



Academic Services
September/ October 2016



Senate Committees' e-Newsletter

Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the Senate Committees' Newsletter for 2016/17. 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.

Report from Senate and E-Senate

Documentation for the E-Senate meeting held from 6 to 14 September and Senate meeting held on 28 September 2016 is available at <http://edin.ac/1FL8Rrj>.

The theme for the presentation and discussion section of the Senate meeting was 'Interdisciplinarity'. It considered ways in which we might strengthen our culture and expectations of high performance in interdisciplinary research, learning and knowledge exchange. Six members of staff shared their experiences of and views on interdisciplinary activity. This was followed by a varied discussion of ways in which the University might bring about further development in this area.

Senate also discussed the University's response to the disappointing National Student Survey 2016 results. Work is being undertaken with Heads of Schools to deliver the cultural, strategic and operational changes needed to ensure a consistent, high-quality student learning and teaching experience. In addition, the University is introducing measures to:

- bring about greater day-to-day engagement between staff and students
- improve student-facing communications
- ensure that all Honours-level students experience feedback and response events in the middle of Semester 1.

For further information about any Senate matter, please contact philippa.ward@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>.



September / October 2016

Meetings covered by the September / October 2016 Edition

Date	Committee
6 - 14 September	E-Senate
8 September	QAC
21 September	LTC
22 September	CSPC
27 September	REC
28 September	Senate

Report from Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 21 September 2016 is available at <http://edin.ac/1tHNcJB>

Key topics considered included:

Draft University Learning and Teaching Strategy

(<http://edin.ac/2dZtrCS> Paper K)

LTC commented on a draft University Learning and Teaching Strategy. The draft has now been issued to Colleges for consultation. Once approved, it will replace the current Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy and will be a point of reference for Schools and Colleges during the annual planning process.

Student Partnership Agreement

(<http://edin.ac/2dZtrCS> Paper M)

LTC agreed to work with students to develop a Student Partnership Agreement. Similar initiatives at comparator institutions have proved very successful.

Lecture Recording

LTC supported the business case for University investment in lecture recording over the summer, and discussed work being undertaken to develop a University policy on lecture recording at its September meeting. The policy work will now be completed by a sub-group of LTC.

Policy Development and Implementation

(<http://edin.ac/2dZtrCS> Paper B)

LTC discussed the way in which the University should approach policy development and implementation. The discussion was framed by themes emerging from the Service Excellence Programme and benchmarking undertaken by Academic Services.

Review of Student Surveys

(<http://edin.ac/2dZtrCS> Paper C)

The Committee considered the findings of a fundamental review of the University's suite of student surveys and commented on plans for simplifying the range of surveys.

Proposed School Plans for Use of the Week Between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4

(<http://edin.ac/2dZtrCS> Paper I)

LTC discussed Schools' provisional plans for the use of the week between Teaching Blocks 3 and 4 in 2016/17. Further information on proposals for the 'Festival of Creative Learning' will now be collected.

Vision for Digital Education

(<http://edin.ac/2dZtrCS> Paper J)

A working group of LTC has been established to consider how the future of digital education should be designed at the University of Edinburgh.

Peer Observation of Teaching

(<http://edin.ac/2dZtrCS> Paper L)

The Committee approved new guidance on Peer Observation of Teaching. The guidance will now be taken to College Learning and Teaching Committees for consultation about the way it might be used in each College.

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



Report from Curriculum & Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 22 September 2016 is available at <http://edin.ac/2cDvyGj>

Key points discussed included:

Board of Examiners' Handbook

(<http://edin.ac/2cDvyGj> Paper D)

The Committee approved a new Board of Examiners' Handbook. This consolidates a number of existing documents into a single "how to" guide for members of Boards of Examiners.

Degree Programme Specifications

(<http://edin.ac/2cDvyGj> Paper E)

CSPC discussed a paper highlighting issues regarding the University's compliance with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) requirements, particularly in relation to the publication of Degree Programme Specifications (DPS). The Committee identified a preferred option to address this issue, which will be considered as part of the Service Excellence Programme.

Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy

(<http://edin.ac/2cDvyGj>, Paper F)

CSPC approved changes to this Policy http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog_course_approval.pdf

The changes:

- consolidate information on programme and course approval and management into one policy, in line with the University's simplification agenda;
- formalise good practice in relation to student recruitment;
- assist the University to comply with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines.

Support for Study

(<http://edin.ac/2cDvyGj>, Paper G)

The Mental Health Services Review Team has recommended that the Support for Study Policy be reviewed to facilitate mandatory interruption of studies for students where a Support for Study panel deems it appropriate. A short-life task group has been established to explore this issue further.

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



Report from Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 8 September 2016 is available at <http://edin.ac/1MUwq8L>

Key issues considered included:

EvaSys Course Evaluation Roll-Out (<http://edin.ac/2dZHCl7> Paper D)

Following extensive consultation with staff and students, the Committee approved the core questions to be used for institution-wide roll-out of course feedback questionnaires using Evasys.

Personal Tutor (PT) System Oversight Group (<http://edin.ac/2dZHCl7> Paper G)

The Committee approved a proposal to extend the lifespan of this Group by a year. The Group will continue overseeing the mainstreaming of the PT system and will focus on reviewing NSS and Edinburgh Student Experience Survey (ESES) data at its next meeting.

Students' Association and University Student Engagement Statement (<http://edin.ac/2dZHCl7> Paper J)

The Committee approved minor updates to the Students' Association and University Student Engagement Statement to ensure that it reflects current initiatives and practices.

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

Report from Researcher Experience Committee (REC)

Documentation for the meeting held on 27 September is available at <http://edin.ac/1Q528n5>

Key items discussed included:

3 Minute Thesis competition

The Coimbra Group (<http://www.coimbra-group.eu/>) is launching a 3 Minute Thesis competition. Institutions will be invited to send representatives, and the University will send the winners of its own competition.

Maddie Long, this year's University of Edinburgh winner, recently won the 'People's Choice Award' in the UK competition.

Distance PhD Implementation Working Group

(<http://edin.ac/2d6MLYY> Paper E)

REC approved the remit and membership of this group, which will take forward implementation of the recommendations of the Flexible PhD Task Group. Good progress is already being made in relation to these recommendations.



Electronic Thesis Submission

(<http://edin.ac/2d6MLYY> Paper G)

REC agreed a new approach to electronic submission of final post-viva PhD theses to the Library via PURE in the Colleges of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and Science and Engineering, and Sharepoint in CAHSS. It is expected that the new approach to electronic thesis submission will be available in the new year.



Edinburgh Enlightenment Scholarships

(<http://edin.ac/2d6MLYY> Paper I)

The Committee commented on proposals for a new style of PhD scholarship. The proposed new model will have a teaching route and a professional development route. Work will be taken forward by an implementation group with the aim of launching in September 2017.

Tutors and Demonstrators – Code of Practice

(<http://edin.ac/2d6MLYY> Paper K)

During the summer, the Committee established a task group to review the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators to produce a concise, usable document.

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



Academic Services
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Remaining Senate Committee Dates for 2016/17

Senate	E-Senate	LTC	CSPC	REC	QAC
		16 November 2016	24 November 2016	15 November 2016	20 October 2016
1 February 2017	10 – 18 January 2017	25 January 2017	26 January 2017	17 January 2017	8 December 2016
		15 March 2017	16 March 2017	14 March 2017	9 February 2017
			6 April 2017		19 April 2017
31 May 2017	9 – 17 May 2017	24 May 2017	1 June 2017	16 May 2017	25 May 2017