



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Senatus Academicus

Wednesday 7 February 2024 at 2-5 pm
G.03, 50 George Square or Teams

Unconfirmed Minute

Attendees: Peter Adkins, Gill Aitken, Mteeve Amugune, Ruth Andrew, Jonathan Ansell, David Argyle, Kate Ash-Irisarri, Sharan Atwal, Nikos Avramidis, Vansh Bali, Michael Barany, Matthew Bell, Shereen Benjamin, Philip Best, Laura Bickerton, Clare Blackburn, Sophia Blum, Richard Blythe, Christina Boswell, Julian Bradfield, Laura Bradley, Mary Brennan, Aidan Brown, Tom Bruce, Lauren Byrne, John Cairns, Rory Callison, Jane Calvert, Celine Caquineau, Leigh Chalmers, Neil Chue Hong, Martin Corley, Juan Cruz, Brenda Cundy, Jo Danbolt, Jamie Davies, Ricardo De Oliveira Almeida, Luigi Del Debbio, Jonny Dennis, Chris Dent, Charlotte Desvages, John Devaney, Simone Dimartino, Hannah Dong, Kevin Donovan, Claire Duncanson, Agata Dunsmore, Olivia Eadie, Jite Eferakorho, Constantinos Eleftheriou, Tonks Fawcett, Valentina Ferlito, Emily Ford-Halliday, Chris French, Vashti Galpin, Stuart Gilfillan, Benjamin Goddard, Justin Goodrich, Iain Gordon, Kim Graham, Richard Gratwick, Patrick Hadoke, Katie Hardwick, Colm Harmon, Tina Harrison, Helen Hastie, David Hay, Thorunn Helgason, Sarah Henderson, Melissa Highton, James Hopgood, Jenny Hoy, Andrew Hudson, Emma Hunter, David Ingram, Jakov Jandric, Itamar Kastner, Jim Kaufman, James Keeley, Meryl Kenny, George Kinnear, Andy Law, Tom Leinster, Steff Lewis, Jason Love, Ewa Luger, Sophia Lycouris, Cait MacPhee, Sam Marks, Rebecca Marsland, Peter Mathieson, Mike McGrew, Avery Meiksin, Carmel Moran, Steven Morley, Susan Morrow, Chris Mowat, Simon Mudd, Rachel Muers, Rupert Nash, Pau Navarro, Bryne Ngwenya, Max Nyman, Steven O'Hagan, Diana Paton, Josephine Pemberton, Natalia Penar, Sarah Prescott, Jon Pridham, Colin Pulham, David Quinn, Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira, Ken Rice, Aryelly Rodriguez Carbonell, Hollie Rowlands, Maximilian Ruffert, Eberhard Sauer, Bernd Schroers, Pablo Schyfter Camacho, Sue Sierra, Geoff Simm, Sean Smith, Stewart Smith, Antonella Sorace, Kirstin Stuart James, Emily Taylor, Melissa Terras, Tamara Trodd, Uzma Tufail-Hanif, Nadia Tuzi, Pia Wahi-Singh, Dylan Walch, Patrick Walsh, Stephen Warrington, Michele Weiland, Christopher Weir, Iain Wright, Qingchi Wu, Alper Yildirim, Ingrid Young, Ansgar Zoch

In attendance: Adam Bunni, Scott Davidson, Lisa Dawson, Sinead Docherty, Arlene Duffin, Lucy Evans, Olivia Hayes, Nichola Kett, Cristina Matthews, Dean Pateman, Lucy Patterson

Apologies: Marialuisa Aliotta, Arianna Andreangeli, Mariam Javed Asghar, Tom Booth, Matthew Bailey, Holly Branigan, Siddharthan Chandran, Jeremy Crang, Hilary Critchley, Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Murray Earle, Darrick Evensen, Susan Farrington, Stuart Forbes, Beatrix Frissell, Gillian Gray, Carl Harper, Elaine Haycock-Stuart, Pia Helbing, Laura Jeffery, Alma Kalina Rießler, Aarnesh Kapoor, Catherine Kidner, Ashley Lloyd, Wendy Loretto, Antony Maciocia, Catherine Martin, Gavin McLachlan, Heather McQueen, Andrew Morris, Cheryl Patrick, Ewelina Rydzewska-Fazekas, Ash Scholz, Jo Shaw, Mike Shipston, David Smith, James Smith, Alex Thomson, Rosemary Townsend, Jeremy Upton, Frank Venter, Ben Wynne

The Convener, Principal Sir Professor Peter Mathieson, opened the meeting and confirmed that Senate had reached quorum.

1.	Convener's Communications
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	<p>The Convener confirmed that there would be no updates provided under Convener’s Communications and referred to his recent New Year’s message for news and updates.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Senate Minutes & e-Senate Reports - S 23/24 2A</p> <p>To approve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of Senate meeting held on 29 March 2023 • Report of E-Senate held from 26 April – 10 May 2023 • Minutes of Senate meeting held on 24 May 2023 • Report of E-Senate held from 13 – 27 September 2023 • Minutes of Senate meeting held on 11 October 2023 • Report of E-Senate held from 10-24 January 2024 <p>The Convener highlighted the volume of minutes that Senate was being asked to approve at the 7 February meeting. He stated that the non-approval of minutes at previous meetings has the potential to impair the effectiveness of Senate and impact on onward reporting to Court and other interested bodies.</p> <p>The Convener invited Senate to approve the 29 March 2023 minutes as presented. Senate approved the minutes as presented without requiring a vote.</p> <p>The Convener invited Senate to approve the Report of E-Senate for 26 April – 10 May 2023 as presented. Senate approved the report as presented without requiring a vote.</p> <p>The Convener invited Senate to approve the 24 May 2023 minutes as presented. Senate approved the minutes as presented without requiring a vote.</p> <p>The Convener invited Senate to approve the Report of E-Senate for 13-27 September 2023 as presented. Senate approved the report as presented without requiring a vote.</p> <p>The Convener invited Senate to approve the 11 October 2023 minutes as presented. Senate approved the minutes as presented without requiring a vote.</p> <p>The Convener invited Senate to approve the Report of E-Senate for 10-24 January 2024 as presented. Senate approved the report as presented without requiring a vote.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senate Actions Log (available via the Senate Members Portal) <p>The Convener highlighted the Senate Actions Log as a new approach to handling actions arising from Senate. The Action Log has been developed in response to comments from Senate.</p> <p>A member welcomed the Senate Actions Log as a step towards greater transparency and communication of Senate’s work. They expressed a view that further work to develop the Action Log was required, and stated a preference that those actions marked as complete should be accompanied by more detail explaining how actions have been completed.</p>
<p>ITEMS TO COMMENT</p>	

4.	<p>Special Minute for former Senate member Professor John McCloskey - S 23/24 2B To approve</p> <p>The Convener noted the passing of Professor John McCloskey who was a former member of Senate. Senate agreed to approve the Special Minute for Professor McCloskey without requiring a vote.</p> <p>The Convener also notified Senate of the passing of Senate member, Professor Margarete Heck, who was a Professor of Cell Biology and Genetics. Professor Heck passed away in August 2023.</p> <p>The Convener requested that members please inform Senate Support if they become aware of any Senate members who pass away during their term so Senate can be notified of this.</p>
5.	<p>General Council Membership & Registration Ordinance - S 23/24 2C To comment</p> <p>The University Secretary, Leigh Chalmers, introduced this item.</p> <p>Ms Chalmers outlined the proposed changes to the Ordinance, which have been prepared by the General Council Secretary, Dr William Duncan. The changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the membership to include all those who graduate with academic awards approved by Senate. • The inclusion of the University Chaplain as an ex-officio member. • The removal of a reference to a registration fee which was discontinued in 2012. • Clarifying that staff can join the General Council on appointment, rather than after one year in post. • Use of the University Grade Scales to allow parity of membership for academic and professional staff. <p>Senate members were invited to comment via the consultation process which was circulated by email to members prior to Christmas. Any comments raised will be fed back to Court when the Ordinance returns to Court for approval on 26 February.</p> <p>No comments were raised during discussion of the item.</p>
6.	<p>Senate Standing Committees - Mid-Year Reflection on Committee Priorities and Upcoming Business - S 23/24 2D To comment</p> <p>This item was taken as read and members were invited to comment on the paper. The Standing Committee Conveners, Professor Colm Harmon, Professor Tina Harrison and Professor Patrick Hadoke were available to respond to any queries on this item.</p> <p>Senate members made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A query was raised regarding the APRC mid-year update provided in Appendix 2. The update indicates that APRC will approve frameworks and guidance which relate to the Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP).

	<p>The member sought to clarify if APRC's approval would come prior to Senate decision making regarding CTP.</p> <p>The Convener of APRC, Professor Patrick Hadoke confirmed that this was raised at the January meeting of APRC and the approval process was clarified. APRC will not pre-empt these elements and these will go to Senate before returning to APRC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member expressed their appreciation to the Standing Committee Conveners for responding to the strong message from Senate that greater detail within the Standing Committee updates is useful to help Senate develops Senate's understanding of the work of its committees. They expressed disappointment that the paper was for comment, rather than for approval, and stated that affirmative buy-in from the membership would be appropriate for good governance. They also highlighted that the plans to formulate the 2024/25 Committee plans appear to follow the same approach as previously and urged the Committees to take a more inclusive approach and for Senate to have an opportunity to input into these. <p>The Convener of APRC, Professor Patrick Hadoke noted that the Committee priorities for 2023/24 were not approved at the 11 October meeting of Senate. He also highlighted that a significant volume of APRC business relates to external requirements, however the Conveners welcome any input from members on what areas of work Senate would like greater information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senate's approval of an amendment to the APRC priorities for 2023/24 which entailed an audit of academic standards was raised. The member stated that last academic year was significantly disrupted and that it would be useful to understand whether academic standards had been maintained through the temporary variations made to the University regulations. They also stated that it would be useful to understand the impact of the actions taken in response to the Marking and Assessment Boycott. Some Schools are concerned about the maintenance of academic standards and urged APRC to look back at how standards were maintained. <p>The Convener of APRC, Professor Patrick Hadoke highlighted the University's existing processes for quality assurance and highlighted that the College Quality Reports and outcomes of degrees, both include specific queries regarding the impact of industrial action. The Convener agreed to feed the points back to APRC, though highlighted that this is already taking place as part of the processes identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of parity between teaching and research staff in promotion criteria contained in Appendix 3 was welcomed, however it was suggested that this should go beyond parity in promotion and towards equity of opportunity. <p>The Convener of SQAC, Professor Tina Harrison noted that this refers to recommendations from the recent QESR report, which the QAA has asked the University to look at. The wording is that of the QAA.</p>
7.	<p>Senate input to a proposed successor to the University's Climate Strategy - S 23/24 2E CLOSED To comment</p> <p>The Deputy Director Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) & Head of Sustainability, Scott Davidson introduced the paper. As the paper was for comment, no decision making on the item would be undertaken by Senate, but members were</p>

invited to give their views. Mr Davidson outlined two amendments to the paper which were received ahead of time and which were circulated to Senate via email:

Amendment 1: Senate supports the principle of embedding climate and sustainability in degree programmes, where relevant and as appropriate to the discipline in question, with Schools to determine how. The Curriculum Transformation project should develop guidelines for Schools as part of its work, in line with recommendations from Senate.

Amendment 2: Senate recommends the University should conduct an audit of Schools, investigating to what extent and in what ways climate and sustainability are addressed in existing degree programmes, and should use this information to help shape and inform any future strategy concerning Learning and Teaching in this area.

In response to the two amendments, Mr Davidson reassured Senate that there is no intention to mandate the inclusion of sustainability within courses and it will be left to Schools to determine the best way to do this in line with the Curriculum Transformation Programme.

My Davidson also highlighted the existing tools and support in place to support the development of sustainability within the curriculum, including the Environment and Sustainability Working Group chaired by the Deputy Director of the Institute for Academic Development, Dr Velda McCune. This group is working with SRS and the Curriculum Transformation Programme to consider what recommendations are needed to support the embedding of sustainability within the curriculum.

Senate members raised the following points:

- The position regarding embedding sustainability within the curriculum was questioned and the decision on whether this is a mandatory component would be returned to Senate for a decision as this relates to core Senate business. The clarification that embedding sustainability within the curriculum would not be made mandatory was welcomed and confirmation was sought that further discussion would take place at Senate if this was to be considered mandatory.

Mr Davidson confirmed that should there be a change to the mandatory nature of this component, it would be returned to Senate for discussion and a decision.

- A view was expressed that there is consensus on the importance of sustainability within the curriculum and indicated that aspects of the Strategy relate to core Senate business and those elements may require approval at a future meeting of Senate. They further added that it would be unusual for sustainability to be embedded across all degrees within the UK, for example where a programme is professionally accredited and must meet external requirements, such as Medical degrees. Further discussions should be had with Schools to understand how they are already doing this, and for Schools to be able to influence how to effectively embed sustainability within the curriculum.

Mr Davidson presented some slides titled 'Why embed sustainability in learning and teaching' and drew Senate's attention to the WEF 2023 Global Risks which indicate that 6 out of the 10 global risks over the next 10 years relate to climate or biodiversity. This position is also reflected in the UKRI Five Strategic Themes. The intention behind embedding sustainability within the curriculum for all programmes is to ensure students have had sufficient exposure to future issues, aiming to give graduates a competitive edge.

- A query was raised on why the paper was marked as closed. Mr Davidson highlighted that the paper contains sensitive details regarding the University's plans which are still to be signed off by the University Executive and therefore the paper is marked as closed until the Executive has considered the paper.
- The mandatory nature of the Sustainable Travel Policy was highlighted and a question posed to the Principal and Senior Management regarding the ambitious sustainability commitment made in paragraph 30 which relates to research and travel. The University's Sustainable Travel Policy does not promote sustainability and queried the Principal's use of business class flights for University travel. The progress of a review of the policy being undertaken by an external reviewer was queried, enquiring when Senate would receive the report.
The Principal confirmed that a review of the Sustainable Travel Policy is currently underway and the report, commissioned by the University Executive, is due by the end of March. The Principal stated that he understood the strength of feeling on the Sustainable Travel Policy at Senate, and agreed to share the report with Senate once it was available.
- The University's sustainability goals regarding business travel were queried. There is a need to balance sustainability goals and the limited time and funding available to staff to travel for research and conferences.
- A view was expressed that there is consensus on the importance of sustainability within the curriculum and indicated that aspects of the Strategy relate to core Senate business and those elements may require approval at a future meeting of Senate.
- The second proposed amendment was discussed with the suggestion that the University undertakes an audit on what is already embedded within the curriculum. There are numerous examples of good practice across the University at course and programme level which can be used to inform the Strategy and influence how these aims can be achieved whilst aligning with current practice.
Mr Davidson and Lucy Patterson (Climate and Sustainability in the Curriculum Coordinator) agreed that there are numerous examples of good practice already running across the University and outlined a programme which is currently in its pilot phase for six Schools. This programme is using student interns from within these Schools to audit the curriculum for sustainability to identify where this is taking place and what examples of good practice can be drawn on. The longer-term plan is to gather this information from across Schools on a regular basis, recognising that Schools will have different cultures and approaches.
- A query was raised regarding the wider areas of sustainability interest for students which go beyond the curriculum. At present, food canteens charge students a premium for choosing plant-based products and embedding sustainability should go beyond the curriculum and encompass University Estates including food venues.
Mr Davidson stated that there will be a sustainable food commitment and the next iteration of the Strategy will go further on this. This area is still to be considered alongside other considerations, such as the cost-of-living crisis. The Department is engaging with relevant experts to help inform decisions on a sustainable food commitment.
- The motivation for developing the revised Strategy was queried, with concerns raised regarding potential accusations of greenwashing if there is insufficient evidence of the University making meaningful progress by

	<p>leading on adapting structures and operations. This spans all areas of university business including curriculum, estates, staff travel and research. Reservations were expressed regarding the approach outlined in the Strategy and concerns that the goals outlined in the Strategy would be forced upon Schools as a box ticking exercise and increased workload, rather than with meaningful results or outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student member reflected on sustainability being a key issue for students and the wider University community. They suggested that greater clarity is required on how the Learning and Teaching goals outlined in paragraphs 24-27 align with the Curriculum Transformation Project and Strategy 2030. Students are actively engaged with and knowledgeable of climate solutions and urged the University to engage with its student community to help establish proactive and beneficial solutions. • Mr Davidson reassured Senate that work towards operational matters remains a priority to support the Strategy goals on learning, teaching and research. The proposed interim targets are to reach the goals by 2040 and Edinburgh is the only UK University to have set these out. The intention throughout the Strategy is to meaningfully embed sustainability into the curriculum and this is not a tick box exercise; a collaborative approach taken. . <p>The University's track record on sustainability paints a positive picture with the University placed number one in Europe and number four in the world for sustainability. The Strategy is a commitment to sustainability with the University making significant investment towards this.</p> <p>The Convener concluded the item and invited any further comments on the Strategy to be submitted to Mr Davidson via email.</p> <p>Action: University Executive to share the Sustainable Travel Policy Report with Senate once available.</p>
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ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

8.	<p>Senate External Review – formation of a Task and Finish Group - S 23/24 2F To approve</p> <p>The University Secretary, Leigh Chalmers introduced this item, indicating that Senate was invited to approve the formation of the Task and Finish Group. The proposal for the Group has been reworked in response to comments raised at the 11 October meeting. The revised proposal was shared via the Senate Members Portal and The University Secretary extended her thanks to members for engaging with the proposal via the Members Portal.</p> <p>The University Secretary noted that five amendments were submitted for this item, four of which were circulated to Senate via email.</p> <p>The fifth amendment had proposed that a process of consent (in lieu of the drawing of lots) be facilitated to confirm the elected representatives for the Task and Finish Group. Following discussion with the proposer the paper authors agreed to incorporate this amendment and Senate Support was charged with taking this forward.</p> <p>Members expressed appreciation for the work that has gone into the proposal and agreed it was a logical next step to take forward the recommendations arising from the External Review of Senate.</p>
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Senate considered the following amendments:

- to the Membership section, proposed by Dr Richard Blythe and seconded by Dr Vashti Galpin.

In view of the scale and complexity of the task, and the importance of identifying effective long-term solutions, members of the Group should be compensated in a manner appropriate to their role in the University for the substantial time commitment.

Ahead of a decision on this amendment the proposer observed that the work the group is tasked with is challenging and suggested appropriate compensation is necessary for those involved, particularly for student members to ensure they are not giving up part-time work to participate in the group. In response the Convener expressed the view that staff time is determined according to local workload allocation.

Senate agreed to accept the amendment without requiring a vote.

- to the 'Action Requested' section, proposed by Dr Michael Barany and seconded by Dr Vashti Galpin:

The formation of a Senate External Review Task and Finish Group shall not preclude members of Senate from separately raising matters and developing proposals for improving the effectiveness of Senate and its committees.

Ahead of a decision on this amendment the proposer sought to clarify that the formation of the group does not preclude proposals relating to Senate arising from other forums.

Senate agreed to accept the amendment without requiring a vote.

- to the 'Terms of Reference' section, proposed by Dr Michael Barany and seconded by Dr Tamara Trodd:

As part of proposal development, to facilitate discussion and consensus among Senate members so that reforms are based on a shared and inclusive understanding of Senate priorities.

Ahead of a decision on this amendment the proposer sought to clarify that this amendment acknowledges that there is likely to be more than one view for what constitutes an effective Task and Finish Group. The proposer explained that the amendment seeks to make the group more facilitative and able to understand the wider needs and concerns surrounding proposed changes and enhancements ahead of these being brought to Senate for decision making, with an effective group able to undertake the consensus building required to make proposals a success. The Task and Finish Group would be responsible for establishing the methods to consult and build consensus with the wider membership.

Senate agreed to accept the amendment without requiring a vote.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to the 'Composition section, proposed by Dr Michael Barany and seconded by Dr Vashti Galpin: <p><i>change 4 elected members to 8 elected staff members, with at least two from each College.</i></p> <p>Ahead of a decision on this amendment the proposer explained that the amendment sought to rebalance the composition of the Task and Finish Group to reflect the composition of Senate, which is comprised of two-thirds of elected academic staff. The proposer explained that this amendment also sought to share the workload more widely and to reflect the increased responsibility of elected academic members to represent across Colleges and different career stages.</p> <p>The following points were made in discussion of the amendment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the size of the group may impact on the student contribution to the group. It may also have practical implications such as difficulties in reaching quorum. <p>Senate approved the amendment via a vote of 82%.</p> <p>Senate agreed to the formation of the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group without requiring a vote and subject to the approved amendments.</p>
9.	<p>Senate Elections 2024/25 & Senate Standing Committee Elections 2024/25 - S 23/24 2G To approve</p> <p>The Senate Clerk, Olivia Hayes introduced this item. She outlined that this was a routine paper that sought approval for the operation and arrangements for the Senate and Senate Standing Committee Elections. The arrangements for the elections are in line with those approved in previous years, and do not preclude alternative methods of Committee membership and appointment from being considered in the future.</p> <p>The paper also sought approval for two revisions to the Senate membership which had arisen from the recommendations of the Senate External Review.</p> <p>The Clerk clarified that the proposal for nine junior research reserved positions in paragraph 5 would be revised to nine 'prioritised' positions with any unfilled positions being opened to the wider pool of nominees in the non-Professorial category. The Election Regulations would be redrafted to reflect these positions as being 'prioritised' rather than reserved.</p> <p>Candidates eligible for the junior research positions would also be eligible to stand for election and vote in the wider non-Professorial election.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that Senate Support would review the existing membership to confirm whether the one and two-year terms referred to in paragraph 24 can be filled from within the existing membership, before seeking to fill these prioritised places in the forthcoming election.</p> <p>The Clerk outlined the final request contained within the paper, which was the approval of the Senate Election Regulations. The Regulations have been revised to clarify the position of Senate Assessors and the Academic Staff member to Court within the Election Regulations. She highlighted that if a member holds an ex-officio</p>

	<p>position, they will not be able to stand for election to Senate until their ex-officio term is due to conclude.</p> <p>Senate members made the following points in discussion of the item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workload allocation for junior research staff was raised. Principal Investigators determine workload, not the School. A clearer definition of what constitutes 'junior research' is required for these positions. The Senate Clerk confirmed that the Vice-Principal Research would be consulted to agree what positions and staff are considered junior research. The Senate Members Portal would be used to communicate with Senate regarding the definition agreed for junior research. • A query was raised on why early career research staff are favoured over early career teaching staff in the proposal. It was suggested that a decision on the proposal should be held over until after the junior positions are clarified, and there is clarification of how research sits alongside teaching within the representation on Senate and the Standing Committees. The Senate Clerk clarified that the proposal has been drawn from the recommendations contained within the external review, and the recommendation identified junior research staff specifically as being underrepresented. • A preference was expressed that a decision on this proposal be taken at this meeting to avoid further delay to move towards increasing the representation of staff in junior research positions on Senate. • The term "junior" is regressive and should be revised to early career. • An indication of the time requirement involved for Senate would support line managers in discussing Senate membership with interested colleagues. A specific allocation for Senate membership to be used across the University would be helpful. It was noted that given the different approaches to workload management across the University such discussions are best held at a local level involving relevant line managers, and with input from Heads of School. • A query was raised regarding the eligibility of Doctoral Students to stand for election to these positions. The Senate Clerk explained that the Students' Association are responsible for determining student positions and that this recommendation would also be referred to them for consideration. <p>Senate approved the proposal to prioritise nine positions for junior research staff in the non-Professorial category via a vote of 66%.</p> <p>The remaining proposals contained within the paper were approved by Senate without requiring a vote.</p> <p>Action: Senate Support to revise the Senate Election Regulations. Action: Senate Support to review the existing membership and seek to fill the one and two-year terms for the early career prioritised places from within the existing membership. Action: The Senate Members Portal to be used to communicate with Senate regarding the definition agreed with the Vice-Principal Research for "junior" research staff.</p>
10.	<p>Curriculum Transformation Project To approve</p>

- **Response from some Elected Academic Members of Senate to the Curriculum Transformation Briefing - S 23/24 2H**
- **Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP) Reflection paper - S 23/24 2I**

Dr Tamara Trodd introduced the first item, Response from some Elected Academic Members of Senate to the Curriculum Transformation Briefing. Dr Trodd outlined the background leading to the development of the paper, and identified where there were differences between each paper and the motions contained within these. She highlighted a core principle that the content of programmes should be determined by the expertise of staff within subject areas and expressed concerns regarding the impact on the quality of degree programmes and student experience.

The Vice-Principal Students, Professor Colm Harmon introduced the second item, Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP) Reflection paper. He reiterated a clear commitment to phasing and that there was no intention to introduce mandatory elements without:

- adequate piloting
- testing
- consideration of staff and student feedback.

The proposals will be taken through the appropriate governance pathways, however there is still considerable work towards the final shaping of proposals.

Dr Jon Turner, Project Lead for the Curriculum Transformation Project, outlined the position for the Taught Postgraduate Framework and explained that a formal proposal would be presented to the May meeting of Senate. He outlined the current position on the Undergraduate Framework, which is that the Project team is undertaking further engagement with stakeholders and the framework will evolve as a result of this. He endorsed the position that Schools will retain disciplinary ownership and the Project is eager to ensure the Undergraduate Framework is flexible enough for Schools.

Senate members made the following points in discussion of the item:

- A query was raised regarding mandatory elements and compulsory courses arising from the CTP.
The Project Lead for CTP confirmed that a decision regarding mandatory elements has not been made and this would be considered during the piloting and phasing of the CTP.
The Vice-Principal Students stated that programme archetypes seek to enable greater consistency across programmes.
- Several members sought clarification on the nature of challenge courses and the potential for these being made compulsory. Student feedback indicates a preference for smaller group face-to-face teaching, and challenge courses appear at odds with this.
- Several members queried the potential for 40 credits of mandatory courses to be reserved for challenge courses and expressed concerns regarding the high volume of credits creating unintended consequences. Specific concern was expressed regarding these creating constraints within the curriculum for degree programmes and reducing the ability for diversity and breadth within programmes, a decision which should be at the discretion of Schools. The example of language programmes was given with many students having limited opportunity to study languages prior to entering university.
The Vice-Principal Students outlined Motion 7 (regarding Challenge Courses) and confirmed that any decisions which relate to these being

mandatory would be reserved to Senate. He explained that the intention of challenge courses is for students to have an opportunity to broaden their knowledge and bring this back to their central disciplines and programmes. Work on the format and means of delivery for challenge courses is ongoing and this may not reflect a traditional lecture format. The Project is seeking a phased implementation with decisions regarding challenge courses and the mandatory nature of these to follow at a later stage.

- Student members reflected on their experience and reason for choosing to study at Edinburgh. They value the flexibility within programmes and scope to choose outside and elective courses. Student members on structured programmes including Law and Medicine reflected on the value of having an opportunity to study courses from outside their discipline, and the benefits of this to those students.

Concern was expressed regarding the potential format of challenge courses and these being a means to increase student numbers by teaching at scale. Comparison was drawn to teaching during Covid-19 which was largely delivered online and the student experience associated with this. An overhaul of various elements which relate to CTP was suggested, including mental health support, student retention rates and improved community building.

- Navigating existing University structures is challenging for students and adding greater complexity to these may increase these challenges.

Ahead of vote on this item, the paper authors outlined their final comments. Dr Trodd welcomed the aspirations of CTP though sought to amend the parameters of the Project remove the compulsory elements of the Undergraduate Framework.

The Vice-Principal Students welcomed the constructive nature of discussions to date and affirmed that the primary driver of the Project is to deliver excellence within the curriculum. He reiterated that the intention is to undertake piloting and review student and staff feedback before considering next steps.

Senate approved Motions 2.1 and 2.2 within the Elected Academic Members paper, and as endorsed by the CTP Reflections paper, without requiring a vote.

Senate approved Motion 2.3 within the Elected Academic Members paper via a vote of 86%

Senate approved Motion 2.4 within the Elected Academic Members paper via a vote of 86%

Senate approved Motions 2.5 within the Elected Academic Members paper via a vote of 86%

Senate approved Motions 2.6 within the Elected Academic Members paper via a vote of 89%

Senate approved Motion 5 within the CTP Reflections paper via a vote of 52%

Senate approved Motion 6 within the CTP Reflections paper via a vote of 52%

Senate did not approve Motion 7 within the CTP Reflections paper via a vote of 58%

11.	<p>Motion on Suppressed Items from Senate Business - S 23/24 2J To approve</p> <p>The Convener outlined that he has received legal advice on this item and this advice is that as President of Senate the he would not be bound by the outcome of a decision on this item due to his legal obligations surrounding individual items. The Convener is responsible for setting the Senate agenda and is responsible for the prioritisation of business.</p> <p>The paper author, Dr Michael Barany, expressed a disagreement with this position and a view that the legal advice permits the Convener to do as he pleases. The author clarified that the paper outlines that Senate should be informed of what items of business are not taken forward, and an explanation of why this decision has been made.</p> <p>The Convener agreed that paper authors should receive an explanation of where a paper submitted is not included on the Senate agenda. He disagreed that this information should be made available to the entirety of Senate and that paper authors should have a right of reply. The legal advice that he has received is that as President of Senate, he is able to determine what items are and are not included on the Senate agenda.</p> <p>Senate approved Motions 3.1 and 3.2 contained within the paper via a vote of 79%.</p>
12.	<p>Senate Role in the Response to People and Money External Review - S 23/24 2K To approve</p> <p>Dr Stuart Gilfillan introduced this item. He explained that this was a continuation of the previous Senate paper received on People and Money and articulates that Senate should be involved in the external review. The paper contains fifty pages of comments which outline the ongoing impacts of the People and Money system. Many of the concerns raised align with those highlighted by PA Consulting's 'People and Money External Review analysis, many of which issues continue.</p> <p>Senate was invited to comment and no comments were raised.</p> <p>Senate approved Motion 4.1 contained within the paper via a vote of 95%.</p> <p>Senate approved Motion 4.2 contained within the paper via a vote of 91%.</p> <p>Senate approved Motion 4.3 contained within the paper via a vote of 89%.</p> <p>Senate approved Motion 4.4 contained within the paper via a vote of 94%.</p> <p>The Convener explained that the University Court would be informed of Senate's decision on this item via the next routine Court Report.</p> <p>Action: Senate Clerk to ensure that Senate's approval of these motions are recorded in the next routine Court report.</p>
ITEMS FOR INFORMATION	

13.	<p>Senate Standing Orders - S 23/24 2L For information</p> <p>Senate noted the paper.</p>
14.	<p>Quality Enhancements and Standards Review Report - S 23/24 2M For information</p> <p>The Convener invited Senate to raise any comments on the item.</p> <p>The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A query was raised regarding the immediate implications of the QESR Report and how actions will be taken forward, with specific reference to Assessment and Feedback. The Deputy Vice-Principal, Enhancement and Convener of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), Professor Tina Harrison explained that the report will be discussed in greater detail at SQAC and that a joint oversight group will be established between the Senate Quality Assurance and Senate Education Committees. This group will have College representation and its purpose will be to oversee the actions developed in response to each of the recommendations and establish timelines for these. There is a need to address what the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has asked for, which includes addressing feedback turnaround times. The immediate focus will be on prioritising what the QAA have asked for in the short term. • A query was raised regarding monitoring improvement on Assessment and Feedback turnaround times and how improvement will be demonstrated. A view was expressed that School Boards of Studies do not enforce the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities and therefore these are not reflected in feedback turnaround times. The Head of School of the Edinburgh College of Art rejected this view stating that there are Board of Studies pathways which work through these principles. Professor Harrison explained that this will be monitored at a local level with ownership within Schools. The QAA has indicated that policies are not being delivered consistently across the University. The University has principles and policies in place, and there is a clear need to deliver and adhere to these consistently cross the University. • The Provost has held conversations with the Vice-Principal Students and Heads of Colleges regarding the implementation of key points within the report and this needs to be implemented in collaboration with Colleges and Heads of Schools. • The Head of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science stated that this is a top priority at College level and the College Education Committee will be communicating expectations regarding Assessment and Feedback turnaround times and ensuring that the principles are in place and being acted on as a priority. • A concern was expressed regarding Attainment gap monitoring and the ability to keep a metric on this at a local level in the absence of granular EDI information. The Head of the College of Science and Engineering confirmed that they are acting on this at a College level.

ITEMS FOR NOTING

The following items were provided to Senate for noting:

15. Research Strategy Group Report - S 23/24 2 2N

16. A Member-Led Approach to Senate Effectiveness - S 23/24 2 2O

17. Corrections and Qualifications to the External Senate Review Report - S 23/24 2P

18. Revised paper deadlines for 22 May 2024 Senate meeting - S 23/24 2 2Q

Clerk's note: Following publication of the agenda and papers for the 7 February 2024 meeting of Senate, an error was identified in paragraph 8 of *Revised paper deadlines for 22 May 2024 Senate meeting*.

The May meeting of Senate will take place on 22 May, not 24 May as indicated in paragraph 8 of the paper.

A student member queried the absence of an abstain option for voting which was discussed at the previous meeting.

Action: The Convener and Senate Clerk agreed to review this ahead of the next Senate meeting.