

Senate presentations – Wednesday 5 February

Student Support and Wellbeing

1. Review of Personal Tutoring and Student Support – presented by Rosalyn Claase (Design Lead) and Professor Emma Hunter (Professor of Global and African History)

In early 2019, the University Executive and Service Excellence Programme Board approved a ‘nothing off the table’ review of personal tutoring and student support at the University of Edinburgh, looking at academic and professional services structures which support students’ academic and personal development. The review has been led by a Design Group, bringing together members of the Senate Education Committee as well as members of the Student Administration & Support Programme Board.

The review has involved significant student and staff engagement in through a variety of face to face and online activities, benchmarking with other universities, as well as further research in areas such as wellbeing. It has looked for opportunities to learn from and build on current best practice. Over the course of September and October 2019 the project team presented possible student support models for discussion, feedback and evaluation. This feedback and earlier background research has been analysed and a consultation report and recommended evolved model of support has been presented to the Senate Education Committee and the Student Administration & Support Programme Board. In December 2019, both of these groups approved the evolved model and in the early new year the project team will be finalising a detailed business case for future implementation.

This presentation will provide an update on the evolved model of student support, including information on the background to the review, key aspects of the evolved model, and next steps with regard to the changes. For more information on the review, please take a look at our [InfoHub](#).

2. Student Mental Health Strategy – presented by Andy Shanks, Director of Student Wellbeing

The number of students in higher education in the UK coming forward for support with their mental health and wellbeing is rising.

In January 2017 the University established a Student Mental Health Strategy, which lays out a vision that the University should be an environment which enables and supports our students to flourish. The implementation plan for the strategy has recently been refreshed and aligned with Universities UK’s ‘Step Change Framework’, which advocates a ‘whole institution’ approach to tackling the challenges presented by the sharp rise in numbers of students experiencing challenges with their mental health. This means adopting mental health as a strategic priority within the University, ensuring it has a system-wide focus and engaging with staff and students consistently within the implementation process.

The University has two key strategic objectives for student mental health and wellbeing, which align with the University’s vision, purpose and values through promoting respect, inclusivity, accessibility, transformation and self-improvement, and which convey the twin aims of the strategy:

1. The University is recognised as a community that promotes the good mental health of its students and treats all students with respect and empathy.
2. Students who experience mental health difficulties at the University are well supported.

Over recent years at University of Edinburgh there has been a significant increase in the volume of students (a) disclosing mental health problems- during the past 5 years this has risen by over 400%

to 1445 in 2018/19; and (b) coming forward for mental health support: referrals to the University Student Counselling Service (SCS) have increased by almost 300% over eight years, and the Disabled Student Support Fund (DSSF) expenditure on supporting students with mental health conditions has risen by 92% over the last three years.

This project makes proposals within the framework of the Student Experience Action Plan, which are detailed in the presentation.

Research Excellence Framework – REF 2021

1. Introduction and Update – presented by Professor Jonathan Seckl, Vice-Principal Planning, Resources and Research Policy

2. REF 2021 Process, effort and challenges involved in preparing the REF 2021 submission – presented by Professor David Leach, Dean of Academic Excellence, College of Science and Engineering

The countdown to the REF 2021 submission has begun. The presentations provide an update on our REF 2021 submission preparations to date and an overview of what this has entailed from a College perspective.

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)

Presented by Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance

The presentation will provide Senate with an update on ELIR preparations, including how students and staff have contributed to the development of the review's Reflective Analysis. The next steps for the development of the Reflective Analysis will be outlined, including how students and staff can provide comments on a draft. Information on the review visits which take place in October and November 2020 will also be provided.