools to avoid teaching on the Thursday and Friday preceding the revision period.



Service Excellence Programme: Study and Work Away – Proposed change in arrangements for progression boards and Exchange Coordinator (<http://edin.ac/2FKWwEO>, Paper C)

The Committee approved proposals to change the planned progression board arrangements for students returning from optional study abroad. This would allow College Progression Boards in the Colleges of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering to continue to fulfil these functions in 2019-20, rather than introducing a University-level Board. The Committee also agreed to change the planned arrangements for the Study and Work Away Service to take on responsibilities held by Exchange Coordinators.

Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy and Procedure: proposed amendments and opt-outs (<http://edin.ac/2FKWwEO>, Paper J)

The Committee agreed some minor amendments to the Policy. It has also agreed an exemption to the one year limit on the duration of visits to the University for programmes involving a formal agreement with other institutions.

Distance Learning at Scale (Closed Paper)

As part of the DLAS project, the University is planning to launch its first 'MicroMasters' (in a subject within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) in September 2019, and anticipates that it will introduce further MicroMasters programmes in other subjects in due course. A MicroMasters is a brand term used by EdX to describe an offering that is smaller than a Masters degree, rather than an academic award. CSPC approved a non-standard 30 credit structure for a University of Edinburgh MicroMasters, and non-standard approaches to allowing repeats of the MicroMasters assessment and email communications.

For further information about any CSPC matter, please contact theresa.sheppard@ed.ac.uk

Remaining Senate Committee Dates for 2018/19

Senate	E-Senate	LTC	CSPC	REC	QAC
					25 Apr 19
29 May 2019	7-15 May 2019	22 May	30 May 19	14 May 19	23 May 19