

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
held at 2pm on Wednesday 24 January 2018
in the Board Room, Chancellor's Building, Little France**

1. Attendance

Present:

Ms Bobi Archer	Vice President (Education), Edinburgh University Students' Association (Ex officio)
Professor Rowena Arshad	Head of Moray House School of Education (Co-opted member)
Professor Sian Bayne	Director of Centre for Research in Digital Education (Co-opted member)
Ms Megan Brown	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Academic Engagement Co-ordinator (Ex officio)
Professor Iain Gordon	Head of School of Mathematics (Co-opted member)
Ms Shelagh Green	Director for Careers and Employability (Ex officio)
Professor Judy Hardy	Director of Teaching, School of Physics and Astronomy, CSE
Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)
Ms Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division (Ex officio)
Dr Velda McCune	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's nominee) (Ex officio)
Professor Neil Mulholland	Dean of Postgraduate Studies (CAHSS)
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching, CSE
Dr Sabine Rolle	Dean of Undergraduate Studies (CAHSS)
Professor Neil Turner	Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, CMVM
Mrs Philippa Ward (Secretary)	Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	University Secretary's Nominee, Director of Academic Services (Ex officio)

Apologies:

Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley	Assistant Principal (Research-Led Learning), Dean (CMVM)
Ms Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (Ex officio)
Professor Charlie Jeffery	Senior Vice-Principal
Ms Nichola Kett	Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services
Professor Anna Meredith	Director for Postgraduate Taught, CMVM

In attendance:

Ms Jane Johnston	Representing Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions
Ms Pauline Jones	Governance and Strategic Planning
Professor Jane Norman	Vice-Principal People and Culture

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November were approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were a number of actions arising from the previous meeting, and members were reminded to take forward those for which they were responsible.

Action: All to take forward actions from previous meeting.

4. Convener's Communications

4.1 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Monitoring

Members were advised that a group had been established by Learning and Teaching Policy Group to monitor developments around the TEF, and to ensure that the University had a good understanding of the metrics it was using.

5. For Discussion

5.1 Using the Curriculum to Promote Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

Members welcomed the Vice-Principal People and Culture to the meeting. It was noted that the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy commits to using the curriculum to promote equality and diversity. The paper aimed to open up a discussion about the way in which this would be taken forward.

It was noted that:

- the University has more female than male students;
- the proportion of UK-domiciled BME students is lower than would be expected;
- there are attainment gaps relating to gender, ethnicity and disability;
- and there is evidence that levels of student satisfaction can vary between different protected characteristics and groups.

As such, it is essential that the University has a thorough understanding of its students' backgrounds and of the effect this has on engagement with the University experience.

Members discussed the following:

- the importance of assessment being sufficiently diverse to ensure that it suits the needs of all students;
- the potential to involve Library, Archives and Collections staff in discussions around making course reading lists more diverse;
- the need to be creative and innovative in this area to ensure that any changes introduced are not just 'box-ticking';
- the potential benefit of providing Subject Areas not only with guidance on using the curriculum to promote equality and diversity, but also on recruiting more students from certain backgrounds or with protected characteristics.
- that it was more difficult to identify ways in which the curriculum might be used to promote equality and diversity in quantitative subjects;

- that students were keen to be involved in any developments in this area, and would welcome additional opportunities to co-create courses.
- that close links with Student Recruitment and Admissions would be essential to ensure that the University's message was consistent at all levels.

It was concluded that this was an important area, and an institutional-level signal of its importance would be necessary. It was agreed that the paper's authors would aim to develop more specific proposals in this area and bring them back to LTC in due course.

Action: Director of Academic Services and Vice-Principal People and Culture to develop more specific proposals in this area and to bring them back to the Committee in due course.

5.2 Undergraduate Retention

Ms Pauline Jones, representing Governance and Strategic Planning, presented the paper. It was noted that Court had asked LTC to give this issue further consideration. Retention of Scottish-domiciled students was of particular interest.

The following was discussed:

- the potential to include additional retention data in the Quality Assurance information provided for Schools;
- the need to obtain more granular data in order to gain a better understanding of the issues;
- the fact that Schools will be aware of and will be able to provide more comprehensive information about those programmes with high non-continuation rates;
- the possible reasons for non-continuation including:
 - educational background / qualifications on entry
 - disengagement following receipt of an unconditional offer
 - the need for more student support or greater flexibility for some cohorts
 - for those students who live at home during their programmes, not being fully submerged within an academic environment (it was noted that the Careers Service was doing further work on understanding the experience of 'Commuter Students');
- the potential to make greater use of SCQF Level 7 courses in Year 1, and to aim to have all students at the same level by Year 2 (the link between this discussion and those around the role of the first year being noted);
- and the fact that it can be difficult for students to transfer to another degree, which in some cases results in them withdrawing instead.

It was agreed that more granular data would be produced and interrogated and brought back to LTC in due course.

Action: GASP to work with the Director of Academic Services to produce more granular retention data in order to facilitate further investigation of the issues.

5.3 Digital Education

5.3.1 Near Future Teaching: Designing the Future of Digital Education at Edinburgh

The Assistant Principal Digital Education updated members on the progress of the strategic project to develop a vision for the future of digital education at the University of Edinburgh. The project had adopted a method which combined gathering input through thematic events led by task group members with short 'vox pop' interviews conducted across the University's campuses. The Committee's input was now being sought on how to build impact from the project and to help Schools move forward. The project was working with Information Services to ensure that the required technology was in place.

LTC made the following observations:

- The Committee was impressed with the consultation methodology used in the project and was keen to learn from this.
- Some of the student interviews shown to the Committee indicated that they were comfortable with, and in some cases preferred, automated systems for certain processes. The potential to make greater use of automation in the Personal Tutor system was discussed.
- The project had, to date, adopted an open and critical approach to the technology being discussed. It would be important to ensure that this critical analysis continued as the project moved forward.

5.3.2 Distance Learning at Scale – Delivering a High Quality Student Experience

It was noted that the University already has a large amount of distant learning provision. What was therefore being discussed here was distance learning provision designed for large groups from the outset as opposed to provision designed for smaller groups and then scaled up.

Members raised the following points:

- Anything developed would need to be of a very high quality with excellent student support.
- It would be essential to offer:
 - high quality, research-informed content
 - enough teaching staff (lecturers and tutors)
 - excellent automated systems where appropriate to do some of the 'heavy lifting'
- These programmes would differ from existing provision, and members were not aware of an existing pedagogical model for provision of this type. As such, it would be necessary for Schools and Colleges to start with a 'blank sheet' when developing these programmes. The approaches to pedagogy and assessment adopted should make the most of the programmes' large numbers of motivated learners.
- There would also be benefit in exploring offering any 'at scale' courses developed to University of Edinburgh students on other programmes.
- The importance of programmes of this type to widening access was noted.
- In general, the Committee was supportive of learners or students on these programmes having the status of full University students. However, students may identify and engage with the University in different ways to current students (eg. they

may associate with both the University and the platform being used to deliver the programme), and it would be important for the University to have a clear understanding of this engagement.

- The University and the Students' Association would need to develop plans to support these students. The fact that the students were online students and that there were large numbers of them would raise particular issues (eg. complexities around arrangements for student representation).
- The Committee noted that the timescales being discussed in relation to this project were very ambitious.

5.4 Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) Update Summary Report

The Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division updated members on developments with MOOCs. It was noted that these were continuing to be developed and delivered via three platforms. Whilst the numbers of learners participating in MOOCs were reducing, the courses continued to provide the University with valuable experience of delivering content to large numbers of learners through a variety of platforms.

5.5 The Future of Computer-Based Examinations

Given the likelihood of the University being required to increase provision of computer-based exams in the future, LTC was supportive of action being taken as soon as possible to explore the pedagogical and technological issues around this.

Members discussed the possibility of undertaking some pilot activity, but was keen to ensure that this did not result in the University introducing a number of different systems. Members also considered:

- the potential benefit of doing some further international benchmarking;
- the University's current estates' strategy which focuses on developing flexible teaching space, not on developing the type of space that might be required to accommodate large numbers of students taking computer-based exams;
- the importance of discussing computer-based assessment, not just computer-based exams;
- the difficulties of introducing computer-based assessment in those disciplines where handwriting is still the norm;
- the relationship between this work and other discussions around distance learning at scale, digital assessment and the estate.

It was agreed that the matter would be referred to the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Working Group for further consideration.

<p>Action: Director of the Learning Teaching and Web Services Division of IS to refer computer-based exams to the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Working Group for further consideration.</p>

Responding to the Student Voice

The paper provided an overview of the various activities that were underway to help Schools to respond to student feedback. The Committee approved the recommendations contained within the paper. In relation to the final recommendation – to consider whether full datasets (apart from free text) from NSS, CEQs and PTES should be made freely available to school and class reps and other students as required - members were supportive of providing students with high-level quantitative and qualitative data where appropriate (and where it did not expose individuals). It was recognised that PTES data is not in the public domain, and the Students' Association Vice-Principal (Education) would discuss with the Student Survey Unit what level of information could be given to students.

Some members did raise concerns about the amount of time it was taking for Schools to receive analysis of CEQs. The matter would be discussed with the Student Surveys Unit.

Action:

1. Students' Association Vice-Principal (Education) to discuss confidentiality around PTES results with the Student Surveys Unit.
2. Members to raise any concerns about the timeliness of CEQ analysis with the Student Surveys Unit.

6. For Approval

6.1 Postgraduate Taught Surveys

6.1.1 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2018: Institutional Questions and Open Date

Members approved the recommendations around the PTES 2018 institutional questions and open date contained within the paper.

6.1.2 Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Consultation on New National Taught Postgraduate Survey

The Committee was advised that HEFCE was currently consulting on the possibility of introducing a new taught postgraduate survey which would be mandatory in England with published results. It was agreed that LTC would maintain a watching brief.

Action: LTC to maintain a watching brief of developments with the proposed PGT survey.

7. For Information and Noting

7.1 Update on the Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching

The Deputy Director of the Institute for Academic Development updated members on the CPD Framework. It was noted that much of the provision had been reaccredited by the Higher Education Academy in 2017, and participation continued to grow steadily. The

biggest barrier to growth was staff workloads. The University was now aiming for sustainable growth and to continue responding to staff feedback about the provision.

7.2 Student Support Teams Internal Audit

Members noted the report and the important role played by Library staff in providing student support.

7.3 Report from Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG)

The report was noted.

7.4 Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC)

Members welcomed the focus on learning and teaching-related initiatives within the report, but agreed that there would be benefit in considering further ways in which the Senate Committees might feed into the work of Knowledge Strategy Committee.

7.5 Service Excellence, Student Administration and Support Update

Members noted the update.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Enhancing Graduate Outcomes through support for Careers, Employability and Graduate Attributes

The Committee agreed to establish a Careers, Employability and Graduate Attributes Task Group to investigate and report to LTC on actions to strengthen careers, employability and graduate attributes within the learning and teaching experience to support positive graduate outcomes.

8.2 Lecture Recording Policy Consultation

Members were reminded that the consultation on the Lecture Recording Policy was now underway and would close on 19 February 2018.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services
31 January 2018