

**Minutes of the Meeting of Senate Education Committee  
held via Microsoft Teams at 2.00pm on Monday 25 May 2020**

**1. Attendance**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Position</b>
Colm Harmon	Vice-Principal Students (Convener) – Ex Officio
Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (Deputy Convener) – Ex Officio
Sabine Rolle	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Lisa Kendall	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Stephen Bowd	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)
Judy Hardy	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Michael Seery	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)
Neil Turner	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, UG)
Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)
Fabio Battaglia	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Postgraduate Research Representative
Iain Gordon	Head of School, CSE
Richard Andrews	Head of School, CAHSS
Mike Shipston	Head of Deanery, CMVM
Sue MacGregor	Director of Academic Services – Ex Officio
Velda McCune	Representing Director of Institute for Academic Development – Ex Officio
Shelagh Green	Director for Careers & Employability – Ex Officio
Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services – Ex Officio
Sian Bayne	Co-opted Member – Digital Education
Philippa Ward	Academic Services (Secretary)
<b>Apologies</b>	
Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, PGT)
Steph Vallancey	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice-President Education – Ex Officio
Stuart Lamont	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Permanent Staff Member – Ex Officio
Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions – Ex Officio
<b>In Attendance</b>	
Laura Cattell	Widening Participation, and Representing Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions
Sarah Moffat	Representing Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice-President Education
Paula Webster	Head of Student Data and Surveys

## 2. Papers Considered by Electronic Business

The following papers were considered by electronic business in advance of the 25 May 2020 meeting:

### For Approval

- Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020 – *approved*
- Support for Doctoral Supervisors – Development of an Online Course – *approved*

### For Comment

- Opt-In Consent for use of Coursework and Dissertations as Examples – *agreed that the consent form would be disseminated via the College Deans*
- Annual Review of Effectiveness of Senate Standing Committees – *no comments received*
- Senate Themes for 2020/21 Meetings – *Covid-19 Recovery was proposed*

### For Noting

- Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees
- Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2020 – Update
- Report from the Meeting of Knowledge Strategy Committee – 24 March 2020
- Education Committee Meeting Dates 2020/21

## 3. For Discussion

### 3.1 Planning for Academic Year 2020/21

#### Widening Participation Considerations

The Convener welcomed the Head of Widening Participation to the meeting. Members recognised that widening participation is a key priority for the University, and will remain so in the coming months, despite the challenging circumstances.

Paper A highlighted the particular issues that widening participation students, those with caring responsibilities, and those who are care-experienced or estranged from their families are experiencing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee discussed:

- Postgraduate employment – finding postgraduate employment is often more difficult for those from widening participation backgrounds, who tend not to have access to the same networks as non-widening participation students. The Careers Service is making an enhanced package of support available to this year's graduates including providing virtual recruitment preparation, a virtual graduate jobs fair in July and virtual delivery of the 'Insights' Programme. University of Edinburgh graduates are being offered a 20% discount on taught postgraduate fees in Academic Year 2020/21 to make postgraduate study more accessible.
- Liaison with Edinburgh College (and other Colleges across Scotland) – to ensure that the material currently being created for those entering the University in September 2020 with limited examination experience has lasting value.

- Making Transitions Personal – it was noted that the Framework would be particularly useful as a mechanism for supporting students in the coming academic year.
- Opportunities presented by hybrid teaching – members noted that the current shift towards a hybrid model of curriculum delivery is likely to have long-term benefits for those students who find it more difficult to engage with a traditional, campus-based approach.
- Student Personas – the Assistant Principal for Digital Education is developing student personas to help the University understand what a journey through hybrid teaching might look like in the coming year. It was agreed that the Head of Widening Participation and the Students' Association would provide input to ensure that the personas took widening participation considerations into account.
- Student support:
  - The possibility of seeking targeted financial support for widening participation students through Development and Alumni was considered.
  - The Head of Widening Participation was encouraged to raise any specific student support needs for the coming academic year with the Deputy Secretary Student Experience.
  - Members discussed the issue of technological equality and agreed that all programme descriptors should include details of the minimum technological requirements for full engagement. It was noted that Information Services is taking this work forward, and College representatives on the membership were asked to encourage their Schools to provide College IT Officers with details of the technological requirements for their programmes.
- Identification of widening participation students – members noted that Schools can find it difficult to provide targeted support for their widening participation students on account of not always knowing who they are. The Head of Widening Participation advised members that her team is considering how this issue might be addressed.

**Actions:**

- 1) Assistant Principal for Digital Education, Head of Widening Participation and the Students' Association to liaise about student personas
- 2) Head of Widening Participation to discuss student support needs with the Deputy Secretary Student Experience
- 3) College representatives to encourage their Schools to provide College IT Officers with details of the technological requirements for their programmes.

Broader Planning Issues

The Convener advised members that all Schools and Subject Areas had been asked to provide details of the programmes and courses they were planning to deliver in academic year 2020/21 and to consider where rationalisation might be possible. At present, around 500 courses – approximately 10% of the University's current offering – would not be offered in the coming academic year. It was noted that further prioritisation may be necessary, and members agreed that if this was the case, Schools should be notified as soon as possible to facilitate planning.

The Committee discussed the management of the estate in the context of social distancing and the way in which limited teaching space would be allocated. It was recognised that a degree of central allocation would be necessary, but that Schools should then be permitted to take local decisions on how best to use the allocated space for their courses. Members also discussed the equipment required for synchronous, hybrid teaching, microphone use, air circulation within teaching rooms and other hygiene considerations. It was noted that many members of teaching staff are keen to be granted access to their offices and other School facilities to allow them to collect the equipment they need to prepare for Semester 1 teaching.

#### End of Semester 1 2020/21 Assessment (Paper B)

The Committee discussed the circulated paper. The value of reducing the amount of assessment overall; using a variety of assessment methods; being flexible about the timing of assessment; and ensuring that assessment is, wherever possible, *for* learning and not *of* learning was highlighted. Members discussed the nature of exams and the fact that external stakeholders consider exams to be a robust form of assessment. The Committee was generally comfortable with the idea of removing or limiting the number of exams at pre-Honours level, but was less comfortable with the idea of not examining at Honours level. The potential value of moving away from the current degree classification system and towards a Grade Point Average system to give a clearer indication of a student's performance over time was discussed.

Members agreed that:

- there should be careful analysis of the Semester 2 2019/20 exam diet to ensure that all possible learning from this is captured.
- the planned end of Semester 1 2020/21 assessment period will remain in place. However, Schools will be encouraged to use in-course assessment and alternative assessments to exams wherever possible.

### **3.2 Postgraduate Research Matters**

#### Doctoral College and Governance Structures

The Dean of Postgraduate Research in the College of Science and Engineering provided an update on the development of the Doctoral College. This now involved around 160 members of staff and numbers were continuing to increase.

The current circumstances had exposed some weaknesses in governance structures, and the Convener agreed to address this with the Adaptation and Renewal Team.

<p><b>Action:</b> Convener to discuss PGR governance structures with the Adaptation and Renewal Team.</p>
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#### Planning for Academic Year 2020/21

Schools had been consulted about PhD programmes in the coming academic year. All programmes were planning to start on time, although it was recognised that some students

would arrive late. A small number of Masters by Research Programmes – primarily those in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine – were planning to start late, but the majority would start on time.

It was recognised that funding issues, including scholarships and the extension of PhD funding, required urgent, further consideration.

#### Support for Doctoral Supervisors – Development of an Online Course

Members expressed strong support for the online course.

### **3.3 Governance Arrangements During COVID-19 Recovery**

The University has established an Adaptation and Renewal Team (ART) to lead the work required to respond to the short, medium and longer-term challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ART has four main strands:

- Research
- **Students**
- Estates and Infrastructure
- Re-shaping.

The Students strand will be led by the Convener of Education Committee and will be built around three delivery sub-teams: Recruitment and Admissions; Curriculum Resilience; and Student Support. Work relating to the delivery of learning and teaching will be overseen by Senate Education Committee.

The Convener advised members that ART was now working through the issues raised by the pandemic systematically and rigorously, facilitating conversations with Schools and disciplines as required. It was noted that stronger student representation on ART was required and, as discussed previously, that more consideration needed to be given to PGR-related issues.

Philippa Ward  
Academic Services  
27 May 2020