



Academic Services
September to October 2017

Senate Committees' *e-Newsletter*

Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the Senate Committees' Newsletter for 2017/18. This publication aims to keep the University community better informed about discussions and decisions occurring within Senate and its Standing Committees. We hope you find it interesting and informative.

Moderation Guidance

The Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) has agreed new guidance to assist staff to put in place effective approaches to the moderation of taught assessment. This guidance will be available soon on the Institute for Academic Development's website.

Report from Senate

Documentation for the E-Senate meeting held from 12 - 20 September and Senate meeting held on 4 October is available at <http://edin.ac/1FL8RrJ>

Presentation and Discussion

The theme for the presentation and discussion section of the Senate meeting was **The Future of Distance Learning**. The session provided an overview of the University's current position and future objectives for expanding its distance learning provision. It also explored the opportunities and implications of distance learning in terms of pedagogy, assessment, and student experience.

HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016

In light of the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, Senate noted that a consultation would shortly be held with the wider University on the recommendation to move to a medium-sized Senate of around 300 members, of which more than 50 percent would be elected. Academic staff in all Schools and Colleges are encouraged to take part in the consultation.

Student Partnership Agreement

(<http://edin.ac/2hYb9Eg>, paper B)

Senate approved enthusiastically of the proposal for the first Student Partnership Agreement for the University. The Agreement, which will be launched later in the semester, highlights the ways in which the wider University, including all staff and students, can effectively work together to enhance the student experience.

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

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>.



Report from Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 20 September is available at <http://edin.ac/1tHNcJB>

Key topics considered included:

Student Survey Results

LTC considered the results of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2017, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2017 and the 2016/17 Semester 2 Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs). As in previous years, the University's PTES results were generally positive compared to sector benchmarks, whilst also highlighting areas for further development. In the NSS, overall satisfaction increased by 3% as compared with 2016, but there was still room for improvement in some areas. CEQs generated positive responses to staff-related questions, though response rates were low in some areas. Work to support Schools to bring about improvements where required will continue.

Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (<http://edin.ac/2xUNhFj>, Paper F)

The Committee considered a paper on learning from the first year of operation of the TEF. Whilst the University's current position is not to participate in the TEF, the learning outlined in the paper will become of relevance if, at any stage, the University changes its position.

Reducing the Pressure on Students in Semester 1 (<http://edin.ac/2xUNhFj>, Paper G)

The Students' Association Vice President Education presented ideas for reducing the pressure on students in Semester 1, whilst operating within the constraints of the current academic year structure. LTC was supportive of the objectives and broad thrust of the paper, but agreed that it would be difficult to impose University-wide solutions on account of the variation in approaches to assessment that exists across Subject Areas. The paper will therefore be considered again by College-level committees and more local solutions adopted.

Strategic Issues Regarding Undergraduate Degree Programmes (<http://edin.ac/2xUNhFj>, Paper H)

There are currently a wide range of University projects that are raising strategic issues around aspects of the undergraduate curriculum. LTC discussed some of these projects and considered the merits of taking a more coordinated and strategic approach to them.

Widening Participation

The University is in the process of developing a Widening Participation Strategy. LTC considered the first draft and will have an opportunity to discuss a more advanced version later in the academic year.

Supporting Personal, Professional and Career Development

The Committee considered a paper outlining ways in which the University might better support students' personal, professional and career development. LTC recognised that this is best tackled at School-level, and the Careers Service will be engaging with some Schools in the near future to discuss their approaches to employability.

Lecture Recording (<http://edin.ac/2xUNhFj>, Papers K and L)

The launch of the University's lecture recording system – Media Hopper Replay – has been extremely successful. The system is recording around 100 items per day and within the first 3 days of operation, around 2000 hours of content were watched by students. Microphone use by

academic staff has increased significantly. The Committee received an update on the development of a Policy to support the introduction of the new system. The plan is for the new Policy to come into effect from 2018-19. For 2017/18, existing policies will continue to apply.

Learning Analytics (<http://edin.ac/2xUNhFj>, Paper N)

Work on developing a University Learning Analytics Policy is continuing. To strengthen the governance of the University's learning analytics activities, LTC agreed to establish a review group to scrutinise plans for substantial, new learning analytics activity.

For further information about any LTC matter, please contact Philippa.Ward@ed.ac.uk



Report from Quality Assurance Committee

Documentation for the meeting held on 19 September is available at <http://edin.ac/1MUwq8L>

Key points discussed included:

School Annual Quality Reports 2016-17 (<http://edin.ac/2hSALIU>, Paper C)

In 2016-17, following a fundamental review, QAC introduced a new and streamlined approach to annual quality review. The Committee discussed the outcome of the first year's operation of this new approach and agreed recommendations for individual Schools and actions to address institutional issues highlighted by the review process. In general the new approach has been well-received by Schools. At its next meeting, the Committee will consider whether any aspects of the processes need refining for 2017-18.

Teaching Programme Reviews (TPRs) and Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPRs) held in 2016-17 (<http://edin.ac/2hSALIU>, Papers D & P)

The Committee discussed the themes that emerged from the twelve TPRs and PPRs held in 2016-17. These included good practice in assessment and feedback, innovative learning and teaching and student support, and areas for potential University action, for example regarding study abroad. QAC also approved the final report of the 2017 TPR of Asian Studies, and endorsed Schools' progress in addressing recommendations from a range of TPRs and PPRs held during 2016-17.

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Report from Quality Assurance Committee (cont.)

A greater focus on the sustainability of Schools' portfolios in TPRs and PPRs (<http://edin.ac/2hSALIU>, Paper M)

The University's Recruitment Strategy, approved in 2016, recommended a number of actions in order to 'agree a common approach to portfolio management and review'. These actions are intended to encourage Schools to ensure that new programmes have a clear strategic rationale and business case, and that Schools have processes in place for monitoring the ongoing sustainability of their programmes. To assist with this agenda, the Committee agreed to revise the TPR and PPR processes (from 2018-19) to provide a greater focus on how Schools review the sustainability of their portfolios.

Oversight of the Personal Tutor system (<http://edin.ac/2hSALIU>, Paper J)

The Committee noted that the PT System Oversight Group had approved Schools' 2017-18 Personal Tutoring Statements, subject to some Schools amending aspects of their statements.

Scottish Funding Council Annual Report 2016/17 (<http://edin.ac/2hSALIU>, Paper N)

The Committee approved the University's annual report to the Scottish Funding Council on institution-led review and enhancement activity.

Enhancement-led Institutional Review – Progress report (<http://edin.ac/2hSALIU>, Paper H)

The Committee noted progress in addressing issues highlighted in the University's last Enhancement-led Institutional Review.

Amendments to School Director of Quality Role Outline (<http://edin.ac/2hSALIU>, Paper O)

The Committee approved some minor changes to the role outline, which are intended to simplify and clarify the role description, and do not entail any substantive changes to the responsibilities.

For further information about any REC matter, please contact b.connolly@ed.ac.uk

Report from Curriculum & Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 21 September is available at <http://edin.ac/1MFWRnG>

Key points discussed included:

Resits and Supplementary Assessment (<http://edin.ac/2hzg1j4>, Paper B)

The Committee reiterated its commitment to the University offering an Overseas Examination Service for international students, which allows eligible undergraduate students to sit August resit examinations at an approved location overseas. Members felt strongly that the University should seek to minimise the number of students required to attend Edinburgh in August. The Committee further agreed to provide guidance to Schools promoting the use of forms of assessment other than formal examination for resit assessment.

Service Excellence Programme

The Committee received an update on current projects for the Student Administration and Support strand of Service Excellence including: working and study away; special circumstances, coursework extensions and concessions; comprehensive timetabling analysis; exam timetabling; student portal pilot; policy; and Tier 4. The Committee is expecting to have a specific role in approving policy changes associated with the Programme.

Authorised Interruption of Studies – Proposal for a University-wide policy (<http://edin.ac/2hzg1j4>, Paper D)

A new task group is being formed for 2017/18 to develop a University-wide policy in relation to Authorised Interruption of Studies. The group will be asked to consider a number of aspects including a clear definition of interruption, acceptable grounds, the application, consideration and approval process, the status of students on interruption, categories for recording, and the return to study process.

Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression (<http://edin.ac/2hzg1j4>, Paper E)

A new task group is being formed for 2017/18 to consider the postgraduate taught programme structure with a specific focus on progression, the requirement for a dissertation or research project element, and the role of the dissertation/research project supervisor.

CMVM New Programme Proposal: DVet Med (<http://edin.ac/2hzg1j4>, Paper H)

A new professional doctorate in the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies has been approved, the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVetMed). The development of the new DVetMed is an important strategic advance for the School, enhancing and strengthening the academic rigour and consistency of the existing advanced clinical training programme.

Student Discipline Committee Membership and Student Discipline Officers 2017/18 (<http://edin.ac/2hzg1j4>, Paper J)

The Student Discipline Committee membership and Student Discipline Officer list for 2017/18 has been formally approved.

For further information about any CSPC matter, please contact ailsa.taylor@ed.ac.uk

September / October 2017

Meetings covered by the Sept / Oct 2017 Edition

Date	Committee
12 – 20 September	e-Senate
19 September	QAC
20 September	LTC
21 September	CSPC
26 September	REC
4 October	Senate

Report from Researcher Experience Committee (REC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 26 September is available at <http://edin.ac/1Q528n5>

Key topics discussed included:

Early Career Researcher Support (<http://edin.ac/2xZVA2Q>, Paper A)

The Committee endorsed a new Institute for Academic Development framework which promotes structured career reflection. The framework is principally based on raising awareness of existing activity and training to support Early Career Researchers (ECR), although some new resources are in development. The framework includes a programme of workshops, online learning and peer support devised to help early career research staff make better decisions and take action to enhance their employability in a range of career areas. Elements of the framework cover transitions, career planning and options, skills for research, supervision and teaching, personal impact and effectiveness and exit strategies. Discussions are underway with Colleges regarding possible approaches to implementing the framework, with the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine planning to pilot it in 2017-18. Further information is available from Sara.Shinton@ed.ac.uk.

Evaluating the Annual Progression Review Monitoring System (<http://edin.ac/2xZVA2Q>, Paper C)

A year on from general roll out of the new annual progression monitoring system, Academic Services did some evaluation of implementation for REC. Colleges provided feedback on implementation and impacts on staff resources and student experience. REC heard that colleagues had found the system to be a very positive development which provides easy access to information. Evaluation has identified some possible system enhancements and some of these may be addressed as part of the Service Excellence Programme.

Three Minute Thesis Vitae Competition

Euan Doidge, University of Edinburgh Three Minute Thesis competition winner, has won the Vitae People's Choice award at the UK competition. Three Minute Thesis challenges doctoral candidates to present a compelling spoken presentation on their research topic and its significance in just three minutes. More information is available on the [Vitae website](#).



LERU Doctoral Summer School

The University has been successful in a bid to host a League of European Research Universities (LERU) doctoral summer school in 2019 on the theme of International Collaboration. The University of Leuven in Belgium will host the 2018 summer school.

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

Survey results have been released and REC will discuss College responses to the results at its next meeting.

Developing Employment Opportunities for PGR Students

HR Information Services Support Group updated REC on a project within Information Services Group (ISG) to increase employment opportunities for postgraduate research students. More information on the project is available from Laura.Richardson@ed.ac.uk

For further information about any REC matter, please contact susan.hunter5@ed.ac.uk

Further Information

Learning and Teaching Conference

The first University of Edinburgh Learning and Teaching Conference will take place on **Wednesday 20 June 2018** in the John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls. Please save the date!

Student Engagement

The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) is supporting a variety of initiatives around student engagement. A series of new guidance documents, EngagEd, has been published: <http://edin.ac/2hQff12>. In addition, a new Student Engagement Network, open to both staff and students, has been launched: <http://edin.ac/2wK2VVm>.

Remaining Senate Committee Dates for 2017/18

Senate	E-Senate	LTC	CSPC	REC	QAC
		15 Nov 17	23 Nov 17	14 Nov 17	30 Nov 17
7 Feb 18	16-24 Jan 18	24 Jan 18	25 Jan 18	16 Jan 18	8 Feb 18
		14 Mar 18	22 Mar 18	13 Mar 18	18 Apr 18
30 May 18	8-16 May 18	23 May 18	31 May 18	15 May 18	24 May 18