

Minutes of the Meeting of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee
(LTC) held at 2pm on Wednesday 27 January 2016
in the Board Room, Chancellor's Building, Little France

1. Attendance

Present:

Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley	Assistant Principal (Research-Led Learning)
Ms Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions
Ms Shelagh Green	Director, Careers Service (co-opted member)
Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)
Professor Peter Higgins	Representative of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Ms Melissa Highton	Convener of Learning Technologies Advisory Group (ex officio)
Ms Erin Jackson	Distance Learning Manager, School of Law, CHSS (co-opted member)
Professor Charlie Jeffery (Convener)	Senior Vice-Principal
Ms Nichola Kett	Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services
Mr John Lowrey	Dean of Undergraduate Studies, CHSS
Ms Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka	EUSA Academic Engagement Co-ordinator (ex officio)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Senior Lecturer, School of Mathematics, CSE (co-opted member)
Dr Velda McCune	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's Nominee) (ex officio)
Professor Anna Meredith	Director for Postgraduate Taught, CMVM
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching, CSE
Professor Neil Turner	Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, CMVM
Mrs Philippa Ward (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	University Secretary's Nominee, Director of Academic Services (ex officio)
Professor Wyn Williams	Director of Teaching, School of GeoSciences, CSE
Ms Imogen Wilson	EUSA Vice President (Academic Affairs) (ex officio)

Apologies:

Dr Elaine Haycock-Stuart	Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Health in Social Science (co-opted member)
Dr Margaret MacDougall	Medical Statistician and Researcher in Education (co-opted member)
Dr Gale Macleod	Dean of Postgraduate (Taught), CHSS

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2015 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Principal's Teaching Award Scheme (Item 7.3)

Members were advised that discussion at the previous meeting about mainstreaming PTAS funding was being taken forward in two ways:

- Consideration was being given to ways in which an ODL funding pot for teaching and learning innovation could be disbursed via PTAS.
- The potential to include an allocation for PTAS in future planning round discussions was being considered, although it was noted that the forthcoming planning round was likely to be very tight.

Members also noted that the Vice-Principal Digital Education would be retiring in the near future. Once a successor had been appointed, the work of the LTC Distance Education Task Group would be reviewed.

3.2 University Representation on Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC) (Item 7.4)

The Committee was advised that the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance would represent the University on SHEEC.

3.3 Knowledge Strategy Committee

It was noted that Senate would be asked to approve changes to Senate representation on Knowledge Strategy Committee. It had been agreed that the Standing Committees would be represented by their Conveners, provided that this resulted in a reasonable spread across the Colleges. As such, Learning and Teaching Committee would be represented by the Senior Vice-Principal.

4. Convener's Communications

4.1 Learning and Teaching Communications

Members were advised that a new website and blog, 'Teaching Matters', had been launched to share and debate ideas and approaches to learning and teaching, and showcase excellent teaching. The website would run as a six month pilot in the first instance.

4.2 Enhancement-Led Institutional Review

It was noted that the draft report of the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) had been received. The final, publically available report would be received in March once corrections to the draft had been agreed. The Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance would begin to develop an action plan in response to the report's recommendations.

5. For Discussion

5.1 Proposal for Review of the University's Academic Year Structure

The Committee agreed to establish a Task Group to review the structure of the University's academic year in response to discussions at Senate Committees and feedback from staff and students. It approved both the broad remit for the Group and the timescales outlined in the paper.

A number of suggestions and comments were made regarding the review:

- The substantial practical issues (and likelihood of negative student sentiment) associated with the option of examining Semester One courses in January were recognised. It was suggested that, while due consideration be given to this option, greater attention be given to other options which did not involve shifting the Semester One examination diet.
- The Group was encouraged to be creative in identifying options for improving the academic year structure. For example, it was suggested that it may be worth considering holding teaching activities (for continuing students) in Welcome Week, whilst also taking into account the reasoning behind the University's decision in 2002 to align the academic year for all subjects and programmes.
- In considering an appropriate academic year structure, the Group was asked to consider which model would make most efficient use of the University's estate. For example, there was potentially spare capacity across the estate during the summer.
- It was suggested that the Task Group should confirm whether there was any scope to reduce the number of teaching weeks from the current level, while recognising that the

University may already be assuming a high number of hours of student effort per week in order to be compliant with SCQF requirements.

- It was noted that the possibility (reported recently in the media) that the date of Easter could be fixed at some point may have implications for the academic year structure.
- The Group was encouraged to think about the academic year as a whole, rather than thinking separately about the structure of each semester.
- It was noted that there would be benefit in learning from what has worked for other institutions.
- The Group needed to remain mindful of the legal implications for students already on programmes of changing the academic year structure – although it was recognised that good consultation and communication should allow the University to meet its obligations.

5.2 Continuing Professional Development for Learning and Teaching: Progress Report

The paper provided an update on work to implement an overarching CPD Framework relating to learning and teaching. Key points discussed by Learning and Teaching Committee included:

- the value of a University-level target for participation – members agreed that a target would be beneficial on the basis that it provided clear evidence of the University's commitment to investing in teaching. It was recognised that any targets set should encourage participation by all staff, not just newer members of teaching staff. It was agreed that the Convener would raise the issue of an appropriate target at Principal's Strategy Group.
- workload issues – it was recognised that workload issues often discouraged participation in CPD. Workload allocation models more generally were being considered by People Committee. People Committee would be asked to include CPD for learning and teaching in its discussions, considering the time involved both in participating in the training and in acting as a mentor.
- School-specific developments – the Committee agreed that scaling up should be achieved through the development of more School-specific variants of the Edinburgh Teaching Award.
- Annual Review – members agreed that all annual review processes for teaching staff should include discussion about CPD.
- Data Capture – the difficulties associated with collecting data relating to qualifications held by teaching staff were noted, although the Committee also noted that IAD and HR were making progress in this respect. It was recognised that, if a target for participation in CPD was set, it would be essential to find ways of collecting accurate data.

Actions:

1. Convener to raise the issue of a University-level target for participation in CPD for learning and teaching with Principal's Strategy Group.
2. Convener to refer workload issues relating to CPD for learning and teaching to People Committee.

5.3 Academic Year 2016/17: Use of Week Between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4

Members discussed proposals produced by a sub-group of LTC concerning the use of the week between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 in 2016/17. The Committee approved the proposals, and expressed strong support for the proposal that the week be used for reflection and consolidation. It was agreed that it may be more appropriate to offer credit-related than credit-bearing activity during the week.

The opportunity for the Review of the University's Academic Year Structure Task Group to consider the use of this week was noted. It was also agreed that an Innovation in Teaching and

Learning sub-group of Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG) would be established to consider the broader issues associated with teaching innovation.

Actions:

1. Review of the University's Academic Year Structure Task Group to consider use of week between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 – Director of Academic Services
2. Sub-group of LTPG, 'Innovation in Teaching and Learning Task Group', to be established – Director of Academic Services

5.4 Assessment and Feedback: Update on Activities

LTC welcomed the paper and the progress that was being made in relation to assessment and feedback. It was noted that an event focussing on developing assessment and feedback would take place in February. Members were asked to direct substantive comments to the Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback.

Actions: Members to direct substantive comments about the paper to the Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback.

5.5 Strategic Direction for the Edinburgh Award and Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)

It was reported that a useful meeting with representatives of the Careers Service, IAD, EUSA, Student Systems, Academic Services and the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance had been held to discuss the strategic direction of the HEAR and its relationship with the Edinburgh Award. This meeting had proposed:

- that the HEAR be retained in its current form, recognising the value placed on it by students;
- that the merits of offering a HEAR to postgraduate research (PGR) students be considered;
- that the proposal form for adding new categories of achievement to Section 6.1 be reviewed;
- that consideration be given to new ways in which the Edinburgh Award might be promoted.

LTC approved these proposals. It agreed that Researcher Experience Committee should be asked to consider the merits of offering a HEAR to PGR students, taking into account the full practical implications of this. The distinctive position of the Edinburgh Award was recognised by the Committee, and there was a desire to raise its profile. It was agreed that the Award would be featured on the 'Teaching Matters' website in the coming months. The Employability Strategy would be brought to LTC for consideration in due course.

Actions:

1. REC to be asked to consider the merits of offering a HEAR to PGR students, taking into account the full practical implications of this – Director Careers Service / Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
2. Edinburgh Award to be featured on Teaching Matters website – Director Careers Service
3. HEAR proposal form to be amended - Secretary

5.6 University Student Recruitment Strategy: An Update

The paper invited discussion on the emerging content and structure of the University Student Recruitment Strategy, particularly in the area of portfolio development. Members welcomed the emerging Strategy, and proposed that it should:

- Integrate any new guidance on programme and course approval with that that already existed as a result of the Programme and Course Information Management project.
- take into account work being undertaken in the College of Humanities and Social Science through the Programme Pathways Project to avoid unhelpful duplication.
- Be more ambitious in relation to widening participation.

The Committee recognised that the University's use of market intelligence is currently not as effective as it could be. The need to provide more support and guidance for academics in the area of marketing was noted, and greater understanding of costing models was needed. Members were advised that the Distance Education Task Group had already done some useful work in the area of costing.

5.7 Open Educational Resources Policy

Members considered the draft Policy, noting that Schools, Departments and Services could choose whether or not to make resources open, but where there was a desire to share materials openly, the University would support this.

LTC approved the Policy, subject to some minor wording changes. The importance of ongoing monitoring to ensure that open resources were of an appropriate quality was recognised.

5.8 Lecture Capture at the University of Edinburgh

The Committee was advised that the University's existing system for capturing lectures and other events, 'capturED' was now unreliable and at the end of its life.

There was high student demand for University-wide lecture capture. Students at institutions where lecture capture was already being used routinely expressed high levels of satisfaction, and there was no evidence of reduced attendance at lectures. Instead, students were using recordings for revision purposes, and they were particularly appreciated by non-English speakers. The potential benefits of lecture capture for Peer Observation were recognised.

It was noted that the cost of introducing lecture capture would be high over several years given that there would be a requirement to equip rooms, upgrade the network and increase storage. As substantial estate developments were already underway, it was agreed that there would be benefit in introducing a lecture capture system at the current time. It was noted that the risk of not doing anything to improve provision was also high.

Members agreed that the possibility of introducing an enhanced system for lecture capture should be pursued provided the quality was sufficiently high. The Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division would progress lecture capture through the Planning Round as a scoping exercise. The Committee was advised that some areas were already successfully using the Panopto lecture capture system, but scaling up Panopto across all three Colleges would require a procurement exercise. The Committee expressed its support for having a single, central system in place and was keen to avoid the proliferation of multiple, local solutions. It would be necessary to decide whether an opt in or opt out system would apply to lecture capture.

Learning and Teaching Committee agreed that an end date for capturED should be agreed upon and published. Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG) would reflect further on lecture capture at its March meeting.

Actions:

1. Exploration of the potential for enhanced lecture capture to be progressed through the Planning Round as a scoping exercise – Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division
2. End date for capturED to be agreed and published – Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division
3. Lecture capture to be added to the agenda for the March meeting of LTPG – Director of Academic Services.

5.9 Student Experience Update

Members welcomed the paper, which set out a number of issues which directly or indirectly appeared to be affecting the student experience, together with good practice examples from various Schools. It was noted that a version of the paper would be taken to Academic Strategy Group in February. Dissemination of best practice was considered to be key to addressing issues relating to the student experience.

6. For Approval**6.1 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2016: Institutional Questions**

The Committee considered the proposed PTES 2016 Institutional Questions. Some concerns were raised about the wording of some questions. The Student Survey Unit would be asked to address these, and the revised questions approved electronically.

Actions: Student Survey Unit to be asked to revise the PTES 2016 Institutional Questions. Revised questions to be circulated electronically for approval – LTC Secretary.

7. For Noting / Information**7.1 University Response to ‘Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice – Consultation’**

The paper provided the University’s response to the UK Government consultation. It was noted that EUSA had submitted a separate response.

7.2 Enhancement Themes – Update

The Committee noted the update. ‘Gearing up for Transitions 2016’ would take place on 2 March 2016. Members were asked to promote the event within the constituencies they represented.

Actions: All members to promote ‘Gearing up for Transitions 2016’ within their constituencies.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 16 March 2016 at 2.00pm in the Raeburn Room, Old College.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services