Minutes of the Hybrid Meeting of Senate Education Committee
11 May 2023
Argyle House Boardroom and Microsoft Teams
1400 - 1700

1.   Attendance

Present	Position
Colm Harmon	Vice Principal, Students (Convener)
Tina Harrison	Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancements)
Sabine Rolle	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Lisa Kendall	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Laura Bradley	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)
Tim Stratford	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)
Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)
Jamie Davies	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching)
Jo Shaw	Head of School, CAHSS
Mike Shipston	Head of Deanery, CMVM
Jason Love	Head of School, CSE
Shelagh Green	Director of Careers and Employability
Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Division of Information Services; Assistant Principal (Online and Open Learning)
Velda McCune	Representing Director of Institute for Academic Development
Shane Collins	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions
Nichola Kett	Interim Head of Academic Services
Lucy Evans	Deputy Secretary, Students
Marianne Brown	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling
Callum Paterson	EUSA Academic Engagement Coordinator
Richard Gratwick	Senate Representative
Mary Brennan	Senate Representative
Susan Morrow	Senate Representative
Lisa Dawson	Academic Registrar
Stuart Fitzpatrick	Academic Services
In Attendance	
Teresa Ironside	Director of Data Science Education
Amanda Percy	Curriculum Transformation
Apologies	
Jon Turner	Curriculum Transformation Lead, Director of Institute for Academic Development
Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, PGT)
Sian Bayne	Assistant Principal Digital Education
Patrick Walsh	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 9 March 2023

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2023.

3. Matters Arising

- Committee Priorities for the coming Academic Year (Electronic Business)

  The Committee Priorities for the coming Academic Year, which had been circulated as Electronic Business, were noted. No further comments were raised by the Committee.

4. Convener's Comments

The Convener invited the Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) to update the Committee on the re-convened meeting of Senate as it related to the Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP). An agreement was reached to provide a fuller report on the CTP at the beginning of the next academic year, incorporating the engagement work conducted by Jon Turner. Senate had emphasized their desire that final decisions on CTP should lie with them. Jon Turner would prepare an overview paper to be sent to the next Senate meeting. The overall sense from the Senate members had been positive, with engagement and understanding of the ongoing work.

5. For Approval

5.1 Student Support Framework

The Academic Registrar presented the Student Support Framework. The Committee were asked to approve its use in the upcoming academic year and retire its predecessor (the Academic and Pastoral Support Policy). The framework provided guidelines on how student support should be delivered during the transitional year. An update to this framework would be provided to the Committee in 12 months for review and approval. All Schools had developed plans for implementing the model. There had been positive engagement with trade unions, although they had not yet fully considered the framework. The Committee suggested cross-referencing the Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors in the document, and also suggested clarifying the content around Support for Study. There had been extensive engagement with Schools and they were thanked for their engagement. The Committee also noted that effort should be made to ensure that the framework operated alongside the Extensions and Special Circumstances Services (ESC) in a realistic way, as there was some concern in relation to administrative burden. The Deputy Secretary (Students) commended the work on the framework, emphasizing its flexibility. The Academic Registrar acknowledged the feedback and would address these points

The Committee approved the paper subject to minor amendments in response to feedback, and also approved the retirement of the Academic and Pastoral Support Policy.

5.2 Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group: Update and Recommendations

The Deputy Vice Principal Students (Enhancement) provided an update on the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group. The Group had recently been established, with the Deputy Secretary (Students) leading a parallel group. The Group had discussed the position on exam formats for the upcoming year. Due to the limited evaluation of the previous exam diet, the group had made no recommendations at this stage. There would be benefit in making colleagues aware of the potential consideration of different exam formats and increasing oversight for decisions regarding in-person exams. The Group also

discussed the August Assessment Diet and recommended exploring alternative assessment formats for resit exams to reduce the need for students to return to Edinburgh. The Group also suggested revisiting the timing of assessments, exploring the feasibility of more robust digital assessments, and increased use of the overseas exam service. Further, the Group had discussed implementation of assessment and feedback principles and priorities, as well as the development of cases for the use of generative AI. There were concerns about the upcoming resit diet and the need for clearer communication and support for students. The Committee noted the need to consider the timing of exams and the possibility of running multiple exams in a day. The Director of Student and Academic Administration in CAHSS specifically suggested an amendment to recommendation number 11 in order to provide a reasonable expectation of what might be possible in the coming year. The Deputy Vice Principal Students (Enhancement) agreed to amend this. There was broad agreement with the paper, and the paper and the recommendations contained within were approved.

Actions:

1) **Deputy Vice Principal Students (Enhancement) to discuss recommendation 11 in the paper with Colleges.**

5.3 Tutors and Demonstrators Policy: Governance proposal

Antony Maciocia presented the paper, which originated from ELIR (Enhancement-Led Institutional Review). The Tutors and Demonstrators (T&D) network currently consisted of approximately 150 staff members and also had an oversight working group. Dr Maciocia emphasized the need for governance within the T&D network as it lacked a structured framework. He acknowledged that while some Schools had effective governance in place, others could be improved upon. Dr Maciocia highlighted the importance of addressing governance concerns before implementing any changes to the training programs. The purpose of the paper was to outline the proposed direction of travel for making improvements in the coming months. A steering group, composed of members from the Senate Quality Assurance Committee, had distilled the recommendations into five key points. The Convener sought clarification on the proposed process and stated that the current direction of travel should be approved by the relevant Committee, after which it would return to Senate Education Committee for final approval. Dr Maciocia confirmed the Convener's understanding.

The Committee noted the employment status of Tutors and Demonstrators - they were employees, and this aspect has caused confusion in the past. Discussions regarding the alignment of their employment and line management should involve Human Resources, People Committee, and the EDI Committee, with a focus on supporting the training that Tutors and Demonstrators received.

There was some concern in regards to Point 11 of the paper, which suggested changing Guaranteed Hours contracts for Tutor & Demonstrator PhD students to fractional contracts. The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences is exploring the full financial costings of Tutors and Demonstrators contracts within the College.

The Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) provided clarification on the ELIR recommendation, stating that the focus was on ensuring that all tutors and demonstrators undergo appropriate training. ELIR had not questioned the quality of the training itself, but had emphasised the need for effective management processes to ensure the completion of training.

Dr Maciocia noted the comments and agreed with the suggestion of involving HR and trade union representation, and noted that any matters in relation to contracts were the responsibility of HR. Dr Maciocia reiterated the need for oversight regarding the training process to ensure that all Tutors and Demonstrators received the necessary training.

The Committee agreed with the points raised in the paper and supported the recommendations.

Actions:

- **Dr Maciocia to involve Human Resources and Trade Unions in discussions. Tutor and Demonstrator employment and line management should be discussed and taken forward with Human Resources, the People Committee, and the EDI Committee;**
- **Dr Maciocia to review ELIR recommendation and consider existing management processes as part of proposals.**

At this point, the Convener invited Dr Maciocia to provide the Doctoral College update, which was noted as Paper I. The Committee noted the updated and thanked Dr Maciocia for his input.

5.4 Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) Additional Category Proposal

Amanda Percy presented the paper. The paper proposed an addition to the HEAR regarding student participation in University-level change projects. The proposal aimed to recognise and reward students for their contributions to projects, with a suggestion that students who contributed at least 15 hours and submitted a short reflective report should be eligible for recognition. The Committee were concerned about the distinction between HEAR and paid employment, and sought clarification on whether students in paid roles would be put forward for the HEAR. There was a need for refined training for students, and clarification on the expectations of the report, who would receive such a report and how it would be judged. There was also some concern about the distinction between recognition and reward. The Convener noted that work on the Postgraduate Research Student HEAR was starting, and proposed aligning it with this current proposal. The feedback was welcomed, and it was agreed that the proposal would be refined based on the discussion.

Actions:

- **Convener to discuss proposal and next steps with Strategic Change Unit**

5.5 Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy: minor revision proposal and recommendations for future development

The Assistant Principal (Online and Open Learning) presented the paper. The group responsible for the review had met several times and had made changes to the policy based on the feedback that had been received. The paper emphasised the importance of universal design, conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs), and performing accessibility checks on courses and websites. The Committee suggested connecting this review with the CTP, and the equality and diversity toolkits for curriculum design. There was a need for consistency within the paper, and the wording could be refined in certain sections. The resource implications were acknowledged, and it was noted that significant effort and support would be required for implementation. The Assistant Principal (Online and Open Learning) noted the importance of engaging with accessibility audit reports and highlighted the improvements that could be achieved through these. There was a need to train and enable students in these practices. There was caution noted on overwhelming the task with the ambition of the project and the Committee suggested starting with small to medium fixes and gradually working towards the overarching goals. The Convener and the Deputy Secretary (Students) would look to address the resource implications within the context of the CTP plan. The Committee approved the paper and the recommendations within in relation to the future development of the policy, noting that it had provided further suggestions on how the future development could be implemented.

Actions:

- **Educational Design and Engagement to consult with Academic Services in relation to consistent use of wording within policy document**
- **Convener and Deputy Secretary (Students) to address resourcing implications**

5.6 Student Partnership Agreement

The Vice Principal Students (Enhancement) provided a brief overview of the annual discussion on Student Partnership Agreement Priorities. This year, three priorities were proposed: community wellbeing and supporting transitions, transforming curriculum, and equality, diversity, and inclusion. These priorities represented a continuation from the previous year, and a pot of funding would be made available for staff and students to submit applications for funding. The proposed priorities were approved.

5.7 Minor Policy Updates

The Interim Director of Academic Services introduced the paper. It included updates to two policies falling under SEC's remit (Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators and Virtual Classroom Policy), and was primarily an exercise in updating terminology. The term "Tier 4" was changed to "sponsored students," and "Personal Tutor" was changed to "Student Advisor." The proposed updates were approved.

6.   For Discussion

It was agreed that any items for discussion had been covered during the meeting to this point, and as such there was no need for further discussion.

7.   For Information

The Convener noted that there were a number of items in front of the Committee noted as For Information. These included a LEARN Ultra update, the Committee Membership and Terms of Reference, and the Scottish Funding Council Upskilling Mid-Year Report.

In relation to the LEARN Ultra update, it was noted that the rollover had taken place and all spaces in which courses could be built were now available. It was noted that there was readily available training in LEARN Ultra should anyone wish to undertake it.

In relation to the Committee Membership and Terms of Reference, the link at the top of the paper required amendment, and ex-officio membership which could be updated from the Students' Association and CAHSS was noted.

In relation to the Scottish Funding Council Upskilling Mid-Year Report, the Committee received the paper with interest and noted the content.

8.   Any Other Business

The Convener thanked the outgoing Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) Vice President of Education (VPE) Sam MacCallum. The Convener noted that Academic Year 2022/23 had been a particularly challenging year, but that Sam had been a great contributor.

The Convener thanked the outgoing Dean of Education in CAHSS, Professor Sabine Rolle, for her experience and input into SEC and its predecessor Committees. Professor Rolle was demitting office at the end of the Academic Year and would be replaced as Dean of Education by Professor Mary Brennan.

The Convener thanked the Committee Administrator Stuart Fitzpatrick, who had provided support to the final two meetings of the Committee for this Academic Year. The Convener noted that Mr Fitzpatrick would leave Academic Services to take up a new position in the School of Mathematics in July.

There was no other business.

9.   Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Senate Education Committee would take place on 14th September 2023, 0930 – 1230. The venue was to be determined in due course.