**Minutes of the Hybrid Meeting of Senate Education Committee
Held in Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and via Microsoft Teams
at 2.00pm on Thursday 19 January 2023**

1. Attendance

Present	Position
Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (Vice-Convener) (Convener for this meeting)
Sabine Rolle	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Lisa Kendall	Representative of CAHSS (Learning and Teaching)
Laura Bradley	Representative of CAHSS (Postgraduate Research)
Patrick Walsh	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Tim Stratford	Representative of CSE (Learning and Teaching)
Antony Maciocia	Representative of CSE (Postgraduate Research)
Jamie Davies	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, UG)
Sarah Henderson	Representative of CMVM (Learning and Teaching, PGT)
Paddy Hadoke	Representative of CMVM (Postgraduate Research)
Jo Shaw	Head of School, CAHSS
Mike Shipston	Head of Deanery, CMVM
Shelagh Green	Director for Careers & 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
Laura Cattell	Representing Student Recruitment and Admissions
Tom Ward	Director of Academic Services
Sian Bayne	Assistant Principal Digital Education
Lucy Evans	Deputy Secretary, Students
Marianne Brown	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling
Richard Gratwick	Senate Representative
Susan Morrow	Senate Representative
Mary Brennan	Senate Representative
Philippa Ward	Academic Services (Secretary)
In Attendance	
Ella Ritchie	Advance HE
Teresa Ironside	Director of Data Science Education
Jon Turner	Director of Institute for Academic Development (Curriculum Transformation Lead)
Amanda Percy	Curriculum Transformation
Robin Gay	EUSA Head of Student Voice
Donna Murray	Institute for Academic Development
Stuart Nicol	eLearning Services
Iain Gordon	Head of College of Science and Engineering
Apologies	
Colm Harmon	Vice-Principal Students (Convener)

Jason Love	Head of School, CSE
Sam Maccallum	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Vice President Education

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 10 November 2022

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022. All 'matters arising' were considered later in the agenda.

3. Update on Externally-Facilitated Review of Senate and its Standing Committees

Members welcomed Professor Ella Ritchie from Advance HE to the meeting. The Director of Academic Services, Tom Ward, noted that under the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance, the University is required to review the operation of Senate and its Standing Committees at least every five years. Professor Ritchie and her colleagues had been appointed to undertake the review which would start in January 2023 and would report in May 2023.

Professor Ritchie advised the Committee that the review process would involve reviewing documentation and speaking to members of the various Committees, both individually and in groups, along with a survey. Members of the Committee expressed support for the review. They noted that Senate had asked for this review to be brought forward and as such, were confident that members of the University community would be keen to be involved and would engage constructively with the process.

4.   For Discussion

4.1 Assessment and Feedback

4.1.1 Coordinating Institutional Activities on Assessment and Feedback

The Director of Academic Services, Tom Ward, introduced the paper, which provided an overview of the range of assessment-related activities that were either currently underway or were planned by the Senate Standing Committees, and set out proposals for coordinating and governing these activities. He emphasised that establishing the two proposed Groups (a Strategy and Policy Group and a Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group) would not necessarily mean that all of the identified work would be completed imminently. However, the groups would ensure that the work was co-ordinated, and the development of work plans would allow activity to be prioritised.

The Committee expressed strong support for the proposals in the paper and thanked the Director of Academic Services for pulling together the various strands of assessment and feedback work that were underway within the University. The Committee supported the proposed membership of the groups subject to considering the following potential additions:

Strategy and Policy Group
- A digital education representative (for example, Prof Sian Bayne)
- Additional student representation - one student representative from each College

- College Academic Misconduct Officers
- Representation from the elected Senate membership

Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group
- Additional student representation - one student representative from each College
- Addition representation of staff in relevant School roles, including Teaching Organisations

However, the group recognised the importance of ensuring that the groups did not become too big and unwieldy, and that in some cases it may be more appropriate to represent particular constituencies through consultation rather than membership of the groups. In relation to memberships of the groups, it was agreed that attention would need to be paid in ensuring key role holders were not overburdened.
One elected Senate member also passed on a suggestion that someone other than a senior University manager convene the groups.

The group supported the proposed remits of the groups subject to the following:

- Clarify that references to 'feedback' incorporate 'feed forward' activity
- Clarify how the groups would link to other relevant groups and projects, for example the Student Lifecycle group and the Student Support Model project, and the Curriculum Transformation Programme
- Explain the relationship between the two groups
- Explain that the University should provide Schools with clear timelines and as much notice as possible of any procedural changes agreed by the relevant Senate Committees on the basis of recommendations from the groups
- Ensure that any guidance that they produce does not unintentionally restrict the activities of Schools

In summary, the Committee approved the proposal to establish the two groups, subject to Academic Services submitting refined proposals for the groups' memberships, timelines and modes of operation to the Committee's March 2023 meeting for consideration. These proposals would take account of discussions with the two other Senate Standing Committees. Members noted that some of the work outlined in the paper was time-sensitive and would need to be started before March 2023. As such, the Committee agreed that this work could commence using the skeleton Group memberships outlined in the paper.

Actions:
1) Director of Academic Services to bring updated proposals for the Groups to the March 2023 meeting of the Committee. *(Director of Academic Services)*
2) Time-sensitive work identified in the paper to commence using the skeleton Group memberships proposed in the paper. *(Director of Academic Services)*

4.1.2 Proposed Arrangements for August 2023 Resit Diet

The Committee Administrator, Philippa Ward, presented the paper. Members noted that, at its November 2022 meeting, the Committee had agreed to establish a group to consider the arrangements for the August 2023 resit exam diet. This group had met on 5 December 2022, and the paper invited the Committee to approve the group's proposals for the management of the August 2023 resit diet (and beyond).

Committee members made the following points:

- General points:
  - While there was a general willingness among Senate members to work towards diversifying assessment, and gratitude among that the resource implications of this work had been acknowledged, the staff workload implications should not be underestimated
  - It was likely that there would always be a need for the University to offer some in-person resit examinations, for example to meet the requirements of professional bodies
  - Schools that had informed their students that August 2023 resits would take the form of in-person exams could still change these arrangements based on consultation with relevant students
- Approaches to assessment:
  - Colleagues had mixed views about whether using a resit assessment that differed from the original assessment could be justified pedagogically - while some colleagues thought that it would be inappropriate to set alternate assessments, other colleagues thought that it is possible to take different approaches to assessing against the same learning outcomes, and that the smaller student groups undertaking resits may offer opportunities for alternate forms of assessment
  - There was some support for the idea of using vivas as a resit or null sit option in appropriate cases
- Timing
  - Many students undertaking assessments in August were not resitting, but were taking assessments as first sits having been awarded null sits in the original assessment diet
  - Where it is necessary to hold in-person resit examinations, it may still be possible to reconsider timings and avoid holding resits in August
  - The Students' Association's initial consultation with students signalled a clear preferences for resits after the Semester 2 exam diet to be held online, and for Semester 1 resits to take place alongside the Semester 2 exam diet
  - However, while members expressed general support for the idea of allowing students to resit failed Semester 1 assessments alongside the Semester 2 exam diet, it was noted that this may not always be practicable or desirable for individual students
- Academic integrity
  - The idea of taking a purposefully more relaxed approach to academic integrity in non-Honours years was not supported - academic misconduct should be taken equally seriously at all levels
  - The University needed to be clear about where responsibility for assuring academic integrity lay, and that the onus should not be on staff members only

- Support for students
  - There would be benefit in informing students who needed to resit about any support that would be in place at the same time

Following discussion, members approved the arrangements for the August 2023 resit diet as outlined in section 11 of the paper, subject to a minor amendment to 11a to cover the point about consultation with relevant students.

Actions:
1) Committee Administrator to seek update from Academic Registrar on the support that would be available for students needing to take in-person resits in the August 2023 exam diet. ***(Committee Administrator)***
2) Academic Services to provide Schools with guidance on the arrangements for the August 2023 resit diet. ***(Director of Academic Services)***

4.2 Academic Best Practice: Consistent and Equitable Application of an Own Work Declaration

Donna Murray, Head of Taught Student Development, Institute for Academic Development, and Stuart Nicol, Head of eLearning Services, Information Services Group. Introduced the paper. The paper proposed changing the way in which Own Work Declarations (OWD) were used to make the University's assessment processes more accessible, supportive and consistent, whilst saving time with administration and support.

The Committee made the following points:

- OWDs
  - In order to make a decision on the proposals, the Committee would need to clarify its policy on OWDs - decide whether it would take a standardised and universal approach to OWDs, allow Schools to operate them if they wished, or abolish the practice altogether
  - The University's current policy position on OWDs (as outlined in Regulation 29 of the Taught Assessment Regulations 2022/23) was arguably illogical, and would benefit from being reviewed
  - Feedback from elected Senate members suggested that there was support for moving away from individual OWDs and replacing them with a process of accepting an OWD as part of the matriculation process
  - However, some members thought that asking students to accept an OWD as part of the matriculation process was too early, and that an OWD was perhaps best used at the point at which Schools were starting to discuss upcoming assessments with students
  - The Students' Association representative noted that consistency of approach was the most important issue for the student experience
  - The Students Association would be supportive of removing OWDs as used at present given that they were requested too late in the assessment process to be meaningful
  - There would be benefit in gathering sector data on how effective OWDs were in preventing academic misconduct
- Issues regarding approaches to incorporating OWDs into VLEs

- o The Committee recognised that there were problems with the way that some Schools were incorporating OWDs into Learn, which involving hiding assessment upload links until a student had completed the OWD
- o However, removing the OWDs from VLEs for Schools that had incorporated OWDs into their curriculum could be problematic
- The course on academic integrity
  - o There were mixed views on introducing a University-wide course on academic integrity
  - o Some Committee members thought resources on academic integrity should be embedded at School or Programme level, whereas others though there was potentially benefit in providing academic integrity education at both University and School or Programme level

In summary, the Committee was broadly supportive of the idea of removing OWDs for individual pieces of work or courses, and was also broadly supportive of utilising a course on academic integrity. However, the Committee recognised that it did not have a consensus on the key elements of the proposals, and that further analysis, consultation and discussion was required before it could make a decision on the way forward. This work would be taken forward by the Assessment and Feedback Groups discussed under item 4.1.1.

Action:
University's policy position on OWDs to be considered by the relevant Assessment and Feedback Group. *(Director of Academic Services)*

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5. Standing Items

5.1 Curriculum Transformation Update

Dr Jon Turner introduced the paper on the Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP). Professor Iain Gordon, Head of the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) was in attendance for this item. The paper provided an update on progress with the development of a proposed curriculum framework for consideration via the appropriate University governance channels. This included plans to work with Schools and Deaneries to develop short and medium term plans for change and investment, and proposals for a modification of the timescale for the implementation and phasing of curriculum transformation. Dr Turner indicated that he and the Vice-Principal (Students) planned to present two papers to the February 2023 meeting of Senate– one on the curriculum framework and one around the support and structures that would need to be in place to implement the new framework.

Professor Gordon advised the Committee that CSE was scoping a possible 'Sustainability' Challenge Course which may assist the College to test some of the Curriculum Transformation concepts. The College's scoping group was considering issues such as scalability, timetabling, governance, staff workload management, approaches to assessment, and the ways in which technology-enhanced learning might be used. He hoped that it would be possible to take a decision on the feasibility of the course by March 2023 and to potentially run the course for the first time in Semester 2 2023/4. The Committee expressed support for the work being undertaken by CSE. Related to this, it

noted that Professor Sabine Rolle and Dr Lisa Kendall were heading up the CTP's work on Challenge courses and that a member of the CSE scoping group would be identified to join the University-level group.

The Committee made the following points in response to the paper:

- General points
  - Elected Senate members signalled that they were supportive of the proposed re-phasing of the Curriculum Transformation work and would potentially welcome further phasing in the introductory stages of the Programme
  - One member asked that the project team provide a clear statement of the problem the CTP Programme was aiming to fix
- The proposed curriculum framework
  - Some members perceived some ambiguity still remained regarding the archetypes
  - It appeared that Schools would need to structure each year around six 20 credit courses, which would be overly restrictive
  - It would be important to ensure that the framework caters for professional degrees with large amounts of prescribed content, for example the LLB
  - Timetabling would be fundamental to the framework and would underpin course and programme design, and therefore needed to be considered at an early stage in the programme
- Resourcing
  - Elected Senate members were keen to understand both the potential impact of the Programme on academic staff time and the overall cost of the Programme to the University
  - Elected Senate members requested that the University provide further information on the costs of the Programme, including the costs of secondments and other budget lines

In response to Senate members' comments, Dr Turner noted that:

- 20 credit courses were not the only option – a mixed currency of 10, 20, 40, 60 credit courses was envisaged
- He would ask the Vice-Principal (Students) and the Director of Strategic Change to respond to the request for information about resources (he anticipated that one of the papers that they plan to submit to Senate's 8 February 2023 meeting will address this)

Action:
1) Member of CSE scoping group to be identified to join the University-level group taking forward the work on Challenge Courses. *(Professor Tim Stratford)*
2) Request for further information on the costs of the project to be taken back to Vice-Principal Students and Director of Strategic Change. *(Dr Jon Turner)*

5.2   Student Experience Update

The Deputy Secretary, Students, Lucy Evans introduced the paper. She confirmed that the Portfolio Management had student representation, and she agreed to confirm that the

Portfolio Leadership Group also had student representation. Committee members made the following points in response to the paper:

- In relation to section 11 of the paper, members welcomed the news that the University had received a large number of high quality applications for the recently advertised Student Advisor posts. They suggested that the Student Support Model project give further thought to long-term career development for the newly appointed Student Advisors to avoid high staff turnover, as part of wider discussion around development and career trajectories for the University's Professional Services staff.
- Elected Senate members noted that Senate members would welcome more information about the ways in which the success of the new Student Support Model was being evaluated.
- Members discussed some of the action the University was taking to support students during the cost-of-living crisis. Further information was available at Cost of living | The University of Edinburgh and staff members were encouraged to point students to this information, potentially by adding the link to their email signatures.

Action:
1) Deputy Secretary Students to confirm with Vice-Principal Students that there is student representation on the Portfolio Leadership Group and to feed back to the Students' Association. *(Deputy Secretary Students)*
2) Deputy Secretary Students to share with the Committee information on the way in which the success of the new Student Support Model was being evaluated. *(Deputy Secretary Students)*
3) Staff members to direct students to the University's 'Cost of Living' web page. *(College representatives on the Committee to cascade.)*

5.3 Doctoral College Update

Professor Antony Maciocia provided a verbal update on progress with the Doctoral College. He noted that the DC planned to submit papers on the following strategic items to the Committee for consideration in the near future:

- Size and shape of the PGR body
- The length of a PhD and implications for tuition fee levels

He also signalled that the DC was keen that the University made progress on introducing a PGR Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR). He also provided a brief update on progress on the group overseeing the University's work on Tutor and Demonstrator training. While this work had been delayed due to staff illness, he recognised the importance of the University making make demonstrable progress in this area as soon as possible, and informed the Committee that significant effort was now being put into moving the work forward.

6.   For Approval

6.1   Student Surveys – Institutional Questions 2023

The Committee approved the proposed institutional questions for the 2023 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Taught Research Survey (PRES), as set out in 3G and 3H.

The Committee also made the following comments on the two surveys:

- In relation to PRES, some of the wording of the survey implied that students were studying in a single area, resulting in it not always being meaningful for students who were working across academic disciplines or were part of a Doctoral Training Centre
- While PRES asked important questions relating to cost of living, these questions were not included in PTES
- Members expressed ongoing concerns about the PTES's use of terminology of 'courses' to mean 'programmes, which was not consistent with the University's own terminology and could cause confusion for respondents
- There may be benefit in looking again at the University's governance for developing and approving the University's institutional survey questions (the Committee was advised that work was underway to review the way in which the Student Voice overall was governed, and survey approval mechanisms would be considered as part of this)

Action:
Committee feedback relating to PRES and PTES to be referred to Advance HE.
(Interim Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling)

6.2 Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – EUSA Community Volunteering Proposal

The Committee approved the proposal that the EUSA Community Volunteering role should be recognised in Section 6.1 of the HEAR.

A member of the Committee noted that the University of Edinburgh's HEAR appeared to recognise fewer additional activities than the HEARs of other, comparable institutions.

Action:
Background information on the content of the HEARs of comparable institutions to be passed to the HEAR Recommendation Panel for review. ***(Professor Mary Brennan)***

7.   Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Philippa Ward / Tom Ward
Academic Services
30 January 2023