

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Quality Assurance Committee
Thursday 16th May 2024, 2pm to 5pm
Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, CSH and Microsoft Teams

A G E N D A

* Standing item

1.	Welcome and Apologies	
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting To approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25th April 2024	SQAC 23/24 5A
3.	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convener's communications	Verbal Update
4.	SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS	
4.1	Degree Awarded Analysis 2022-23 To note and discuss.	SQAC 23/24 5B
4.2	Student Support*: Evaluation Plan To note and discuss.	SQAC 23/24 5C
4.3	Student Data Monitoring To approve.	SQAC 23/24 5D
4.4	External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy Review To approve.	SQAC 23/24 5E
4.5	Work-based and Placement Learning Policy Update To approve.	SQAC 23/24 5F
4.6	Operation of Senate Standing Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Annual Review of Effectiveness of Senate Standing Committees To comment.	SQAC 23/24 5G
5.	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION & FORMAL BUSINESS	
5.1	Scotland's Rural College (SRUC): Accreditation Committee Annual Report 2023-24 For information.	SQAC 23/24 5H
5.2	Annual Monitoring and Internal Periodic Review Themes 2022-23: University Level Actions For information.	SQAC 23/24 5I

5.3	Committee Priorities 2024/25 To note.	SQAC 23/24 5J
5.4	Terms of Reference and Membership 2024/25 To note.	SQAC 23/24 5K
5.5	Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses* The Committee is invited to approve the IPR Final Reports published on the Committee SharePoint.	SQAC 23/24 5L
6.	Any Other Business	
7.	Date of next meeting - Tuesday 10 th September 2024 (venue TBC)	

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Thursday 25th April 2024, 2-5pm
Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House
and Microsoft Teams

1. Attendance

Present:	Position:
Professor Tina Harrison	Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) (Convener)
Professor Matthew Bailey	Dean of Quality, CMVM
Dr Michael Barany	Senate Representative
Professor Laura Bradley	Doctoral College Representative of CAHSS (PGR)
Marianne Brown	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling
Brian Connolly	Acting Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services
Dr Anne Desler	School Representative of CAHSS
Dr Gail Duursma	School Representative of CSE
Olivia Eadie	Co-Director, Institute for Academic Development
Carl Harper	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
Dr Pia Helbing	Senate Representative
Professor Nazira Karodia	Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching, Edinburgh Napier University
Professor Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, CSE
Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar	School Representative of CMVM
Dr Emily Taylor	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, CAHS
Sinéad Docherty	Committee Secretary, Academic Services
Apologies:	
Callum Paterson	Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator
Professor Jose Vazquez-Boland	Senate Representative
In attendance:	
Dr Kate Nicol	Academic Policy Manager, Head of Student Conduct Team, Academic Services

2. Minutes of meeting held on 22nd February 2024

The Committee discussed the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2024. A correction had been accepted prior to the meeting and an amendment proposed to the account of the QESR assessment & feedback discussion.

The Committee agreed that the response to the QESR recommendation around A&F must give feedback quality the same attention as turnaround times, and agreed that this position should be reflected in the minutes. Discussion highlighted concern held by some members that turnaround times would become the main focus of the response to the A&F recommendation, due to the immediate action being taken to understand and collect the data, and this focus was at the expense of feedback quality. This view was not held by all members; it was noted that the Assessment & Feedback Strategy Group are focussing on feedback quality, and data collection which evidences turnaround times is also relevant to quality of feedback and its timeliness.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, pending the amendment to reflect the emphasis on equal attention to be given to feedback quality and turnaround times.

The note of e-business from February 2024 was approved by the Committee.

3. Matters Arising

- **Update on use of the fines collected by ACE**

In relation to an action regarding the Student Discipline report in the February meeting, Academic Services requested clarity from ACE on the collection of student fines. The Convener confirmed that ACE has an arrangement to transfer the sum collected as a result of disciplinary action to the University's Hardship fund.

- **Curriculum Transformation Workshop**

As agreed during the Curriculum Transformation discussion in the February meeting, SQAC members are invited to attend a workshop to explore the Postgraduate Taught Framework. This workshop will be held on Tuesday 7th May 2024.

- **QESR update**

The Convener informed the Committee that the QESR oversight group met most recently on 23rd April so discuss the response and related actions. Action is being taken in relation to all recommendations, and the following specific updates were shared in relation to the high priority recommendations:

Assessment & Feedback

- A data dashboard has been created to show collected data on turnaround times.
- The dashboard appears to show a correlation between student feedback (via surveys) and the collected data.
- The data does indicate some vast differences between subject areas within some Schools.
- Convener & Deputy Secretary, Students met with internal audit colleagues to look at the process of auditing quality of feedback. It is intended that this work will help with consistency of approach across the institution.

Tutors & Demonstrators Training

- There is concern that this recommendation will not be met this academic year, and plans must be urgently put into place for the next academic year.

- Professor Antony Maciocia is leading on this work to address the recommendation.
- The QESR recommendation focussed on postgraduate research students who teach and therefore this will be the initial institutional priority. However, the longer-term plan will address career & development needs for all tutors & demonstrators.

Members discussed the training needs and provision for PGR tutors and demonstrators, noting that some development aspects, such as those provided by the Institute for Academic Development, are intended to complement the training provided by Schools & Deaneries. However, the training is discretionary and not monitored. The Committee recognised that some aspects of training will be mandatory as a minimum requirement, with additional aspects being available for the continued development of tutors and demonstrators.

Action: Committee Representative for IAD to look into the uptake on IAD courses and report back to Committee.

- **Appeals subcommittee**

The Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, CSE reported having approached colleagues about joining the Academic Appeals Committee, as per an action from the February meeting. Colleagues had asked for further information on the requirements and commitment involved in the appeals process.

Action: Committee Secretary to liaise between Academic Appeals and Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, CSE to provide information to those looking to volunteer.

4. Annual Reports 2022-23

Complaint Handling (Paper C – closed)

This paper was presented by the Head of Student Conduct from the Academic Services department who highlighted that the report presents data for academic year 2022/23, includes a commentary on themes and account of the recommendations following an internal audit of the Complaints Handling process.

The Committee discussed the nature of complaints, and the impact on staff who are involved in an investigation over what may be an extended period of time. It was recognised that further support and enhanced long-term follow-up may be needed by staff, and also recognised that better information may be needed in order to differentiate between HR processes and the complaints process. It was felt that a more open culture around complaints that encourages learning would be valuable to staff and the University, and would provide some reassurance to those involved in the complaints process.

There was some discussion as to why the complaints report was presented as a closed item. It was clarified that complaints data is published online and meets the public reporting requirements, but the report itself may hold identifying features when looking at small numbers

of cases and this carries a risk. Furthermore, a small number of staff within Academic Services work on complaints and limited resource affects the ability to close the loop on some details in the report.

The Committee noted appreciation for the well-presented and high-quality report that had been compiled by the Complaints team.

Action: Head of Student Conduct to take forward comments from this discussion to the upcoming review of the procedure for handling student complaints which relate to the conduct of University staff.

5. Annual Monitoring: Reporting templates 2023-24 (Paper D)

The Acting Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services spoke to this paper. The annual monitoring templates at programme, School and College level were presented for approval. It was noted that the guidance had been informed by pilot work undertaken by the Director of Quality for ECA in the previous academic year, and a new question added to the programme and School template around awarding gaps. It is expected that more significant changes to the templates will be included next academic year to reflect the outcome of the external tertiary framework review.

During discussion of the templates, the Committee emphasised the importance of factual, evidence-based reporting rather than more general reflections and impressions. It was agreed to update some of the language used to increase the emphasis on effectiveness and evidence. It was highlighted that awarding gap data may return small numbers at programme level and it was agreed that guidance should note the use of rounded data in instances where small, identifiable numbers would present a reporting risk. Other amendments to the templates included corrections to the advised length of responses and an update to the assessment and feedback section to cover assessment challenges and not only over-assessment.

A member of the Committee welcomed the revisions and PGR focus, noting that the specific questions on PGR last year made a material difference to the annual monitoring outcomes and this is another step forward. It was proposed that additional prompts in the Student Voice section of the templates could be useful.

Action: Academic Services to update templates to reflect corrections and amendments and circulate to Schools.

6. Student Data Monitoring (Paper E)

The Acting Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services spoke to this paper which revisits the plans for institutional and systematic oversight monitoring student retention, progression, and attainment data. This package of work had been impacted by the pandemic

and industrial action, but the recommendation from the recent QESR visit builds on the previous recommendation from ELIR 2021 which requires the University to monitor the attainment gap.

It had previously been agreed by the Committee that a sub-group would be responsible for this oversight, which would rely on data gathered from across the University, and would ultimately become a regular, systematic approach. The Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, CSE shared details of the Progression and Attainment (ProAttain) Working Group that operates within CSE and has a remit to analyse progression and attainment outcomes and to identify and share good practice to address issues. It was recognised that the work of this group would be useful to inform the remit and role of the SQAC sub-group operating at institutional level. It was also highlighted that the expertise of a colleague with quantitative data skills, such as from within SPS, would be a valuable addition to the membership of the sub-group.

The Committee discussed the importance of contextualising the work of the sub-group and avoiding any duplication with work happening at College-level, or work undertaken by the EDI Committee or the Curriculum Transformation Project. Whilst various strands of work are ongoing, the institutional oversight and sharing of good practice is not assured and this area falls within the remit of the Committee. Members of the Committee were in agreement that this is a vitally important issue and is necessary to respond to Schools having already asked for help to address gaps, as well as in order to meet external requirements.

The Committee approved in principle the establishment of a task and finish group to explore methodological options and make recommendations to the Committee for a new systematic approach to monitoring student data at University level. It was also agreed that the initial focus of the group will be to ensure that the new approach will also address the [Enhancement Led Institutional Review \(ELIR\) 2021](#) and the [Quality Enhancement and Standards Review \(QESR\) 2023](#) recommendations regarding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the student population.

The Committee agreed that a draft Terms of Reference and membership for the proposed task group be brought to the May meeting.

Action: Academic Services to submit a draft Terms of Reference and membership for the Student Data Monitoring Task Group to the May meeting.

7. External Examiners

External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) Thematic Analysis (Paper F)

This paper was presented by the Acting Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services and is a thematic report which draws on the comments received by Colleges from their External Examiners. The Committee was informed that the overall report does not reflect programmes which have no comments, due to issues in pulling information from the central reporting system & Academic Services will be looking to resolve this system issue with Colleges

going forward. It was noted there are inaccuracies in tables 1, 2, 4 & 5 contained within the report due to some CAHSS reports having been omitted by the system.

Key themes highlighted in the report include the overall high number of commendations, low number of issues and appropriate action taken at local level when required. It was noted that concrete examples of good practice included in the report would be valuable.

It was agreed that this report should be presented to the Committee each year at its April meeting and should be divided into UG and PGT sections. It is intended that a fixed reporting point will enhance year-on-year reflection and progress, and facilitate more comparison.

External Examiner Appointments on BVM&S (Paper G)

This paper was presented by the Dean of Quality for CMVM. The challenges around course-level EE appointments were explained to the Committee; with only 12 Vet Schools in the U.K., it is extremely difficult to avoid reciprocal arrangements and there are conflicts with the University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy (section 22).

The Dean of Quality outlined the approach that BVM&S had developed to mitigate conflicts and to use the Exceptional Circumstances policy to ensure that the EE requirement is met at course level. Some external individuals can be brought in from the sector but insight into Higher Education is still required and arrangements for this may rely on the Exceptional Circumstances policy. Appointments of EEs would be reported to SQAC as standard. It was confirmed that the relevant accreditation bodies are supportive of the outlined approach as a practical, appropriate and transparent way forward.

The Committee approved the proposed mitigations to support External Examiner appointments on BVM&S.

8. Committee Priorities 2024/25 (Paper H)

SQAC members received a paper outlining the draft Committee priorities ahead of the April meeting to allow for consultation. The paper was then discussed during the meeting, taking into account the comments already submitted by some members in advance. These included the responsibility for reporting the progress against, and changes to, external requirements to Senate, clear identification of all the QESR recommendations which are the remit of the sub-group and the focus on the effectiveness of the Student Support model. It was acknowledged that clarity is needed on the evaluation model to be applied to the SSM; an update is expected at the May meeting. The Committee were in agreement that all priorities and objectives should be evidenced and data-supported, as far as possible.

The Committee considered other areas of business which may require additional focus. The Curriculum Transformation Project was discussed and is an area of interest, but as it will become part of the regular business it was not agreed as a priority. Internal systems were also discussed, with Timetabling, Learn Ultra and the Exceptional Circumstances policy identified as potential areas of focus. As these areas sit within the remit of the Deputy Secretary, Students it was agreed

that the appropriate course of action is for the Convener to investigate the relevant reporting strategies and update the Committee.

The Committee discussed a proposed review of the Marking & Assessment Boycott (MAB). It was agreed that the impact of MAB needs to be reviewed and understood, and the Convener informed members of work that is already being undertaken elsewhere in the University toward this review. The Committee agreed to wait for the findings of the current, ongoing review and the outcomes of the data analysis in relation to degree classifications (an item due to be presented at the May meeting of SQAC) before deciding on any course of action. It was highlighted that members of wider Senate consider the MAB review as a priority area and also expect to be presented with a report on the outcomes of the review.

Action: Convener to liaise with Deputy Secretary, Students about the reporting strategies for internal systems and processes under USG remit.

Action: Convener to investigate the reporting cycle for the MAB review already in progress and report back to the Committee.

Action: Academic Services to take the feedback provided by members to develop a revised draft of the proposed priorities to then be shared on the Committee's SharePoint site for further comment.

9. Internal Periodic Review: Reports & Responses (Paper I)

Due to time constraints, it was agreed that the IPR reports and responses would be addressed via e-business.

Action: Committee Secretary to circulate this item via e-business.

10. A.O.B.

The representative for IAD proposed that the Committee receive a twice-yearly standing report on the new, in-progress and completed Principal's Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) projects. The Committee welcomed receiving updates on this matter.

Action: Committee Secretary and the representative for IAD to arrange the submission of the PTAS project reports to the Committee.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 16th May, 2-5pm. This will be a hybrid meeting, taking place in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and via Microsoft Teams.

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

18 May 2024

Degrees Awarded Outcomes

Description of paper

This paper provides an overview of the degrees awarded to students who completed their studies in 2022/23 academic year. This includes outcomes at institutional and School level, and across key student groups.

Action requested / recommendation

The committee are asked to note and discuss this paper.

Background and context

Outcomes for degrees awarded are discussed annually by SQAC.

Analysis presented uses data from the student record system. This differs from analysis presented in previous years, which used the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data. Due to changes in statutory reporting, the HESA dataset is yet to be published therefore is not available for the 2022/23 academic year. This means that benchmarking data is not available at institutional or subject level as in previous years.

The marking and assessment boycott during 2022/23 resulted in different approaches in recording awards within the student record. Limitations in the data have been mitigated where possible. Additional contextual information regarding the impact of the marking and assessment boycott on the provision of awards is included in the appendices.

Outcomes are presented across a five-year period to show the trend over time. This enables a comparison with outcomes pre-pandemic (2018/19).

Discussion

High level outcomes outlined in the papers are:

- A 3.2% decrease in the number of first class degrees awarded from the previous year, but an overall increase of 5.3% across the five year period;
- More than 89% of students achieved a high classification degree in 2022/23; this has decreased by 1.8% from the previous year, and 0.5% across the five-year period;
- For the first time in the five-year period, a higher proportion of male students achieved a first class award than female students. However the gap between male and female attainment of high classification awards remains at 3.8% (female – 90.6% and male 86.8%);
- Students with a disclosed disability continue to be less likely to achieve a first class or high classification award than students with no disclosed disability.

The gap has narrowed in attainment of high classification degrees (0.7%) but slightly increased in first class awards (0.2%);

- The most significant attainment gap is in the awarding of first class degrees between BAME and white students (11.6%). This gap has decreased by 1.5% from the previous years. However the attainment gap in awarding of high classification degrees has widened from 4.7% to 7.3%;
- A similar trend is seen in attainment across widening participation students, with a narrowing in attainment of first class awards (2.9%) but widening of high classifications awarded overall (2.2%).

Resource implications

There are no resource implications of this work.

Risk management

The University must maintain oversight of the distribution of degrees awarded to ensure academic standards are monitored.

Equality & diversity

Outcomes across key student groups are included in analysis to allow oversight of attainment gaps.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

This paper presents an update for discussion. Outcomes will be shared with local areas for consideration.

Author

Vivian So – Senior Analyst

Presenter

Marianne Brown

*Marianne Brown – Head of Timetabling,
Examinations and Student Analytics*

May 2024

*Adam Bunni – Academic Policy Manager
(Head of Policy and Governance)*

May 2024

Freedom of Information (*Is the paper 'open' or 'closed'*) *open*

Open

Degree Award Analysis

May 2024

Introduction

This paper presents analysis on degree award outcomes for undergraduate students over the past five academic years from 2018/19 to 2022/23. The data is obtained internally from the student record system (EUCLID)¹, and includes award classification information for all students who completed their degree programmes of study:

- All awards, including both exit and interim awards;
- All programmes, including integrated masters, medical, dental and veterinary medicines degrees;
- High classification is defined as follow:
 - Honours programmes: First Classification or Second Classification, Division 1
 - Integrated masters, MBChB and BVM&S programmes: Target award is the same as the award they received (e.g., Pass or above).

The analysis consists of a trend analysis on the proportion of students who achieved a First Class degree, or a high classification degree at both University and School levels. It also investigates the attainment gap between a range of demographics and widening participation².

¹ The data is a snapshot taken on 22 April 2024.

² Widening participation data is only available for UK-domiciled students.

First Class Degrees

In the 2022/23 academic year, more than one-third (34.1%) of UG students achieved a First Class degree. There is a 3.2% decrease from the previous year but a 5.3% increase over the five-year period.

Year	% First Class
2018/19	28.8%
2019/20	40.3%
2020/21	44.9%
2021/22	37.3%
2022/23	34.1%

The School of Mathematics has the highest proportion of First Class degrees (64.4%) of First Class degrees in 2022/23, followed by School of Informatics (57.5%), School of Literatures, Languages and Culture (49.2%), School of Physics and Astronomy (46.3%), and School of Chemistry (45.1%).

While over half of Schools experienced a decline in First Class degrees awarded between 2021/22 and 2022/23, the Moray House School of Education and Sport (+8.7%), and School of Mathematics (+8.5%) saw the largest increases during this period. The School of Health and Social Sciences (-18.4%), School of Law (-12.1%), School of Biological Sciences (-8.7%), and School of Engineering (-8.6%) had the most significant decreases.

Looking at the five-year trend, most Schools saw an increase in the proportion of First Class degrees. In particular, the Moray House School of Education and Sport (+13.4%), School of Literatures, Languages and Culture (+11.3%), and School of Mathematics (+10.9%) demonstrated the largest increases in First Class degree attainment. Meanwhile, the School of Health and Social Sciences (-11.2%) experienced the most substantial decreases.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	YoY Change	Five Year Change
BIO	35.1%	32.0%	42.3%	42.4%	33.7%	-8.7%	-1.4%
BMS	32.3%	35.2%	30.2%	30.2%	31.5%	1.3%	-0.7%
BUS	31.0%	46.6%	36.3%	33.0%	33.9%	0.9%	2.9%
CHE	38.4%	65.0%	69.2%	52.6%	45.1%	-7.5%	6.7%
DIV	16.2%	32.7%	38.0%	19.4%	23.9%	4.5%	7.7%
ECA	30.8%	46.6%	45.5%	41.6%	35.9%	-5.7%	5.2%
ECN	26.7%	42.9%	39.0%	29.4%	33.9%	4.5%	7.1%
EDU	19.4%	24.6%	52.0%	24.1%	32.8%	8.7%	13.4%
ENG	26.4%	36.4%	41.7%	35.5%	26.9%	-8.6%	0.5%
GEO	28.0%	29.0%	42.0%	37.7%	30.7%	-7.0%	2.7%
HCA	24.7%	41.6%	45.8%	32.8%	29.8%	-3.0%	5.1%
HEA	43.9%	53.8%	62.2%	51.1%	32.7%	-18.4%	-11.2%
INF	58.1%	61.1%	73.4%	61.4%	57.5%	-3.8%	-0.5%
LAW	20.6%	40.3%	58.4%	42.3%	30.2%	-12.1%	9.7%
LLC	37.9%	59.1%	70.1%	57.1%	49.2%	-7.9%	11.3%
MAT	53.5%	64.8%	58.4%	55.9%	64.4%	8.5%	10.9%
MED					0.4%	0.4%	0.4%

PHY	37.8%	51.7%	45.9%	48.6%	46.3%	-2.3%	8.5%
PPL	36.3%	48.6%	48.5%	39.1%	33.3%	-5.8%	-3.0%
SPS	24.4%	36.7%	42.5%	36.1%	31.3%	-4.8%	6.9%
VET				1.6%	4.7%	3.1%	4.7%

Note that areas where there are less than 10 students have been excluded

High Classification Degrees

In the 2022/23 academic year, over 89% of students achieved a degree with a high classification. There was a decrease of 1.8% since 2021/22 and 0.5% in the last 5 years.

Year	% High Classification
2018/19	89.7%
2019/20	92.2%
2020/21	94.2%
2021/2	91.0%
2022/23	89.2%

More than 80% of students from all Schools received a high classification degree in 2022/23. Both Edinburgh Medical School and The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies have at least 98% of their students achieving a high classification degree. Furthermore, the School of Literatures, Languages and Culture (94.8%), School of Divinity (93.5%), Deanery of Biomedical Sciences (92.7%), School of Mathematics (92.5%), School of Social and Political Science (91.5%), and School of Philosophy, Psychology & Language Sciences (90.3%) had the highest proportion of high classification degree.

Most Schools saw a decline in the proportion of high classification degrees awarded between 2021/22 and 2022/23, with the exceptions of the Moray House School of Education and Sport, School of Mathematics, School of Philosophy, Psychology & Language Sciences, School of Physics and Astronomy, School of Social and Political Science, and School of Informatics which saw increases ranging from 0.1% to 3.8%. The School of Health and Social Sciences (-9.0%) and Business School (-6.0%) experienced the most substantial decreases.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	YoY Change	Five Year Change
BIO	87.9%	87.4%	93.9%	90.9%	86.8%	-4.1%	-1.1%
BMS	96.8%	94.9%	93.4%	93.9%	92.7%	-1.2%	-4.0%
BUS	92.1%	96.4%	93.9%	94.2%	88.2%	-6.0%	-3.9%
CHE	86.6%	93.0%	96.2%	89.6%	88.5%	-1.1%	1.9%
DIV	98.6%	89.8%	98.6%	95.5%	93.5%	-2.0%	-5.2%
ECA	86.4%	88.6%	88.7%	91.2%	86.2%	-5.0%	-0.2%
ECN	84.9%	91.4%	88.8%	86.4%	84.1%	-2.3%	-0.8%
EDU	75.4%	84.7%	94.7%	77.5%	81.4%	3.8%	6.0%
ENG	84.3%	88.1%	92.5%	87.6%	82.7%	-4.8%	-1.6%
GEO	85.8%	89.1%	93.4%	90.5%	88.4%	-2.0%	2.7%
HCA	90.7%	93.3%	97.5%	89.5%	87.5%	-2.0%	-3.2%
HEA	97.6%	97.4%	95.6%	93.6%	84.6%	-9.0%	-12.9%
INF	84.5%	88.6%	94.2%	87.3%	87.3%	0.1%	2.8%

LAW	91.1%	91.8%	96.3%	93.4%	87.0%	-6.4%	-4.1%
LLC	96.5%	98.0%	99.1%	97.1%	94.8%	-2.2%	-1.6%
MAT	86.0%	91.2%	90.5%	88.8%	92.5%	3.7%	6.5%
MED	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.6%	99.1%	-0.4%	-0.9%
PHY	81.1%	87.3%	93.2%	83.6%	85.3%	1.7%	4.2%
PPL	94.9%	94.9%	91.9%	88.2%	90.3%	2.1%	-4.6%
SPS	90.1%	92.4%	95.0%	91.1%	91.5%	0.3%	1.4%
VET	99.4%	99.3%	100.0%	99.5%	98.8%	-0.6%	-0.5%

Note that areas where there are less than 10 students have been excluded

Attainment Gap

The report also analyses attainment gaps in First Class and high classification degree achievement based on various demographic factors.

Sex

In 2022/23, the attainment gap for achieving a First Class degree reversed, with female students (33.5%) being less likely to achieve this distinction compared to male students (34.9%). However, more female students (90.6%) achieved a high classification degree than male students (86.8%), narrowing the attainment gap for high classification degree.

	First Class Degree			High Classification Degree		
	Female	Male	Attainment Gap	Female	Male	Attainment Gap
2018/19	29.2%	28.1%	1.1%	91.5%	87.0%	4.5%
2019/20	41.0%	39.0%	2.0%	94.2%	89.1%	5.1%
2020/21	46.4%	42.4%	4.0%	95.7%	91.8%	3.9%
2021/22	37.9%	36.0%	1.9%	92.8%	88.0%	4.8%
2022/23	33.5%	34.9%	-1.4%	90.6%	86.8%	3.8%

Disability

Students with a disclosed disability are less likely to attain a First Class or high classification degree compared to their peers without a disclosed disability. The gap in achievement for both First Class and high classification degrees increased by approximately 2 percentage points from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

	First Class Degree			High Classification Degree		
	Disclosed disability	No disclosed disability	Attainment Gap	Disclosed disability	No disclosed disability	Attainment Gap
2018/19	26.2%	29.2%	-3.0%	89.2%	89.8%	-0.6%
2019/20	38.3%	40.7%	-2.4%	89.8%	92.7%	-2.9%
2020/21	44.1%	45.1%	-1.0%	92.6%	94.6%	-2.0%
2021/22	35.9%	37.6%	-1.7%	89.1%	91.5%	-2.4%
2022/23	32.7%	34.6%	-1.9%	87.9%	89.6%	-1.7%

Ethnicity

BAME students are less likely to achieve a First Class or high classification degree, and the attainment gap remained unchanged. While the attainment gap for First Class degrees reduced from -13.1% in 2021/22 to -11.6% in 2022/23, the gap for high classification degrees increased from -4.7% to -7.3% during the same period.

	First Class Degree			High Classification Degree		
	BAME	White	Attainment Gap	BAME	White	Attainment Gap
2018/19	22.7%	30.2%	-7.5%	84.6%	91.0%	-6.4%
2019/20	29.0%	43.5%	-14.5%	88.2%	93.4%	-5.2%
2020/21	35.1%	47.6%	-12.5%	91.2%	95.1%	-3.9%
2021/22	27.7%	40.8%	-13.1%	87.6%	92.3%	-4.7%
2022/23	26.0%	37.6%	-11.6%	84.2%	91.5%	-7.3%

Widening Participation (UK-domiciled students only)

Widening participation (WP) students were less likely to achieve a First Class or high classification degree than their non-WP peers. The attainment gap for First Class degrees reduced from -10.3% in 2021/22 to -7.5% in 2022/23, but the gap for high classification degrees increased from -6.7% to -8.9% during the same period.

	First Class Degree			High Classification Degree		
	WP	Not WP	Attainment Gap	WP	Not WP	Attainment Gap
2018/19	23.8%	29.4%	-5.6%	86.1%	92.9%	-6.8%
2019/20	35.9%	43.4%	-7.5%	90.3%	94.4%	-4.1%

2020/21	38.9%	48.9%	-10.0%	91.8%	96.6%	-4.8%
2021/22	30.2%	40.5%	-10.3%	86.8%	93.5%	-6.7%
2022/23	29.2%	36.6%	-7.4%	84.1%	93.0%	-8.9%

Conclusion

The overall First Class degree and high classification degree rates have decreased between 2021/22 and 2022/23. Although the proportion for First Class degrees remains high in the last 5 years, the high classification degree rate is the lowest since 2018/19. Meanwhile, the overall attainment gap for First Class degrees is narrowing for ethnicity, and widening participation.

Appendix A

First Class Degree

This table presents the total number of students (*) who obtained a degree and the number of students who achieved First Class Degree at School level.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
BIO	61 (174)	66 (206)	83 (196)	84 (198)	64 (190)
BMS	80 (248)	111 (315)	110 (364)	114 (377)	139 (441)
BUS	78 (252)	117 (251)	107 (295)	91 (276)	103 (304)
CHE	43 (112)	93 (143)	92 (133)	81 (154)	55 (122)
DIV	12 (74)	16 (49)	27 (71)	13 (67)	11 (46)
ECA	140 (455)	208 (446)	238 (523)	184 (442)	193 (537)
ECN	46 (172)	75 (175)	80 (205)	67 (228)	83 (245)
EDU	52 (268)	66 (268)	127 (244)	45 (187)	58 (177)
ENG	91 (345)	122 (335)	161 (386)	140 (394)	109 (405)
GEO	59 (211)	53 (183)	95 (226)	75 (199)	69 (225)
HCA	77 (312)	137 (329)	164 (358)	100 (305)	110 (369)
HEA	18 (41)	21 (39)	28 (45)	24 (47)	17 (52)
INF	90 (155)	118 (193)	152 (207)	154 (251)	145 (252)
LAW	37 (180)	64 (159)	111 (190)	83 (196)	65 (215)
LLC	162 (427)	240 (406)	324 (462)	254 (445)	248 (504)
MAT	69 (129)	103 (159)	80 (137)	100 (179)	112 (174)
MED	0 (225)	0 (237)	0 (212)	0 (232)	1 (235)
PHY	48 (127)	61 (118)	67 (146)	71 (146)	63 (136)
PPL	121 (333)	143 (294)	162 (334)	149 (381)	131 (393)
SPS	84 (344)	130 (354)	162 (381)	155 (429)	136 (434)
VET	0 (157)	0 (152)	0 (148)	3 (184)	8 (169)
Total	1,373 (4,771)	1,947 (4,837)	2,375 (5,291)	1,988 (5,334)	1,921 (5,635)

High Classification Degree

This table presents the total number of students (*) who obtained a degree and the number of students who achieved High Classification Degree at School level.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
BIO	153 (174)	180 (206)	184 (196)	180 (198)	165 (190)
BMS	240 (248)	299 (315)	340 (364)	354 (377)	409 (441)
BUS	232 (252)	242 (251)	277 (295)	260 (276)	268 (304)
CHE	97 (112)	133 (143)	128 (133)	138 (154)	108 (122)
DIV	73 (74)	44 (49)	70 (71)	64 (67)	43 (46)
ECA	393 (455)	395 (446)	464 (523)	403 (442)	463 (537)
ECN	146 (172)	160 (175)	182 (205)	197 (228)	206 (245)
EDU	202 (268)	227 (268)	231 (244)	145 (187)	144 (177)
ENG	291 (345)	295 (335)	357 (386)	345 (394)	335 (405)
GEO	181 (211)	163 (183)	211 (226)	180 (199)	199 (225)
HCA	283 (312)	307 (329)	349 (358)	273 (305)	323 (369)
HEA	40 (41)	38 (39)	43 (45)	44 (47)	44 (52)
INF	131 (155)	171 (193)	195 (207)	219 (251)	220 (252)
LAW	164 (180)	146 (159)	183 (190)	183 (196)	187 (215)
LLC	412 (427)	398 (406)	458 (462)	432 (445)	478 (504)
MAT	111 (129)	145 (159)	124 (137)	159 (179)	161 (174)
MED	225 (225)	237 (237)	212 (212)	231 (232)	233 (235)
PHY	103 (127)	103 (118)	136 (146)	122 (146)	116 (136)
PPL	316 (333)	279 (294)	307 (334)	336 (381)	355 (393)
SPS	310 (344)	327 (354)	362 (381)	391 (429)	397 (434)
VET	156 (157)	151 (152)	148 (148)	183 (184)	167 (169)
Total	4,280 (4,771)	4,459 (4,837)	4,982 (5,291)	4,854 (5,334)	5,024 (5,635)

Appendix B: Contextual information relating to marking and assessment boycott

Variations to regulations affecting Undergraduate degree classification

In response to the 2023 marking and assessment boycott and strike action, Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee approved variations to regulations, in order to mitigate the impact of the industrial action upon students, while maintaining academic standards. Some of the variations to regulations had a bearing on the approach taken by Boards of Examiners to the award and classification of undergraduate Honours degrees:

- When considering classification, Boards were expected to discount from calculations course results which were missing, had been flagged as unreliable due to the impact of industrial action (provided this would be to the individual student's benefit), or recorded as Pass/Fail.
- Where a Board had sufficient credits to award a degree, but an incomplete mark profile, the Board was expected to consider whether it had sufficient information available to classify an award on the information available. There is no minimum credit requirement on which a Board must base a classification decision, however Boards must be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of performance at the required level to justify a particular classification. *(It is common for Boards to make classification decisions based on a reduced volume of credit, where some course results are excluded due to Special Circumstances.)*
- Where a Board had sufficient credits to award a degree, but could not reach a robust decision regarding classification, it could award a degree without a classification.
- Where a classification decision was based on an incomplete profile of marks, the classification was recalculated when the outstanding course results became available, but the classification would only be changed where this was to the student's benefit (i.e. a classification once awarded could not be reduced).
- Where an unclassified degree had been awarded, or no degree had been awarded, the classification would be calculated based on the full profile of marks, when outstanding course results became available.

Maintenance of academic standards

It is vital to the maintenance of academic standards that degree outcomes are consistently robust and based on academic merit. Under the above variations to regulations, it was conceivable that a student could be awarded a higher degree classification based on a smaller sample of course results than would have been awarded based on their full profile of results. The way that students' course and programme data are presented in the student record is not supportive of pursuing this kind of enquiry via EUCLID. For example, there is no way to distinguish at scale

between students for whom courses were discounted for classification purposes due to industrial action, and those for whom courses were discounted due to Special Circumstances. However, all Schools were required to revisit classification decisions for students once the full profile of marks were available, to determine whether any should change (previously ratified classifications could only be increased, in line with the above variations). As such, information was sought from Schools and Deaneries via Colleges regarding cases where students were awarded a higher classification based on a limited profile of results due to the industrial action than would have been awarded based on their full profile of results. Based on the information provided by Schools, there were two cases in one School where students who were in the borderline for classification purposes (i.e. they had a weighted course average of 68.00-69.99%) were awarded a First Class degree, where their full profile was ultimately found to be in the 2:1 category (based on the rules relating to the award of classification in borderline cases in operation in CAHSS). There were small numbers (between 0 and 13 in any given School) of cases in several Schools involving students whose degree classification was upgraded based on their full profile of results.

Appendix C: Overview

Graduations for 2022/23 academic year commenced on 3 July 2024. Data on 30 June showed that:

- 1,471 students had an Award – Deferred or Nothing Published status (26% of final undergraduate students)
- 4,188 students had an Award – either published, exit award, fail or confirmation of repeat year required (74%)
- Of the Awards published, 5.3% were unclassified – 213 students

Senate lists from later in the year confirm timings of other awards coming through throughout the next academic year:

- 702 - September
- 140 - October
- c.1,200 – November

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 May 2024

Student Support – Evaluation Plan

Description of paper

This paper provides an overview of the student support evaluation plan which will be embedded in University processes after project closure. Elements of the evaluation plan are in development and have been labelled accordingly.

Action requested / recommendation

The committee are asked to note and discuss this paper.

Background and context

The post-project evaluation plan will outline how the effectiveness and impact of the model of student support will be monitored beyond the closure of the implementation project, including how evaluation of the model will intersect with existing quality assurance processes and the proposed introduction of new reporting mechanisms.

The evaluation plan will encompass a series of activities designed to gather feedback, analyse data, and derive actionable insights to understand the success and impact of the model and to inform future decision-making relating to student support.

The primary objectives of the evaluation plan are:

- To evaluate the extent to which objectives of the model of student support were achieved
- To assess the impact and effectiveness of the model on students, staff, and organisational goals
- To ensure consistency of student and staff opportunity across the institution according to the detailed model design agreed by project governance

Discussion

Summary of Approach

Evaluation of student support provision will align with existing quality assurance processes and timelines through Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC). Data and guidance to support local evaluation of the model of student support through these mechanisms will be provided to support these processes at each level. Existing quality assurance processes through SQAC include:

- College / School / Programme Annual Monitoring and Internal Periodic Reviews
- Student Support Services Annual Review.

An additional quality assurance process will be introduced to ensure cyclical reporting and oversight of the model of student support at institutional level. This reporting will be governed by the Student Support (Continuous Improvement) Group,

with cyclical reporting to SQAC. This will focus on outcomes across key indicators and supplementary contextual data sources.

College, School, Programme Quality Assurance

Colleges, Schools and Programmes will be asked to reflect on student support provision as part of annual monitoring processes. Each area will be required to use data to evidence the effectiveness of their provision and alignment to the student support model framework. Specific prompts will be provided to ensure the core elements of the model are discussed (as applicable at each level). This will include reflection on partnership working across the institutional ecosystem of student support.

Supporting guidance will be provided, including the logic model framework, centrally held data relating to outcomes and impact of the model, suggested local data-sources relevant to each report and targeted areas for reflections to focus on at each level. A central resource of institutional data will be available through Registry Services' Insights Hub.

Themes extracted through these annual monitoring processes will be reflected (through SQAC) into institutional reporting on the student support model.

Student Support Service Annual Review (SSSAR)

The SSSAR will ask student support professional services to reflect on student support provision in their area, with consideration to the objectives of the student support model as articulated through the logic model framework. This should also include consideration to the service area in relation to the wider ecosystem of support and partners in Schools, Colleges and other support services.

Student support professional services will have access to institutional level data through Registry Services Insights Hub, as well as guidance regarding desirable service level data to support evidence-based reflection on support provision.

Outcomes from SSSAR will be reflected (through SQAC) into institutional reporting on the student support model.

Institutional Quality Assurance (QA)

Quality assurance at institutional level will be overseen by the Student Support (Continuous Improvement) Group (SSCIG) who will provide cyclical updates to SQAC. An evaluation report summarising analysis of key indicators, supplementary data and key insights from QA processes will be led within Registry Services, in collaboration with key partners.

SSCIG will have responsibility for responding to any actions or recommendations arising from the evaluation outcomes and for overseeing any relevant communication to staff and students regarding the outcomes of evaluation. The group will have responsibility for ensuring SQAC has the relevant information required to respond to external quality requirements and have appropriate oversight of quality mechanisms.

Institutional reporting will be guided by the logic model framework (appendix A). This framework reflects the outcomes and impacts expected through introduction of the model of student support and has been agreed in partnership with academic and professional services colleagues across the University. This framework will be measured through key indicators (undergraduate, postgraduate taught, staff) which will be monitored annually.

A set of key indicators are currently being consulted upon and will be confirmed ahead of project closure.

Supplementary data will be used to support an understanding of the drivers behind the outcomes and to provide contextual information. A draft list of supplementary data is provided in appendix B. Note that this is not a finalised list and will be refined in consultation with the key stakeholder group (appendix C) to provide a streamlined list of primary and secondary data points.

The data available includes a range of quantitative and qualitative data from the following sources;

- Student Surveys
 - National Student Survey (NSS) Core Questions
 - Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) Core Questions
 - Rotation bank of optional questions NSS and PTES
 - Student Life Survey (SLS) Core Questions
 - Edinburgh University Student Association (EUSA)
- Longitudinal student evaluation – surveys / focus groups
- Student Systems (via Power BI dashboards)
 - Student Record
 - Case management system
 - ESC
- Staff Survey (professional and academic)
- Local School/Deanery mechanisms
- People and Money
- Integration with existing Quality Assurance

Discussions are on-going with academic colleagues in Health in Social Sciences around the creation of a cohort group for evaluation from entry to alumni.

Resource implications

14. The evaluation plan has been created to align with existing processes where possible and reduce duplication of effort. Resources to support additional institutional reporting will be managed through Registry Services.

Risk management

15. The University is investing in student support as part of mitigating concerns in student satisfaction. Ensuring that there is on-going evaluation and monitoring of the support model is critical to ensure that standards are upheld and that the model achieves what it aims to for our students. Failure to do so carries reputational risk,

does not deliver student experience as set out in strategy 2030 and continues to affect the University's standing in national league tables.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

16. This paper would support the SDG "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" as part the strategic objective to improve student experience. The proposals would not hinder the achievement of any other UN SDGs or exacerbate the Climate Emergency.

Equality & diversity

17. The work undertaken will support greater equality, diversity and inclusion for students within our community, through ensuring student voices are reflected within evaluation outcomes and institutional reporting.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

18. This paper presents an update for discussion. Discussion points will be shared with the student support project board and the operational management group which links with the College Implementation Groups.

Author

*Marianne Brown
Head of Timetabling, Examinations and
Student Analytics
3 May 2024*

Presenter

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3 May 2024*

Freedom of Information (*Is the paper 'open' or 'closed'*) open
Open

Resources/Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short Term Outcomes	Longer Term Outcomes	Impact
In order to accomplish our set of activities we will need the following:	In order to address our problem or asset we will conduct the following activities:	We expect that once completed or under way these activities will produce the following evidence of service delivery:	We expect that if completed or ongoing these activities will lead to the following changes in 1–2 yrs	We expect that if completed or ongoing these activities will lead to the following changes in 3–4 yrs	We expect that these activities will lead to the following:
Financial investment New professional services roles New wellbeing support roles New academic roles Guidance / frameworks Task lists Service expectations Updated / new policies Physical space Central systems	Communication strategy (students) Communication strategy (staff) New job descriptions Recruitment Training for staff (all roles) Communities of practice Case management system and other appropriate systems to assist in new roles Guidance and procedures Student experience teams established Student Record enhancements Project Governance	Every student knows who their student adviser is Staff models have requisite number of student support staff in place Every student aware advice and wellbeing support is available to them and that their Student Adviser can provide appropriate signposting when necessary Every student is part of a cohort with a named lead, and knows who this is Every student has opportunity to attend cohort activities Proactive group events for X (SWS) Every student has opportunity to participate in peer support and/or learning 1:1 with referred students (SWS)	Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University Students are supported in making appropriate course / programme choices Students are given opportunities to engage with peers Students feel part of a community of learners Staff are clear about when to and to whom they should refer students with complex issues Communication about and to students is timely and effective Non-engaging students are proactively reengaged University has greater awareness of individual students needs / issues (e.g. student is known to SA before submission to special circumstances) Academic time (non-CLs) is focussed on academic matters	Students are able to support themselves / make informed decisions Students have a sense of belonging Student mental health is maintained/improved Increased collaboration and trust between teams (within/across Schools and within/across central services) Student satisfaction overall improves Student engagement and attendance in learning activities improves Student progression and completion rates improve Student outcomes are maintained or improved Staff have opportunities to develop professionally	Students are / feel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported Part of a community of learners Valued as an individual Supported to reach their academic potential That they have agency in their learning journey That support experienced by students is of high quality and timely Staff are / feel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students Given opportunities to develop professionally Academic staff feel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their time is spent on academic matters CL academic staff feel that they have greater opportunities to build cohort identity and programme affiliation There is an institutional ecosystem which supports student needs

Appendix A: Logic Model

		Short Term Outcomes	Data Source
A1	Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it	How easy was it to contact teaching staff when you needed to (NSS)	NSS
		How well communicated was information about your university's mental wellbeing support services (NSS)	NSS
		I know how to find out about the support services the University offers (SLS)	SLS
		I feel comfortable in reaching out to my Student Adviser for support (SLS)	SLS
		Response "I have never heard of this service" to "My needs as a student have been met by this service"	SLS
		I was given appropriate guidance and support when I started my course	PTES
		Student knows who their Student Adviser is and what they are there for	Student voice
		Student knows how to contact the Student Adviser and is comfortable in doing so	Student voice
		Students can easily find information about services – number of clicks	Web analytics?
A2	Students are offered consistent, quality, and appropriate support across the University	How well have teaching staff supported your learning (NSS)	NSS
		There is sufficient welfare and student services to meet my needs (B9 opt NSS)	NSS - optional
		When needed, the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful (B9 Opt NSS)	NSS - optional
		I am happy with the support for my learning I receive from staff on my course	PTES
		There is sufficient contact time (in-person or virtual/online) between staff and students to support effective learning	PTES
		The support for academic skills meets my needs	PTES
		The support for my health and wellbeing meets my needs	PTES
		My needs as a student have been met by this service: all support services	SLS
		I have access to the academic support I need to succeed at University (SLS)	SLS
		Students are matriculated in timely manner	Matriculation tracker
		Course enrolments are processed in timely manner	Student record
		Acknowledgement of email	School
		Personal response to email	School
		Actions and timescales post-meeting	School
		All students are offered 1:1 meeting	School
		All 1:1 meeting are scheduled within 5 days (unless student availability)	School
		Student Adviser has 15-20 slots for meetings available per week (30 mins)	School
		Waiting times for access to student support service	Support Services
		Response time from support services	Support Services
A3	Students are supported in making	Number of course choices processed / outstanding by X week	Student record
		Staff have the right knowledge to provide advice to students on course choices	Staff voice

	appropriate course / programme choices	Students feel supported in making appropriate course and programme choices	Student voice
		Number and reason for course choice changes after X point	Student record
		Number and reason for programme changes	Student record
		Number of course choice events	School
A4	Students are given opportunities to collaborate with peers	Metrics TBC	EUSA Survey
		Student knows what peer led activity is available and how to access it	Student voice
		Number of Peer Support groups in Schools	School
		Number of Peer Support Coordinators	School
		I have been able to explore academic interests with other students. (B12 Opt NSS)	NSS - optional
		The course has created sufficient opportunities to discuss my work with other students (in-person or virtual/online)	PTES
A6	Students have the opportunity to be part of a community of learners	Students feel they are part of a community of learners	Student voice
		Student perceptions of cohort activity in building community	Student voice
		Number of cohort activities available for student to attend	School
		I feel part of a group of students committed to learning. (B12 opt NSS)	NSS - optional
		I have been able to explore academic interests with other students. (B12 Opt NSS)	NSS - optional
		I feel part of an academic community in my college or university (B12 Opt NSS)	NSS - optional
		The University provides opportunities for building connections with other students	SLS
		I feel part of a community of postgraduate taught students	PTES
A7	Staff are clear about when to and how to refer students with complex issues	Referrals to the Wellbeing Service	Case management dashboard
		Staff are clear on when to refer students on to Wellbeing Service	Staff voice
A8	Non-engaging students are proactively reengaged	Decrease in number of students not engaging with learning activities	Student record, TBC
		Number of pro-active individual student engagements	Local?
A9	University has greater awareness of individual students needs / issues	Students who have applied for special circumstances are already identified in local case management systems	ESC data and School
A10	Academic staff spend time on academic matters	Academic staff know who to direct students to for administrative or wellbeing support	Staff voice

Long Term Outcomes

Data sources

B2	Students have a sense of belonging to their/a cohort	Levels of engagement with contacts hours (core activity)	Student record
		Levels of engagement at cohort activity	School
		Students have a sense of belonging at the university (may not need to be to learning cohort) Students agree that cohort activities create sense of belonging	Student voice
		Within my course, I feel my suggestions and ideas are valued (B12 Opt NSS)	NSS
		I feel a sense of belonging at my institution	PTES
B3	Increased collaboration and trust between teams (within and across Schools and with central services)	Number of referrals to Wellbeing Service	Wellbeing Service dashboard
		Trust between and across Schools (academic/professional/TO/SA...)	Staff voice
		Trust between Schools and support services	
B4	Student satisfaction overall improves	Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.	NSS
		University student experience KPI	GASP
		Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course	PTES
B5	Student engagement and attendance in learning activities improves	Decrease in number of students not engaging with learning activities	Student record
B6	Student progression and completion rates retained or improved	Reduction in repeat year students	Student record
		Including breakdown of why – i.e. special circ or academic performance	
		Reduction in number of withdrawals from university	Student record
		Reasons for withdrawal from university (including passive withdrawals)	Student record
B7	Student outcomes are maintained or improved	Average course outcomes are maintained	Student record
		Average degree classification distribution is retained	Student record
		Students progressively improve in performance on core courses	Student record
B8	Staff have opportunities to develop professionally	Student support staff have opportunities to build and develop skills	Staff voice
		Being a cohort lead has provided opportunities to develop professionally	Staff voice
		Student support staff are retained or move to promoted position (low turnover of SAs)	HR
		Learning and development courses taken	P&M
		Check metrics	Staff survey

Impacts		Data sources	
3	Valued as an individual	Student feels that they are known to staff	Student voice
		Student feels supported as an individual	
		Student feels individual needs are met	
		I am encouraged to ask questions or make contributions in taught sessions (in-person or virtual/online)	PTES
		I am encouraged to be involved in decisions about how my course is run	

		I am treated with dignity and respect by staff and students at the University	SLS
		I am able and comfortable to share my views and opinions with staff and students	
		To what extent are students' opinions about the course valued by staff?	NSS
		Within my course, I feel my suggestions and ideas are valued (B12 Opt NSS)	
4	Supported to reach their academic potential	How often does your course challenge you to achieve your best work?	NSS
		How well has your course developed your knowledge and skills that you think you will need for your future?	
		How well have assessments allowed you to demonstrate what you have learned?	
		My confidence to be innovative or creative has developed during my course (PTES)	PTES
		I have been encouraged to think about what skills I need to develop for my career (PTES)	
		As a result of the course I feel better prepared for my future career (PTES)	
		I have access to the academic support I need to succeed at the University	SLS
		Through my studies, I am developing skills which are preparing me for my future career	
		The assessments I am given support my learning and development	
		Course outcomes are retained or improved	Student record
Student feels they have reached their academic potential	Student voice		
Reduction in students "failure to progress"	Student record		
Success of students post AIS	Student record		
5	That they have agency in their learning journey	Reasons for withdrawal	Student record
		I am encouraged to be involved in decisions about how my course is run (PTES)	PTES
		As a result of the course I am more confident about independent learning (PTES)	
		That they have agency in their learning journey	Student voice

Appendix C: Key stakeholder group

Colleagues who attended one or both workshops:

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
John Devaney (lead)
Christine Lennie
Joe Stroud
Caroline Brett
Lorna Devlin
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Kim Picozzi

Neale Summer Kasia Banas
College of Science and Engineering
Jean O'Donoghue Chloe Cutler-Burton Stephen Warrington
Central services
Brian Connolly Kate Armit Rebecca Shade Nichola Kett
Student representative
EUSA VP Education <VPeducation@eusa.ed.ac.uk>;
Project team/evaluation
Shian Holt Michele Holubek Chantal Reilly Marianne Brown

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 May 2024

Student Data Monitoring

Description of paper:

1. Proposal for the Terms of Reference and membership of the Student Data Monitoring Task Group.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. For approval.

Background and context:

3. At the previous meeting, held on 25 April 2024, the Committee approved in principle the establishment of a task and finish group to explore methodological options and make recommendations to the Committee for a new systematic approach to monitoring student data at University level.
4. It was also agreed that the initial focus of the group will be to ensure that the new approach will also address the [Enhancement Led Institutional Review \(ELIR\) 2021](#) and the [Quality Enhancement and Standards Review \(QESR\) 2023](#) recommendations regarding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the student population.
5. The Equality Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) produces an annual report analysing student and staff data by the key equality dimensions of gender, age, disability and ethnicity. The report provides the University with comprehensive statistical data on protected characteristics to support the monitoring of equality and diversity within the University. However, staff are not required to systematically engage with the EDMARC data once it has been published on the University's Equality and Diversity website. Instead, the data is simply made available to Colleges and Schools for use if they wish to take it forward.
6. The University's annual quality processes and the Internal Periodic Review process encourage academic areas to engage with student data and highlight any equality and diversity issues. However, this tends to happen on an ad hoc basis dependent on the diligence or priorities of particular members of staff, subject area, School or College. The University does not currently review this data systematically and collectively at any one of our Senate Committees.
7. The proposed systematic approach will fill a gap in our oversight of the student experience.

Discussion:

8. The aim of the new approach will be to understand how well the University supports different student groups throughout their lifecycle at Edinburgh: **recruitment and admissions** (how prepared are different student groups students to begin their programme of study); **retention** (the likelihood of different student groups continuing or withdrawing from study at the University); **progression** (how successful the University is at supporting different student groups transition within their programme of study and afterwards to employment or further study); and **attainment** (the extent to which the University enables different student groups to fulfil their potential during their time at Edinburgh). It will be important to analyse this data in terms of the 'distance travelled' by different student groups from recruitment/admission through to graduation and beyond in order to understand the 'value added' by the University and the extent to which the needs of different student groups are being supported by the University.
9. The proposal is for a short-life task and finish group to: benchmark approaches to monitoring student data; identify the different student groups and the key stages in the student lifecycle that should be overseen at University level; identify the relevant data required and any gaps in current data sets; and then make recommendations to SQAC for a new systematic approach to monitoring student data.
10. The key outcome of the group's work will be to develop a comprehensive baseline set of data/reports and good practice exemplars that SQAC will use to monitor data for different student groups at key stages in the student lifecycle.
11. A key initial outcome will be to identify good practice (either internal or from across the sector) that has been effectively used to address awarding gaps for different student groups and determine how best to share it with staff and students.
12. The task and finish group will terminate once SQAC has approved a new systematic approach to monitoring progression and attainment data. On implementation it is anticipated that a new standing sub-group of SQAC (akin to the sub-group responsible for reviewing School annual quality reports) will assume responsibility for the ongoing monitoring of student data.

Resource implications:

13. Additional statistical analysis resource may be required to systematically monitor student data. This will need to be costed depending on the methodological approach agreed by the Committee.

Risk management:

14. Poor performance across the range of student experience and lifecycle metrics is a risk to the University's reputation particularly if we do not develop a better

understanding of which groups of students are at higher risk of withdrawing or under-achieving and the underlying reasons.

Equality & diversity:

15. Equality and diversity issues are integral to the development of a new systematic approach to monitoring student data.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed:

16. Committee Secretary will feedback comments to relevant areas.

Authors

Brian Connolly
Academic Services

Presenter

Brian Connolly
Academic Services

May 2024

Freedom of Information: Open

**The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

**Student Data Monitoring Task Group
Terms of Reference**

1. Purpose and Role

- 1.1 To explore methodological options and make recommendations to Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) for a new systematic approach to monitoring student data at University level.
- 1.2 To ensure that the new approach will also address the [Enhancement Led Institutional Review \(ELIR\) 2021](#) and the [Quality Enhancement and Standards Review \(QESR\) 2023](#) recommendations regarding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the student population.

2. Remit

- 2.1 To benchmark sector approaches to monitoring student data and sharing associated good practice.
- 2.2 To identify the different student groups and the key stages in the student lifecycle that should be overseen at University level.
- 2.3 To identify the relevant data required (to address 2.2) and examine existing datasets (e.g. [data supporting annual monitoring processes](#) and [Equality Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee \(EDMARC\)](#) annual report) to identify any gaps. Work with the University Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC), Governance and Strategic Planning, and Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling to address any gaps.
- 2.4 To develop a comprehensive baseline set of data and reports that SQAC will use to monitor different student groups at key stages in the student lifecycle.
- 2.5 To identify good practice (either internal or from across the sector) that has been effectively used to address awarding gaps for different student groups and determine how best to share it with staff and students.
- 2.6 To develop institutional policy on student data monitoring.

3. Operation

- 3.1 The Group will report to SQAC and make recommendations where formal Committee approval is required (for example, for a change to institutional policy).
- 3.2 The Group will link to the University Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC) via shared membership.

4. Composition

Role	Member
Convenor	Convenor of SQAC
Student Representative	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association
College Representative	Dean of Quality
School Representative (with Statistical Expertise)	TBC
University Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC) Representative	TBC
Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA) Representative	
Academic Services Representative	TBC
Governance and Strategic Planning Representative	TBC
Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling Representative	TBC

May 2024

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 May 2024

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy Review

Description of paper

1. The paper proposes amendments to the University External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy.

Action requested / recommendation

2. To discuss and approve amendments to the Policy

Background and context

3. The policy is due for periodic review by Academic Services. Our approach to reviewing the policy has been to consider alignment with recently developed QAA [External Examining Principles](#) and to seek feedback from Schools and Colleges. The proposed amendments seek to incorporate feedback and align with the principles where possible. The External Examining Principles are non-mandatory but provide a framework of good practice for external examining in higher education. However, there are a few areas where other development, outside of the policy, may be warranted.

Discussion

4. Key changes in the attached are:
 - Section 22 g and h: amended based on feedback from Schools to avoid situations where grouping of subject areas in a department at another institution lead to a technical conflict arising which ought not to be of concern.
 - Section 33: amendment to the wording in section 33 of the policy (to align with Principle 7) aims to ensure Schools prepare External Examiners for their role. The current wording suggests that a briefing for External Examiners may be optional and the aim is to strengthen and formalise these arrangements. This is also identified as an area for further development and Schools requested some guidance on expectations around training for External Examiners. The Committee may wish to consider whether some additional work to scope what is already in place across the institution and potentially develop further guidance for Schools on induction and training expectations would be beneficial.
 - Section 38: Amended to reflect that it is no longer a requirement to attend a meeting in person in the first year of an External Examiner's term of office. This was previously included due to UK regulations on right to work requirements; however, the development of online checks (IDVT) removed the requirement to attend in person (although Schools must still carry out right to work checks). Schools can also still agree with External Examiners that they should attend in person where appropriate.
 - Section 53a: addition (to align with Principle 5) to include External Examiner responsibilities in relation to inclusivity.

- Minor changes to clarify wording in sections 13c, 17, 21.2, 34, 35, 47 and 52.
 - Changes to update title of Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) role.
5. External Examining Principle 11 relates to supporting University staff who are External Examiners at other institutions and learning from and reflecting on their experience for enhancement. The University does not currently have formal structures in place to gather information on or from its staff who act as External Examiners elsewhere. The External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy is unlikely to be the appropriate location for any policy or guidance on this aspect. However, the Committee may wish to consider how to approach learning from this are captured in future.
6. Schools also provided feedback in relation to fee structures for External Examiners. The policy states that Colleges are responsible for determining how to set fees and therefore no changes are proposed to the policy in this respect.

Resource implications

7. There are no resource implications associated with the paper.

Risk management

8. The External Examiner system is a key mechanism for ensuring that the University's provision is of a high standard. The proposed policy changes are intended to mitigate the risks associated with inconsistent operation of the external examiner system.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

9. The paper does not contribute to the climate emergency and sustainable development goals. It contributes to meeting external regulatory requirements.

Equality & diversity

10. The proposed amendments to section 53a of the policy are positive from the perspective of equality and diversity, since they set clearer expectations about External Examiners' (and Schools') responsibilities to promote inclusivity in learning and assessment, and to prioritise the mitigation of attainment gaps.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

11. Academic Services will communicate policy changes as part of the annual update to Schools and Colleges. College Deans are encouraged to communicate locally.

Author

*Susan Hunter, Academic Services
06 May 2024*

Presenter

Brian Connolly

Freedom of Information The paper is open.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Purpose of Policy

The policy sets out the role, powers and responsibilities the University assigns to its External Examiners for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. The policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of Schools, Colleges and at the Institutional level for external examining processes.

Overview

The policy replaces: (i) Code of Practice for External Examiners of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes and (ii) Guidance to Schools/Colleges regarding the Freedom of Information and Data Protection implications of the University's Code of Practice on External Examining.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

This policy applies to External Examiners, staff who are engaged in assessment, processes involving External Examiners appointed for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes or courses and those involved in development of Course or Programme Handbooks. The policy must be applied, unless an exemption has been approved by Quality Assurance Committee or as otherwise stated in the policy, on the basis of a case proposed by a College. The "Application of the policy" provides guidance and must be applied, unless the College has approved an exemption on the basis of a case proposed by a School. The approving body records concessions and exemptions.

Contact Officer

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~~Academic Policy Officer~~

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Document control

Dates	Approved: 18.04.2017	Starts: 28.05.2015	Equality impact assessment: 28.05.2015	Amendments: April 2017 Sept 2017 Sept 2018 May 2019	Next Review: 2023/24 <u>2028/29</u> <u>2028/29</u>
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Approving authority

Quality Assurance Committee

Consultation undertaken

Working Group of Quality Assurance Committee

Section responsible for policy maintenance & review

Academic Services

Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

Taught Assessment Regulations
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment-regulations/taught>
Guidance on policy, principle and operation of Boards of Examiners:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners

UK Quality Code

UK Quality Code, -External Expertise; [External Examining Principles](#)

Policies superseded by this policy

Code of Practice for External Examiners of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes, all previous versions of this policy

Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk -or telephone 0131 651 4490.

Keywords

External Examiner, Board of Examiners



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Contents

Contents	2
Introduction	2
External Examiners' Roles	3
Course External Examiners	4
Programme External Examiner	5
Appointment	6
Selection	6
Qualifications and Expertise	8
Conflicts of Interest	10
Disclosure of intimate relationships	11
Terms of office	11
Appointment and Induction	12
Termination of Appointment	13
Participation in Assessment	15
Course External Examiners	15
Programme External Examiners	16
External Examiner Reports	17
Submission	17
Actions in response to External Examiners' Reports	18
Analysis of Themes arising from External Examiner Reports	18
Expenses and Fees	19
Raising Serious Concerns	19
Data Protection	19
Personal information of External Examiners	20
Use of data by External Examiners	20
Details of External Examiners	20
External Examiner Reports	20

Introduction

1. The University's Taught Assessment Regulations govern the conduct of assessment and examinations. This policy sets out the role, powers and responsibilities the University assigns to its External Examiners for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

All sections of the policy apply to External Examiners appointed to a course(s) or taught programme(s), referred to as Course External Examiners and Programme External Examiners respectively, unless otherwise stated.

External Examiners' Roles

2. The External Examiner system forms a key part of the University's quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms. External Examiners provide independent and impartial assurance of:
 - consistent assessment standards, processes and student achievements which are comparable with other institutions;
 - the integrity and rigour of assessment;
 - fair, reliable and transparent assessment and degree classification.

External Examiners also

- identify good practice and enhancements and
- contribute to programme and course design.

3. External Examiners need to be able to:

a) participate in assessment procedures (see sections 36-47); and

b) comment and give advice on assessment procedures and standards and jointly agree, as members of the Board of Examiners, the detailed assessment, award and final degree results.

4. External Examiners have the right to see any assessment material pertinent to the role and may comment about any aspect of a course or programme for which they are appointed as External Examiner.
5. Schools will not ask an External Examiner to assess directly the work of individual students unless this is explicitly stated in the External Examiner's terms of appointment. Where External Examiners are expected to advise on individual cases, the final decision will be made by the Board of Examiners, with consideration of the External Examiner's views.
6. Schools will determine which Programme or Course External Examiners may be required to have oversight of the decision process of the Undergraduate Progression Board.
7. Colleges or Schools may also choose to invite External Examiners to see and comment on reports and feedback related to curriculum review and quality of educational provision.
8. Schools may ask External Examiners to comment on the wider quality and enhancement aspects of a programme or course, such as its design, curriculum, mode of delivery and assessment methods.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

9. External Examiners are required to provide an annual report based on what they have observed of the University's assessment processes and students' assessed work.

Application

- 9.1 External Examiners should also comment on course content, balance and structure and on degree programme curricula. See sections 48 – 53, which set out the expectations for External Examiners on completing External Examiner Reports.

Course External Examiners

10. The College appoints a Course External Examiner to each course. The Course External Examiner is expected to:

- a) assess and comment on whether the course enables students to achieve the defined learning outcomes and whether the assessment is appropriate in this regard;
- b) consider the level of achievement of students on the course, in relation to standards elsewhere in the sector for the same kind of course within similar degree programmes;
- c) review and approve, if appropriate, all examination papers and assessment criteria for the courses examined;
- d) scrutinise a representative sample of all assessed work across each of the courses examined in order to judge whether marks are fairly and consistently applied to students across the courses, and whether markers are applying the marking scheme consistently and using the full range of marks where justified;
- e) participate as a member of the relevant Board of Examiners meetings and to agree jointly the decisions of the Board of Examiners; and
- f) be satisfied that the business of the Board of Examiners is correctly and robustly carried out, in line with the University's policies and regulations.

Application

- 10.1 The College can appoint a Course External Examiner for multiple courses, where appropriate. Colleges may appoint a Programme External Examiner to act as Course External Examiner for one or more courses.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Programme External Examiner

11. The College appoints at least one Programme External Examiner to each programme that leads to a higher education award.
12. For combined degree programmes, the “owning” School is responsible for recommending Programme External Examiners for appointment by the College.

Application

- 12.1 Colleges can appoint a single Programme External Examiner for multiple programmes, including their exit awards, where appropriate.
- 12.2 A Programme External Examiner may be appointed to a programme and also act as a Course External Examiner for one or more courses. Where no Course External Examiners are appointed, the Programme External Examiner will also act as the Course External Examiner for the courses within the programme.

13. The College appoints Programme External Examiners to give oversight of a whole programme. They are expected to:
 - a) assess and comment on whether the programme design enables students to achieve the defined learning outcomes for the programme;
 - b) affirm that the programme meets recognised national standards for the final award;
 - c) consider the ~~application of approach to the degree classification for Honours and postgraduate taught programmes scheme of award for classification of honours~~ to ensure it is correctly and fairly applied to all students on the programme;
 - d) participate as a member of the relevant Board of Examiners meetings and to agree jointly the decisions of the Board of Examiners; and
 - e) be satisfied that the business of the Board of Examiners is correctly and robustly carried out, in line with the University’s policies and regulations.

Application

- 13.1 Programme External Examiners do not necessarily need to have knowledge of all the subject areas covered by the programme in order to perform the role of Programme External Examiner. The Programme External Examiner’s role is to have oversight of the academic standards for the programme(s) and/or award(s) for which they are appointed. The University’s [Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses](#)



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

~~and Programmes Taught Assessment Regulations~~ provides further information about the operation of the Board of Examiners:

<https://uoesharepoint.com/:b:/s/PolicyRepository/EelceQ1t3zpMiWZI0p1eVW8BLCnEwIZsoeJk2ESMar2mA> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/boe-handbook.pdf>
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf

Appointment

- Colleges, on behalf of the University, are responsible for appointing External Examiners. Colleges must have robust and documented mechanisms for approval of appointments in place.
- Schools make nominations to the College after consultation with the staff members teaching the course or programme and having ascertained that the proposed individual is willing to accept the nomination as External Examiner.

Application

- 15.1 Schools and Colleges may operate different nomination and appointment processes depending on their respective quality assurance structures. Nominations are made in the name of the relevant Head of School and appointments are approved in the name of the Head of College. The information contained in the External Examiner nomination form should affirm to the College that the person nominated has the necessary authority and experience and meets the other requirements set out in relation to qualifications and expertise, conflicts of interest and terms of office below.

Selection

- Schools and Colleges select External Examiners from suitably qualified people who meet the qualifications and expertise outlined in this policy (See sections 20 and 21). Prior to appointment, Schools and Colleges must also consider any potential conflicts of interest (see section 22).
- ~~Some degree programmes may have more than one Programme External Examiner, where this serves to ensure sufficient expertise is available across the range of subjects covered by the programme. The number of External Examiners for any particular degree programme or course should be sufficient to cover the range of studies therein.~~ More than one External Examiner may be needed where there is a large number of students, ~~the course or or the~~ programme covers a wide range of ~~studies/subjects, and/or a large volume of academic work contributes to the course or programme.~~

Application



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

- 17.1 In specialised subjects where the pool of expertise is small, it may be necessary to appoint a single External Examiner to more than one Board of Examiners simultaneously. Schools should exercise judgement in allocating an individual External Examiner a manageable workload.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

18. External Examiners should normally be resident in the United Kingdom.

Application

- 18.1 If the proposed External Examiner is resident abroad, and planning to undertake work in the UK, the School must take account of UK visa and immigration requirements, travel costs and, where appropriate, check that the College is prepared to pay the cost of travel to Edinburgh before proposing the appointment.
- 18.2 Where an External Examiner from outside the UK is appointed, the School should confirm that the individual has the required knowledge of the UK Higher Education system.
- 18.3 Human Resources' website provides information on Right to Work in the UK and information and guidance for recruiters on immigration and visa requirements. See: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/recruitment-guidance/right-to-work-checks> [EASE log in required].

19. Schools must take account of any professional validation by external organisations or professional bodies if these are required in the discipline.

Qualifications and Expertise

20. In order to ensure that External Examiners are competent to undertake the responsibilities expected of them, only individuals who can show appropriate evidence of the following will be appointed:
- appropriate knowledge and understanding of the UK HE Sector's agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards, including the relevant subject benchmarks, the national qualifications frameworks and UK Quality Code for Higher Education (See <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>), along with sufficient experience of quality assurance and enhancement processes;
 - a high degree of competence and experience in the fields covered and the necessary academic experience and subject knowledge to be able to identify good practice and recommend enhancements;
 - sufficient standing and experience to be able to command authority and the respect of academic peers and, where relevant, professional peers;
 - relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate. External Examiners from outside the HE system, for example from industry or the professions, may be appropriate in certain circumstances;



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

- e) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
- f) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- g) familiarity with the standard expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
- h) fluency in English and, where programmes are delivered or assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s); and
- i) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Application

- 20.1 In addition to the above, Schools may wish to develop their own School-specific guidance on the requisite qualifications and experience for External Examiners, as appropriate to their own specific disciplines.

21. In exceptional circumstances, the College may approve the appointment of an External Examiner who does not meet the criteria with respect to qualifications and experience. Requests for appointments of External Examiners in these circumstances must be supported by a School recommendation. Colleges will not approve this type of exceptional appointment for a sole Programme External Examiner for a specific degree programme. Colleges will report annually to Senate Quality Assurance Committee on exceptional appointments of External Examiners who do not meet the criteria for qualifications and experience stated in this policy.

Application

- 21.1 These exceptional circumstances may arise where the School seeks appointment of an External Examiner from industry or where the nominee has no previous experience as an External Examiner. Where the College appoints an External Examiner who is not an academic for a particular course, the School will need to ensure that it has a mechanism for assuring academic standards are maintained; for example, by having another External Examiner who is an academic on the Board of Examiners.
- 21.2 Where an External Examiner has no previous experience as an External Examiner for any institution, a more experienced External Examiner will-may be appointed to act as mentor to work with the first-time External Examiner to provide guidance and to ensure that the Examiner fulfils the requirements of their role. Schools must consider whether first-time External Examiners have additional information and development needs when compared with experienced examiners.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Conflicts of Interest

22. External Examiners must be wholly impartial and independent of the University, its staff, governing body and relevant partners. Individuals in any of the following categories will not be appointed as External Examiners:
- a) Members of the University Court, University Committee members or employees of the University.
 - b) Anyone with a current or previous personal, family or legal relationship with a student being assessed. (See also 25.)
 - c) Anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to significantly influence the future of students on the programme of study or any of the courses in question.
 - d) Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or course(s) in question. Significant involvement in this context means directly involved with a close knowledge of one another's work.
 - e) Former staff or students of the institution, unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the individual have completed their programme(s) of study.
 - f) Anyone whose appointment would create a reciprocal external examining arrangement involving equivalent programmes at another higher education institution.
 - g) Anyone whose appointment immediately follows the appointment of an External Examiner from the same department-subject area in the same higher education institution.
 - h) Any nominee who has a colleague from the same department-subject area of the same institution already acting on the Board of Examiners to which the nominee is to be appointed.
 - i) Any nominee who has an honorary position at the University or has held an honorary position at the University within the last five years.

Application

22.1 This is a non-exhaustive list. Schools and Colleges must use their judgement when ascertaining whether a conflict of interest exists.

22.2 With regard to section 22 (f), staff who perform External Examiner duties in other Universities should keep their School informed in order to ensure that reciprocal arrangements involving equivalent programmes do not occur.

22.3 Schools should avoid a situation where a member of University staff and a member of staff of another Higher Education Institution are both simultaneously sitting on the



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

same Board of Examiners at both institutions. To maintain objectivity, Schools should attempt to select examiners from the full pool of experts available rather than continually re-appointing from a small, familiar group.

23. The External Examiner must keep the School informed of any changes in circumstances that may give rise to a conflict of interest. The School should inform the College when a conflict of interest arises.
24. In exceptional circumstances, the College may approve the appointment of an External Examiner where a conflict of interest has been identified. Requests for appointments of External Examiners in these circumstances must be supported by a School recommendation. Such an appointment will not be approved for a sole Programme External Examiner for a specific degree programme. Colleges will report annually to Senate Quality Assurance Committee on exceptional appointments of External Examiners with conflicts of interest categories stated in this policy.

Application

- 24.1 Exceptional circumstances may arise when a limited pool of expertise is available in a specific discipline or subject area.

Disclosure of intimate relationships

25. The University requires any member of staff, including External Examiners, to disclose an intimate relationship with any University of Edinburgh student (see [Policy on Disclosure of Intimate Relationships](#)).

Terms of office

26. The duration of an External Examiner's appointment will be for four years. An exceptional extension of one year may be permitted, if necessary.
27. Where an External Examiner retires from their institution during their four year External Examiner term, their appointment with the University as an External Examiner will cease at the end of the relevant academic session. An exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity may be approved.
28. An External Examiner who has completed their term of appointment is not eligible for a new appointment until five years have elapsed.
29. In view of the time commitment required to fulfil the duties of an External Examiner, it is recommended that an individual should hold no more than one other External Examiner



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

appointment for courses or taught programmes during their period of employment as an External Examiner in the University.

30. The University expects that the External Examiner has agreed with their own institution / employer the time commitment required for the role.
31. It is recommended that the period of office for all undergraduate and taught postgraduate External Examiners begins on 1 August, finishes on 31 October for all undergraduate External Examiners and on 30 November for all postgraduate taught External Examiners.

Appointment and Induction

32. Once the College has approved an External Examiner's nomination, the College, or School where the College has delegated this responsibility, will communicate with the External Examiner notifying them of their appointment.

Application

32.1 The appointment notification should include:

- a) a formal letter of appointment and details of the External Examiner contract, including a statement on the External Examiner's duties. This should include the courses or programmes they are appointed for, deadline for return of the External Examiner report and a statement that the External Examiner will operate within this policy and within the University's other regulations and policies;
- b) guidance on the payment of fees and expenses, including relevant forms. The School or College will provide an explanation of how the External Examiner's fee is calculated or the amount if a fee is set. It should be explained that the fee will be subject to the External Examiner's satisfactory fulfilment of their duties and will be paid on receipt of the External Examiner's final report. The School / College will also provide information on the University's Expenses Policy; and
- c) the process for raising serious concerns about academic standards. (See sections 64-65)

33. Schools will provide an appropriate induction for External Examiners including sufficient information to enable them to fulfil the duties set out in their letter of appointment. Schools will also take account of any additional induction needs of first-time External Examiners~~brief External Examiners as appropriate so as to enable External Examiners to fulfil their duties, including giving due attention to the needs of first-time External Examiners.~~

Application

33.1 This information should include but may not be limited to, links to:



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

- relevant sections of the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study,
- course and programme handbooks,
- objectives of the courses,
- curricula and teaching methods,
- methods of assessment and marking scales or grade schemes,
- the schedule for aggregation of marks of the various components in the overall assessment and
- any arrangements for credit on aggregate or reassessment of parts of the programme.

The School must also ensure that the External Examiner is briefed on their oversight role, where they have one, for an Undergraduate Progression Board.

34. At the beginning of ~~the each~~ academic session, the School should provide the following information to the External Examiner:

- a) information on dates of meetings;
- b) details of the Board of Examiners' composition;
- c) detailed arrangements for other examining activities such as attendance at orals or practicals; and
- d) any other material the School considers necessary for the External Examiner to fulfil their role effectively.

Termination of Appointment

35. The University can terminate an External Examiner's appointment at any time where the External Examiner is deemed not to have fulfilled their obligations as set out in their letter of appointment, or if a conflict of interest arises which cannot be satisfactorily resolved. External Examiners who wish to resign before the end of their normal term of office must give three months' notice in writing to the appointing College.

Application

35.1 Schools are expected to review the work of External Examiners and make recommendations for termination to the College for contractual non-compliance should this become necessary. The College is responsible for monitoring the External Examiners' compliance with their contracts. Schools and Colleges must make reasonable efforts to resolve issues of non-compliance through discussions with the External Examiner concerned. In rare cases where these matters cannot be resolved, termination of the appointment may be carried out by the Head of College on the basis of advice from Human Resources. The reasons for the termination of the appointment, along with efforts to resolve the issues, should be fully documented.



THE UNIVERSITY
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External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy





External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Participation in Assessment

36. External Examiners are full members of the Board(s) of Examiners. All External Examiners have the right to attend meetings of all relevant Boards of Examiners.
37. In order to be quorate, at least one External Examiner must participate in and approve the decisions of the Board of Examiners.
38. External Examiners must participate in all Board of Examiners meetings relevant to their appointment. ~~External Examiners are required to attend in person at least one Board of Examiners meeting in the first year of their term.~~

Application

- ~~38.1 If an External Examiner is not able to attend at least one Board of Examiners meeting in the first year of their term, their non-attendance must be reported to the College. The Taught Assessment Regulations define "attendance" and "participation".~~

Course External Examiners

39. In some disciplines, an External Examiner may need to assess students directly in some parts of the assessment (for example orals) and this should be explicitly stated in the External Examiner's contract. In all other cases, the External Examiner must never be asked to mark, grade or otherwise assess directly the work of individual students.
40. External Examiner(s) must review and approve draft examination papers. Draft examination papers should be accompanied by model answers, where applicable and appropriate, or solutions and the marking schemes to be applied.
41. Schools will provide Course External Examiners with a sample of students' assessed work for each component of summative assessment on the course (for example, examination scripts or student coursework) to review.

Application

- 41.1 The samples must provide the External Examiners with enough evidence to determine that internal marking is of an appropriate standard and is consistent. External Examiners should see samples of summative assessments from the top, middle and bottom of the range. The principles governing the selection of these samples must be agreed in advance and communicated to the External Examiner.

42. Schools may ask External Examiners to jointly invigilate practical, oral or performance elements of exams with members of academic staff. Schools must inform students if oral assessment arrangements will involve an External Examiner.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Application

42.1 Where External Examiners directly conduct oral examinations, Schools must provide the necessary information about the oral assessment to allow them to judge the student's performance. Where the External Examiner does not directly examine the student, they have the right to view oral examinations and presentations (either in person or by audio-visual means) where practicable and proportionate. See the regulation on "Oral assessment" in the University's Taught Assessment Regulations: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf

43. External Examiners should have the same amount of involvement in both the content and process of practical examinations as they have for written papers and coursework.
44. Some Arts disciplines require assessment by live performance or exhibition. Participation by External Examiners in these forms of assessment must meet current standards and practices of the sector and relevant professional bodies, including, where appropriate the creation of retainable documentation of the performance and/or exhibition.

Programme External Examiners

45. The Programme External Examiner approves jointly, as a member of the Board, the decisions of the Board of Examiners regarding students' programme outcomes, including award and classification. The Programme External Examiner confirms that these decisions are taken in line with University regulations and published criteria.
46. Programme Boards of Examiners determine programme outcomes based on course marks which have already been ratified by a Board of Examiners. Members of the Programme Board, including the Programme External Examiner, are not entitled to challenge ratified course marks.
47. Programme External Examiners may be required to have oversight of the decision process of an Undergraduate Progression Board. ~~This oversight may be remote; the External Examiner does not need to be physically present.~~

Application

47.1 The Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy sets out the responsibilities of External Examiners who have oversight of the decision process of the Board and how Schools can effectively support External Examiners in fulfilling their role.

www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

External Examiner Reports

Submission

48. External Examiners are required to submit a report annually to the Principal of the University via the External Examiner Reporting System.
49. External Examiners are also required to provide an additional reflective overview at the end of their periods of office.
50. The deadlines for submission of the External Examiner reports are 31 July for undergraduate and 30 November for postgraduate taught. External Examiners may submit their annual reports at any time prior to the deadline.
51. External Examiners are expected to provide informative comment on the extent to which:
 - a) the University is maintaining threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements;
 - b) the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the course(s) or programme(s) and is conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations;
 - c) the academic standards and the achievements of the students are comparable with those of other UK higher education institutions of which the External Examiner has experience.
52. External Examiners are expected to provide informative comment on quality assurance and quality enhancement and are asked to:
 - a) confirm that sufficient evidence was received to enable the role to be fulfilled and if evidence was insufficient, give details;
 - b) state whether issues raised in the previous report(s) have been, or are being, addressed to their satisfaction;
 - ~~e) address any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional body and highlight areas of good practice and innovation; and~~
 - ~~d)c) recommend, where appropriate, opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.~~
53. External Examiners are expected to provide informative comment on teaching, course and programme structures and content including:
 - a) good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment, including ensuring content, delivery, and assessment are appropriately inclusive, reflective of the diversity of the student body, and help to mitigate attainment gaps; and



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

- b) opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.

Actions in response to External Examiners' Reports

54. Schools are responsible for ensuring that they have robust mechanisms in place for handling External Examiner reports and for taking appropriate action where required in response to those reports.
55. A senior person responsible for teaching and quality assurance matters (the Academic Response Co-ordinator), designated by the Head of School, will take responsibility for responding to each External Examiner report. Schools will respond to External Examiner reports within six weeks so that information in the reports is acted upon promptly in order to maximise its use to Schools and students. This response will demonstrate that the University has given full and serious consideration to the comments made and indicate what actions will be taken as a result.
56. It is the College's responsibility to oversee the operation of School processes for responding to External Examiners' reports. Each College is also responsible for handling issues or suggestions arising from External Examiners' reports that pertain to the College, so that Colleges can take appropriate action where required.
57. The College is responsible for identifying issues or suggestions that have institutional level implications and raising these matters in appropriate forums at an institutional level.
58. The College is responsible for ensuring that issues raised in a particular report, that are judged to be particularly serious or important, are notified to the ~~Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance~~ Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) acting on behalf of the Principal. This is only likely to occur in exceptional cases where institutional action is necessary
59. Schools may choose to send the reports of External Examiners who are subject to validation by external organisations, to the relevant organisation, provided they are accompanied by information setting the Examiner's comments into context and noting any action that will be taken as a result of the report.

Analysis of Themes arising from External Examiner Reports

60. Colleges and the University's Senate Quality Assurance Committee use information from External Examiner reports to identify common themes to help shape their strategic approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement, and to enhance the student experience.
61. Schools will make themes from External Examiner reports, and the Schools' summarised response to these themes, available to student representatives.

Application

- 61.1 Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC) should consider themes arising from External Examiners' reports and summarised responses from Schools/Subject areas.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Each School should decide which SSLC is most appropriate for the consideration of the summary reports.

62. Students have the right to view External Examiners' reports. Schools are responsible for making External Examiner reports available to students on request.

Application

- 62.1 See sections 66 - 73 for further guidance on freedom of information and data protection matters. Schools should record the frequency of requests.

Expenses and Fees

63. Colleges are responsible for determining how to set External Examiner fees, and for arranging for the payment of fees and expenses. In some circumstances, Colleges may devolve responsibility for paying fees and expenses to Schools. Payment of expenses must be in line with the University's Expenses Policy.

Application

- 63.1 Payment of the External Examiner's fee is made annually by the Finance Office after receipt of a completed report from the External Examiner, and on the basis of payment instruction from Colleges or Schools.

Raising Serious Concerns

64. External Examiners have the right to raise any matter of serious concern with the [Deputy Vice-Principal Students \(Enhancement\) Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance](#), who acts on behalf of the Principal, if necessary, by means of a separate confidential report. The [Deputy Vice-Principal Students \(Enhancement\) Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance](#) will respond in writing, outlining any actions to be taken as a result.
65. Where an External Examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings in the academic standards of a programme or programmes (and has exhausted all procedures internal to the University, including the submission of a confidential report to the [Deputy Vice-Principal Students \(Enhancement\) Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance](#)), they may invoke the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) concerns scheme or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

Data Protection



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Personal information of External Examiners

66. In order to administer the processes of appointing, managing, and paying fees to External Examiners, Schools and Colleges hold personal data regarding External Examiners in line with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Use of data by External Examiners

67. External Examiners have access to confidential information and must ensure that personal data are always held securely and are not disclosed to any unauthorised third party either accidentally, negligently, or intentionally.
68. External Examiners must not identify students or staff in their reports. It should be noted that even if a student or member of staff is not named it may be possible to identify them, for example using a student's exam number or matriculation number, or a member of staff's job title.
69. Where an External Examiner identifies an individual, the individual has the right under data protection law to make a subject access request.

Details of External Examiners

70. The names, positions and institutions of External Examiners must be included in the relevant course/programme handbook and made available to students. Where an External Examiner is appointed to fulfil a role on behalf of a professional body, this will be stated.

Application

- 70.1 This information will also be made available to relevant staff in the University, and, where relevant, to external bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency.
- 70.2 Schools must inform students, in the course/programme handbook, that students must not make direct contact with External Examiners, and that other routes exist for queries about the assessment process.
- 70.3 The University holds information on appointed External Examiners for no longer than is necessary. The [Human Resources \(HR\) privacy notice](#) and [retention schedule](#) give details of categories of information and how long the University holds the information.

External Examiner Reports

71. The University does not publish External Examiner reports. However, External Examiner Reports are disclosable upon receipt of a request for copies of the reports in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Application

- 71.1 Schools are responsible for making External Examiners' reports available to students and the public on request. There is no requirement to publish External Examiners' reports. Schools must take care to redact from the report any information about identifiable students.
- 71.2 If the School is unsure about any aspect of a request made under freedom of information or data protection law, they should contact their local practitioner or the Records Management Section. ~~Requests for the disclosure of any restricted reports made directly and separately to the [Deputy Vice-Principal Students \(Enhancement\)](#) [Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance](#) will be judged on a case by case basis in line with the University's freedom of information obligations.~~
- 71.3 External Examiner reports are accessible to those who have access to the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) system and Business Information Suite. This means that a significant number of staff in the University are able to access External Examiner reports and Schools' responses. The system includes a mechanism for reporting a data breach. System guides contain further information on using this tool.

72. External Examiner reports are held in the system for five years from submission.

73. Data protection advice is available from the local Data Protection Champion and the University Data Protection Officer. Information Security advice is available from the Information Security Division of IS. ~~Advice on disclosure of information is available from the University's Records Management Section.~~

XX May 2024

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 May 2024

Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

Description of paper

1. The paper proposes amendments to the Work-based and Placement Learning Policy, following the periodic review of the policy due this academic year 2023/24. The updated version of the policy, showing the amendments, is presented in Appendix 1.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee is asked to **approve** the proposed amendments to the policy, and for these to take effect from 1 August 2024.

Background and context

3. This policy was first developed and approved in 2015, and has only had minor amendments since then. The policy was therefore in need of a review, particularly to align with responsibilities and procedures related to the Study and Work Away Service (SWAY) and their work with Schools.

Discussion

4. The proposed amendments incorporate feedback received through consultation with SWAY and a number of stakeholder Schools who conduct placements.
5. Some of the proposed amendments relate to the reorganisation of the information, the rewording of sections for the purpose of clarity or comprehensiveness, and amendments required to bring it up to date with current practices and terminology used across the University. The more substantive amendments to the policy are presented below in *Table 1. Key changes*.
6. The consultation revealed a lack of clarity on the scope of the policy, particularly regarding whether or not non-compulsory placements and clinical placements would be within the scope of the policy. The proposed amendments propose that all work-based and placement learning (WBPL) credit-bearing activities, whether these are a compulsory part of the degree or not, be included within the scope of the policy. The amendments also clarify that clinical placements are governed by Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies and are therefore not covered within the scope of this policy.

Table 1. Key changes

Section	Amendment and rationale
Scope	Scope includes work-based and placements that are credit-bearing, rather than only compulsory elements. Schools noted that they sometimes have work-based learning or placements which are optional to the degree, and therefore not covered by the policy, but also not covered by other central policies.

	<p>Clarified that the policy does not cover clinical placements which are governed by relevant Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB).</p>
<p>Background and definitions (1.4-1.6)</p>	<p>1.4 added to clarify the clinical placements governed by PSRB are not covered by this policy.</p> <p>1.5 amended to clarify which WBPL activity falls within the remit of SWAY. Reference to the Exchange Coordinator Toolkit has been removed as SWAY noted this is no longer relevant.</p>
<p>Key roles and responsibilities (3.1-3.4)</p>	<p>3.2 has clarified or added responsibilities for students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be responsible for obtaining any necessary visas and travel insurance, for completing the necessary risk assessments (instead of “researching the risks of undertaking WBPL”), registering with SWAY if applicable and completing any other required documentation - To have discussions with the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) prior to the selection of the placement, if there are considerations or adjustments to be made during the WBPL - To inform the School if they have concerns about themselves or others - Continue to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct while on WBPL <p>3.3 has added or clarified responsibilities for Schools/Subject Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure that adequate resource and staffing is in place to adhere to the policy and support WBPL activities - To obtain ethical approval of WBPL where appropriate - To carry out due diligence and appropriate risk assessments of WBPL Hosts - To work with DLSS to ensure that students with disabilities and/or learning adjustments are not disadvantaged during WBPL - To provide key staff contacts to the student and WBLP Host - To ensure that agreements with WBPL hosts are compliant with GDPR - To inform SWAY and Student Immigration Service of any international WBPL - To adhere to University procurement policies where applicable - To ensure that any relevant communications to students are also shared with students undertaking WBPL activities <p>Removed the School responsibility to check the current position on visas, given that Schools are not allowed to provide visa advice. This has been replaced by a note that Schools should encourage students to apply for their visa and discuss any issues with the Student Immigration Service.</p> <p>Some of the School responsibilities listed have been condensed into a single bullet point.</p> <p>3.4 has clarified or added responsibilities for WBPL Hosts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To make reasonable adjustments for students with learning adjustments, where the University or the student has reported these to the WBPL Host

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To comply with any monitoring and engagement responsibilities as agreed, where the University is sponsoring the visa of a student on WBPL - To raise any concerns regarding a student, including health and wellbeing concerns
Risk assessments (5.1)	5.1 amended to note that international WBPL will require an additional travel risk assessment.
Assessment guidance (6.4)	6.4 amended to clarify that markers who are not University members of staff will need training and guidance on using the appropriate marking scheme and assessment marking criteria. Replaced the reference to markers being “fully aware of the University’s Assessment Regulations”, with “markers should also having an understanding of relevant assessment regulations, including guidance on academic misconduct.”
School management of WBPL (7.1-7.7)	<p>Section 7 aims to expand on the School responsibilities listed in 3.3. and now includes section 7 and the former section 8 (School register of WBPL activities).</p> <p>7.3 clarifies the purpose and importance of maintaining an accurate register of WBPL, and notes that this information may be required in the event of an emergency.</p> <p>7.4 added to clarify that Schools must ensure that student records are kept up to date with the necessary information related to the WBPL.</p> <p>7.5 added to ensure that the agreement includes compliance with GDPR and key contact information from all parties.</p> <p>7.6 and 7.7 added to clarify visa arrangements and responsibilities both for WBPL activities within the UK and abroad.</p>
Student information and briefing (8.1)	Further detail has been added to section 8.1 regarding information which Schools must provide to students as part of the WBPL briefing, in line with the responsibilities in 3.3
Staff development	Former section 10 has been removed due to redundancy, and information is incorporated into 7.2 and 3.3
Monitoring and review of WBPL (9.1-9.2)	9.1 has been amended in line with School responsibilities in 3.3

Resource implications

7. There may be resource implications for staff time within Schools associated with the expansion of the scope of the policy to include non-compulsory placements. However, the consultation suggested that some Schools were already applying the policy to non-compulsory placements, in which case there would be no additional resource.
8. The clarified responsibilities for Schools may also have resource implications for staff time (e.g. ensuring that WBPL activities have ethical approval of WBPL where appropriate, carrying out due diligence and appropriate risk assessments of WBPL Hosts, working with DLSS to support students with disabilities and/or

learning adjustments, and ensuring that student records are kept up to date with the necessary information related to the WBPL). However, it is expected that most of this work should already be taking place as good practice, which the policy now makes explicit.

Risk management

9. There are no significant risks associated to the proposed amendments. A number of the amendments aim to reduce risks to the University by clarifying the responsibilities of different parties involved in the provision of WBPL, e.g. risk of Schools not carrying out due diligence on WBPL Hosts, risk that Schools or WBPL Hosts do not comply with GDPR, risk of WBPL Hosts not complying with student monitoring and engagement responsibilities, risk of Schools not maintaining up to date register of WBPL activities and emergency contact details.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

10. The policy contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Equality & diversity

11. The review of the policy considers that the proposed amendments have no negative impact on students or staff with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. There may be some positive impact on students with disabilities or learning adjustments following the clarification of the responsibilities of Schools and WBPL Hosts to engage in early discussions regarding support and adjustments necessary for these students.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

12. Should the Committee approve the proposed policy, this would come into effect on 1 August 2024.
13. Academic Services will communicate the amendments to stakeholders consulted via its standard communications regarding annual key changes to policies and regulations. It will also provide feedback to staff who took part in the consultation process. Once the policy were to come into effect, Academic Services will also update the published policy.
14. If approved, the proposed amendments would require minor updates to the mappings to the UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance for the theme of Work-based Learning. Academic Services would amend these as needed, and propose that the amendments to the mapping be approved by Convener's action.

Author

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Presenter

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Freedom of Information *Open*



Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

Purpose of Policy

This Work-based and Placement Learning (WBPL) policy ~~aims has been developed~~ to ensure that:

- The academic standards of the University of Edinburgh are maintained for WBPL activities.
- Pastoral and academic support has been considered and roles and responsibilities are clear.
- Procedures are in place for the approval and ongoing monitoring of WBPL arrangements.
- The legal responsibilities of the University of Edinburgh have been met.

Overview

The University of Edinburgh recognises the benefits of WBPL to students, particularly in providing opportunities to gain essential skills for employment and to put learning into practice. All WBPL arrangements must be driven academically but be underpinned by support mechanisms to ensure that the aims of widening educational opportunities and broadening work-based perspectives are met.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

The policy applies to ~~all Colleges and Schools involved with W~~ork-based ~~L~~earning and ~~P~~placements ~~as a compulsory which are credit-bearing elements of a the~~ degree programme, including undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, and postgraduate research programmes. ~~that are credit-bearing and may be subject to formal assessment methods.~~ The policy **does not** cover clinical placements governed by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) ~~less formal arrangements or internships that do not constitute a compulsory part of the students' programme of study and which the student may arrange by him/herself and undertake during term or vacation time.~~, and The PSRB requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies will take precedence over the University's practice and expected standards in the management of WBPL. It also does not cover less formal arrangements or internships that do not constitute a credit-bearing element of the programme of study and which the student may arrange by themselves and undertake during term or vacation time.

Contact Officer Academic Services academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Approved: 28.05.2015 XXXXXXX	Starts: <u>01.08.15</u> <u>01.08.24</u>	Equality impact assessment: 20. <u>0</u> 5.15	Amendments: 23.4.20, 16.5.22, 18.05.23	Next Review: 2023/24
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Approving authority Senatus Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)

Consultation undertaken ~~A QAC working group developed a policy and code of practice in 2011/12. These were merged following a desk-based review by Academic Services and subject to QAC approval in May 2015. Consultation has been undertaken with the Study and Work Away Service (SWAY), and with a number of stakeholder Schools, before being reviewed and approved by SQAC.~~

Section responsible Academic Services

Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations Study and Work Away Service (SWAY)
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/study-work-away>
Collaborative Provision Framework www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/collaborative-activity;
Health and Safety Guidance Notes for Students on Placements
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/guidance/students-young-persons>
~~http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/guidance/students-young-persons~~
Go Abroad policy
[https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/go_abroad_policy.p](https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/go_abroad_policy.pdf)
[df](#)



Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

1. Background and definitions

1.1 The University recognises that work-based and placement learning (WBPL) is a valuable component of a student's programme of study. Work-based and placement activity exists in a variety of forms which makes it difficult to provide a precise and formal definition.

1.2 ~~This policy aligns with the expectations that providers have effective arrangements in place to ensure core practices for standards and quality, in line with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance for Work-based Learning: core practices for standards and quality contain the expectation that "Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them."~~ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-work-based-learning.pdf>

1.3 The University recognises that the scale and scope of WBPL can range from full employment within an organisation to conducting a project for an organisation. In view of this, not all elements of this Policy will apply equally to all WBPL contexts, and a degree of judgement must be exercised in applying this Work-based and Placement Learning Policy.

~~1.4~~ 1.4 Clinical placements are governed by regulations and policies set by the relevant Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies and are therefore not covered within the scope of this policy.

1.5 This policy applies to UK-based and international WBPL opportunities offered by Schools within degree programmes, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Undergraduate students completing international WBPL as a credit-bearing part of their degree in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) or the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) are supported by the University's Study and Work Away service (SWAY). These students are required to register their activity with SWAY once it has been approved by their School and complete additional steps associated with international activities. Within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM), SWAY offers guidance to Schools that have international placements within their degree programmes, but these Schools do not need to register WBPL with SWAY. For some programmes (e.g. modern languages) the Year Abroad period may be used as a placement year, but students may be linked to a placement via a host University. Hence, there may not be a clear distinction between Year Abroad and placement. In such cases, colleagues must also consult the Exchange Coordinator Toolkit <https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad/staff-toolkit>. Further advice where required information is available from at the Study and Work Away Service <https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad/staff-toolkit/contact-us> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/study-work-away>

2. Key Principles

2.1 Work-based and placement learning, wherever and however organised and delivered, should widen learning opportunities without prejudice either to the academic standard of the award being sought or the quality of what is offered to students. Furthermore, the arrangements for assuring quality and standards should be as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for programmes provided wholly within the institution and through conventional class-based modes of teaching and learning.



Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

3. Key roles and responsibilities

3.1 A number of key roles ~~may~~ exist in WBPL. ~~Where each of the following roles exist t~~he responsibilities associated with those roles are set out below.

3.2 Students are responsible for:

- Making the practical arrangements relating to the WBPL, — e.g. travel arrangements, ~~visas, organising obtaining~~ University travel insurance cover, and personal travel insurance if applicable, and seeking accommodation, registering with SWAY if applicable and completing any University-required documentation in order to undertake WBPL.
- ~~Completing the necessary risk assessments~~ Researching the risks of undertaking WBPL.
- Maintaining contact with the School's WBPL Co-ordinator during the WBPL period and advising the WBPL Co-ordinator of any proposed changes to their arrangements, and any wellbeing concerns they have about themselves or other students.
- Informing the School of their address and contact details whilst away from the University.
- ~~Advising the~~ Where students have a schedule of adjustments, or a disability or health issue which may impact on their WBPL, students must engage with the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) prior to the placement being selected in order to identify what needs to be considered in the selection of the placement. Further information about accessible placements is available from the DLSS website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/staff/supporting-students/accessible-placements> appropriate WBPL Co-ordinator, at application stage, if they have a disability which will impact on their WBPL.
- ~~Ensuring Informing that~~ the WBPL Co-ordinator, Student Adviser or Research Supervisor is informed about any Special Exceptional Circumstances which might impact on the student's academic performance.
- Attending information/briefing sessions and reading relevant information to keep up-to-date with the WBPL arrangements.
- Providing feedback on the experience when requested to do so and, where necessary appropriate, making recommendations for the enhancement of the WBPL activities.
- Continuing to adhere to the University's Code of Student Conduct while undertaking WBPL: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/codeofstudentconduct.pdf>

3.3 The School/Subject Area is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there is adequate resource and staffing in place in order to adhere to this policy and adequately support WBPL activities adherence to this Policy
- Establishing and approving WBPL elements through the appropriate academic governance routes
- Obtaining ethical approval for WBPL activities where appropriate and ensuring its academic legitimacy.
- Carrying out due diligence on WBPL hosts and ensuring that activities are compatible with the University Health and Safety policies, carrying out risk assessments where appropriate



Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

- Working with the DLSS, where appropriate, to ensure that students with disabilities and/or learning adjustments are not disadvantaged in their placements or work-based learning.
- Agreeing in writing the WBPL arrangements with the WBPL Host and with the student.
- Adhering to the University procurement policies where payments are made to placement providers
- Overseeing the development and on-going management of WBPL activities in the School, regularly monitoring and reviewing the WBPL arrangements.
- Providing information and briefings to students, including informing students of the academic and credit arrangements and the expected learning outcomes relating to the WBPL.
- ~~Advising students of any changes to Programme requirements.~~
- ~~Checking the current position on visas for students and any conditions for work-based placements~~
- Maintaining contact with the student and with the WBPL host as agreed, and escalating any concerns where necessary, although the student is ultimately responsible for initiating contact.
- ~~Ensuring that information about subsequent study arrangements, changes to programme requirements and any other relevant communications to students is also~~ transmitted to WBPL students to ensure that they are not disadvantaged because of their distance from the University.
- ~~Overseeing the on-going management of WBPL activities.~~
- Maintaining a School register of WBPL activities and ensuring that student records are maintained up to date.
- ~~Regularly monitoring and reviewing the WBPL arrangements.~~
- ~~Ensuring that staff involved in supporting WBPL activities have appropriate training and support in their roles are appropriately developed and supported in their role.~~

The School's responsibilities are further expanded on in section 7 of this policy.

3.4 The WBPL Host is responsible for:

- Agreeing in writing the WBPL arrangements and working in accordance with the agreed arrangements.
- Ensuring WBPL activities provide students with adequate opportunities to achieve the intended learning outcomes and to demonstrate these through assessment.
- Providing support and supervision to students during their WBPL activities as agreed.
- For WBPL activities within the UK, and where the University is sponsoring a visa of a student on WBPL, the WBPL Host must monitor and report on engagement points to the University as agreed.
- Ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to support the participation in WBPL activities of students with learning adjustments and/or disabilities, where the University or the student has informed the WBPL Host of these disabled students in WBPL activities.
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing the WBPL arrangements, and informing the University in a timely manner of the need to make changes to the agreed arrangements.
- ~~Regularly monitoring and reviewing the WBPL arrangements and reporting to the University.~~
- Providing a clear point of key contacts for the WBPL activities.

Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

- Raising concerns, or complaints about any aspect of the arrangement with the University. This may include an individual student's health and wellbeing, performance or conduct.
- ~~Making suggestions~~ Providing feedback to the University about how the WBPL activity could be improved.

4. Establishing and approving WBPL

4.1 School Boards of Studies are ultimately responsible for approving proposed work-based and placement learning activities through standard course and programme approval processes within their own ~~S~~School. Boards of Studies or Heads of School may ask individual members of the School to take on specific organisational responsibilities, for example, WBPL Exchange or Placement Coordinators. Board of Studies curriculum approval ~~must~~should include explicit consideration of the following concerns:

- a. Suitability of the placement in delivering the learning outcomes of the course and/or programme;
- b. Safety and welfare of students, including health and safety considerations and risk assessment, which needs to be kept under review and not just considered at original approval stage;
- c. The ability of the host to fulfil the University's expectations and legal responsibilities in relation to students in protected characteristic groups, including disabled students, and children and vulnerable adults.
- d. The resource capacity and capability of the School/Subject Area to manage the ~~placement~~WBPL;
- e. Arrangements for the supervision and support of students, e.g. arrangements for support from Student Advisers, ~~Student Support Teams and/or~~ Research Supervisors, where relevant;
- f. Arrangements for the assessment of students' work;
- f.g. If the WBPL may be conducted outside of the UK, the Board of Studies should ensure that the School engages with SWAY at an early stage of development.

5. Risk ~~A~~assessments

- 5.1 A risk assessment must be carried out, usually by the student or host, and approved by a member of staff. Different types of activity will carry varying degrees and types of risk, and the risk assessment must be appropriate to the risk. International WBPL will require an additional travel risk assessment. For certain placements, e.g. laboratory based placements, it is advisable to issue a pre-placement questionnaire to the WBPL Hhost to provide an assessment of the risk and the Hhost's management of the placement. The University's Health and Safety Department provides guidance for students on placements: http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/general/students_on_placement.pdf
- 5.2 The University's Health and Safety Department provides also provides guidance and support on conducting risk assessments: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/online-resources>
- 5.4 Information on accessible placements is provided by the ~~Student~~Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS). For risk assessments involving ~~disabled~~ students with disabilities and/or learning adjustments, the ~~DLSS~~Student Disability Service should be contacted for further advice: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/staff/supporting-students/accessible-placements>



Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

6. Learning outcomes and assessment

- 6.1 WBPL ~~activities must~~should have clearly defined intended learning outcomes, and these should reflect the intended learning outcomes of the relevant course(s) and programme of study, ~~as specified in the relevant Degree Programme Specification.~~
- 6.2 The nature of the WBPL activities, and the support provided to students, should provide students with adequate opportunities to achieve the intended learning outcomes and to demonstrate these through assessment. Course and programme documentation must provide clear and transparent information on the assessment process and criteria including:
- how achievement of the intended learning outcomes in the WBPL will be assessed;
 - the division of responsibility for student assessment between the University and the WBPL ~~h~~Host;
 - the consequences of failure to complete the placement/work-based learning, or failure to achieve the intended learning outcomes within the placement;
 - alternative pathways for achieving the relevant course credits in the event of failure to secure a placement or work-based learning opportunity ~~WBPL~~.
- 6.3 ~~The A~~assessment of ~~the~~ students' learning while on placement must align with the will be as set out in the University's Taught aAssessment ~~r~~Regulations, or Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees, in accordance with the student's programme of study:
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf>
https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf
- 6.4 The ~~University-School~~ has responsibility to ensure that any marker who is not a University member of staff is competent to undertake the task, and has had adequate training, including guidance on using the appropriate marking scheme and assessment marking criteria. Markers should also having an understanding of relevant ~~is fully aware of the University's A~~assessment ~~R~~regulations, including guidance on academic misconduct, and the specific marking criteria of the assessment, and the marking is moderated by a member of the University's academic staff.

7. School Mmanagement of WBPL by Schools

- 7.1 Management of WBPL by Schools should take account of activity that involves students in activities/placements away from the University and also in employer engagement activities that take place in the University.
- 7.2 An individual within the School ~~should~~must be identified as being the WBPL Coordinator responsible for managing each WBPL arrangement. This ~~individual member of staff may act as the WBPL Coordinator across all WBPL activities within the School, or there may be multiple members of staff who take on this role. should be competent to do so and Staff~~ should be provided with adequate support, training and development opportunities to establish and further develop his or hertheir capabilities to manage the arrangements role. ~~In such cases, colleagues must also consult the Exchange Coordinator Toolkit.~~
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad/staff/toolkit>

8. ~~—~~School Register of WBPL Activities



Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

7.3.8-1 Schools ~~must~~should maintain a register of all formal and compulsory WBPL activities. This should include details of the WBPL activity, key contacts for both the University and the WBPL Host, the student's contact details, trusted contact information, and signed agreements, risk assessments and any other relevant documentation, where relevant. Schools should note that the information may be required in the event of an emergency, and therefore must ensure that the register remains up to date.

7.4 Schools must ensure that student records are updated with the necessary information (e.g. address and contact information during WBPL, changes to mode of study, visa status, etc.)

7.5 Agreements with the WBPL Host must include an outline of responsibilities regarding the transfer of student data which complies with GDPR legislation. The agreement must also include key contact information for both the University, the WBPL Host and the student.

7.6 Where WBPL activities take place outside of the UK, the School must inform the Study and Work Away Service (SWAY) and the Student Immigration Service. Schools should encourage students to apply for their visa and discuss any issues with the Student Immigration Service in good time

7.7 Where WBPL activities take place within the UK, and the University is the visa sponsor for a student during the WBPL, the School must liaise with the WBPL Host in order to record engagement points as required.

9.8. Student ~~I~~information and ~~B~~riefing

9.8.1 All students ~~should~~must be provided with briefing information prior to commencing any WBPL activity. Briefing information should include:

- discussion of planned learning activities, intended learning outcomes and how they will be assessed;
- the risk assessment and recommendations regarding health, safety, welfare and ~~personal~~ insurance cover for the student, including travel insurance (where relevant);
- the student's responsibilities, rights and entitlements in the WBPL setting;
- language and cultural considerations (for international placements);
- accommodation arrangements (where relevant);
- contact information ~~for both with the~~ University key contacts, WBPL Host key contacts and also with contact information for relevant local organisation(s) in the WBPL setting. This should include guidance on what to do if they have a concern or complaint during or following the placement, either in relation to themselves, other students, members of staff or individuals at the WBPL Host;
- student support arrangements, including ways in which the University will stay in touch/contact with the student and any requirements for monitoring and engagement;
- any specific ~~or special~~ needs of the individual student, e.g. disability, health, dietary ~~or~~, religious requirements, and how these will be accommodated within the placement setting;
- any reasonable adjustments that ~~need will to~~ be made to meet the student's learning adjustments/disability-related needs.

9.8.2 Briefing processes should include an opportunity for individual students to discuss any aspect of the WBPL with the WBPL Coordinator.

Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

~~10. Staff Professional Development~~

~~10.1 University staff and host staff involved in placement activity should be appropriately qualified and should have opportunities to develop their own knowledge and practice.~~

~~11.9. Monitoring and Rreview of WBPL Aactivities~~

~~11.9.1 WBPL activities should be included in the — Mmonitoring and review of teaching portfolios should be carried out~~ using the established processes of School Annual Quality Assurance Reports and Internal Periodic Review processes:

~~<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting> and periodic Internal Review processes:~~

~~<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review>~~

~~11.9.2 Schools should monitor all WBPL activity on an annual basis. This should include:~~

- ~~• opportunities for feedback from all participants and stakeholders, i.e. all students who undertook WBPL and all WBPL Hosts, ~~They who~~ should be given an opportunity to comment on the WBPL and to suggest any ways in which future placements might be improved;~~
- ~~• review of resource and staffing required for supporting University staff associated with the WBPL;~~
- ~~• review and update due diligence of WBPL Hosts;~~
- ~~• any relevant other organisations associated with the WBPL.~~

~~11.9.3 The College Quality Assurance Committee, or equivalent, will maintain an oversight of monitoring at the College level and the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) will maintain oversight at the institutional level and, with the support of the Institute for Academic Development, will disseminate reported case studies of good practice.~~

Senate Quality Assurance Committee**16 May 2024****Senate Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review****Description of paper**

1. This paper outlines plans for the annual review of Senate Standing Committees' effectiveness.

Action requested / recommendation

2. Committee members are asked to comment on the plans for the annual review.

Background and context

3. The 2017 version of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance states that institutions are expected to review the effectiveness of their Senate and its committees annually and to hold an externally-facilitated review every five years: "49. The governing body is expected to review its own effectiveness each year and to undertake an externally facilitated evaluation of its own effectiveness and that of its committees, including size and composition of membership, at least every five years. As part of these processes or separately, the effectiveness of the academic board (also known as Senate, Senatus Academicus or academic council) is expected to be reviewed similarly. These reviews should be reported upon appropriately within the Institution and outside. Externally facilitated reviews should be held following any period of exceptional change or upheaval (allowing suitable time to see the effects of changes made), the usual timetable for externally facilitated review being brought forward if necessary in these circumstances."
4. In line with the requirements of the Code, Registry Services will be conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the three Senate Standing Committees over summer 2024. The outcomes of the annual review will be reported to Senate and Senate Standing Committees in September/ October 2024.
5. Actions identified in the previous annual review and responses are outlined in Appendix 2.

Discussion

6. The annual review process is intended to gather information on, and evaluate effectiveness in terms of, the:
 - Composition of the committee
 - Support and facilitation of committee meetings
 - Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remit
 - Impact and strategic relevance of Senate Committees' work
7. The review is a self-evaluative process and Senate Standing Committee members will be invited by the relevant Committee Secretary to respond to an online survey during summer 2024. Draft questions are provided in Appendix 1.
8. Registry Services will collate and analyse the information, producing a report on the findings to be presented to Senate and Senate Standing Committees in September/ October 2024.
9. Previously the Convener and Secretary of each committee reviewed its coverage of postgraduate research student business, however, this is being looked at through the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.

Resource implications

10. The review will be conducted by Registry Services as part of planned work. The resource implications of any actions identified in response to the outcomes of the review will be considered at that stage.

Risk management

11. The annual effectiveness review process assists the University in ensuring that its academic governance arrangements are effective and enables the University to manage a range of risks associated with its academic provision.

Equality & diversity

12. The online survey provides an opportunity for members to reflect on equality, diversity and representation through committee work.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

13. The report will be presented to Senate and the Senate Standing Committees in September / October 2024. If the review identifies required actions or enhancement opportunities, these will be taken forward by Registry Services (if directly related to the functioning and support of the Senate Committees) or referred to the appropriate body for consideration.

Author

Registry Services
24 April 2024

Freedom of Information

Open

Appendix 1

Senate Standing Committees: Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

Draft questions for Summer 2024 survey

Members of the Senate Standing Committees will be invited to fill in an online survey during Summer 2024 and the draft questions are set out below for comment. The questions are based on the same set used for the previous four years but have been reviewed and refined for clarity, to align with the intentions of the review process outlined in paragraph 6, and to support gathering of actionable responses. HR EDI were consulted on the questions relating to equality, diversity and representation. Registry Services will also use responses to develop and track key performance indicators.

All responses to questions are Likert scale unless otherwise stated (strongly agree – agree – neutral – disagree – strongly disagree).

1. Composition of the Committee

- 1.1. The composition of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit.
- 1.2. The size of the Committee is appropriate for it to operate effectively.
- 1.3. Please provide any comments on the composition of the committee [free text]

2. Support and Facilitation of Committee Meetings

- 2.1. The information provided supports effective decision-making by the Committee.
- 2.2. The Committee is supported effectively by Registry Services.
- 2.3. For new members in 2023/24: I received an effective induction when I joined the Committee.
- 2.4. Please provide any comments on the support and facilitation of committee meetings [free text]

3. Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits

- 3.1. The Committee's remit is clear.
- 3.2. The scope of the Committee's remit is appropriate.
- 3.3. I am clear on my role and responsibilities as a member of the Committee.
- 3.4. I am able to engage effectively with and contribute to the work of the Committee.
- 3.5. Please provide any comments on the engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits [free text]

4. Impact and Strategic Relevance of Senate Committee's Work

- 4.1. The work of the Committee makes a positive impact.
- 4.2. The work of the Committee links to University strategic priorities.
- 4.3. Equality and diversity are appropriately considered and promoted in the work of the Committee.
- 4.4. Please provide any comments on how the work of the Committee can represent the views and needs of our diverse University community to inform decision-making [free text]
- 4.5. The work of the Committee is communicated effectively to the wider University.
- 4.6. Please provide any comments on the impact and strategic relevance of Senate Committees' work [free text]

Appendix 2: Action taken in response to 2022/23 Senate Standing Committees' Annual Effectiveness Review

Committee	Action	Response
All	Consider how to focus business within the Committee remit and clarify responsibilities where business overlaps and links with other committees.	<p>Registry Services have supported paper authors to focus on the detail relevant to the committees' remit and the decision being asked of them. Discussions held on committees' priorities have made specific reference to remits. Consideration is also being given to including reference to remits on committee paper cover sheets.</p> <p>This is also being looked at through the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.</p>
All	Continue to explore ways to diversify the membership of the Committee and effectively consider EDI matters.	Registry Services have signposted to relevant EDI guidance and training materials in order to empower members and enhance their understanding of EDI matters, and enable all members to appropriately scrutinise Committee business.
All	Consider how committees can communicate effectively with stakeholders, including the roles and responsibilities of Academic Services and members.	<p>Information to support members with their roles and responsibilities was updated in the Senate Standing Committees' Members' Guidance. The Senate Committees' Newsletter is back to being routinely published throughout the year.</p> <p>Registry Services have supported paper authors to include a plan of how information will be communicated to relevant stakeholders and to record instances where Committee members have responsibility for communicating information or outcomes to their College or Group.</p>
SQAC	Clarify the roles of subgroups and task groups at the start of the year.	Registry Services are producing an organogram with the subgroups and task groups for all Senate Standing Committees.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 May 2024

**Scotland's Rural College Accreditation Committee
Annual Report 2022/23**

Description of paper

1. This paper summaries the key areas of discussion from the Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation Committee meeting of Friday 26 April 2024.

Action requested / recommendation

2. This paper is for information.

Background and context

3. The Convenor of Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) convenes the annual accreditation meeting, with Academic Services responsible for co-ordinating the process.
4. In April 2024 the Accreditation Committee met to review and affirmed continued accreditation of the following SRUC programmes:
 - BSc Environmental Management
 - PhD Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies (and with Placement)

Discussion

5. See attached paper.

Resource implications

6. Accrediting SRUC degree programmes has resource implications for Academic Services.

Risk management

7. In order to preserve the University's reputation, it is essential to ensure that degrees accredited by the University of Edinburgh meet the same high standards of academic quality and student experience that we would expect from our own programmes. The annual SRUC Accreditation Committee provides a framework to ensure that the accredited programme continues to meet these expectations.

Equality & diversity

8. As this paper reports on past activity, there are no Equality and Diversity considerations and an EqIA is not necessary at this time.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

9. As the paper is an update to provide information, there are no actions.

Author

Patrick Jack,
Academic Policy Officer,
Registry Services

Presenter

Professor Tina Harrison,
Convener, Scotland's Rural College
(SRUC) Accreditation Committee

Freedom of Information: Open

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation
Committee held on Friday 26 April 2024 at 11am via Microsoft Teams**

Present:

Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement), University of Edinburgh
Professor Andrew Barnes	Head of Department, Rural Economy Environment and Society, SRUC
Professor Matthew Bailey	Dean of Quality Assurance, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, University of Edinburgh
Dr Kyrsten Black	Registrar, SRUC
Dr Jenn Carfrae	Programme/Team Leader for Environmental Management, SRUC
Brian Connolly	Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services, University of Edinburgh
Toni Dismore	Head of Doctoral College & Academic Manager, SRUC
Dr Andrew Innes	Senior Lecturer, Rural Economy Environment and Society, SRUC
Patrick Jack (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services, University of Edinburgh
Professor Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, College of Science and Engineering, University of Edinburgh
Professor Jamie Newbold	Provost & Deputy Principal, SRUC
Catherine Stewart	Student Representative, Co-President of SRUC Students' Association
Professor Eileen Wall	Head of Research & Professor of Integrative Livestock Genetics, SRUC

Apologies:

Professor Antony Maciocia	Dean of Postgraduate Research, College of Science and Engineering and Doctoral College, University of Edinburgh
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1. Welcome and Apologies

The Convenor welcomed all attendees, particularly those colleagues who were new members to the Committee.

2. Membership of the Accreditation Committee 2023-24

The Committee noted the membership for 2023-24. It was noted that Dr Jenn Carfrae would be replaced by Dr Andrew Innes for future meetings. The Convenor thanked Dr Carfrae for all of her previous input on the Committee.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5 April 2023

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting as a full and accurate record. It was noted that the minutes had also been previously submitted to the University of Edinburgh's Senate Quality Assurance Committee in April 2023, for information.

4. Matters Arising

The following was noted in relation to the minutes of the previous meeting:

- Agenda Item 7 – Annual Report 2021/22 (section: Application for Degree Awarding Powers (DAP))
 - The SRUC Registrar confirmed that relevant documentation was submitted to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in June 2023. The application was subsequently considered by the QAA Board in September 2023 and was received positively. The application has now progressed to consideration by the Scottish Government, with SRUC hopeful of a positive outcome by late summer 2024. SRUC are beginning to consider transitional arrangements, however do not wish to commence formal communications with the University of Edinburgh prior to DAP being formally approved.
- Agenda Item 9 - Proposal for University of Edinburgh to Accredite SRUC's Postgraduate Research Provision (PGR) Due Diligence:
 - At its meeting in April 2023, Senate Quality Assurance Committee endorsed the proposal for the University of Edinburgh to accredit postgraduate research provision at SRUC.
 - The new PhD in Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies at SRUC has since launched, with ten students recruited in its first year of the programme in 2023/24. SRUC await the outcome of their application for taught degree awarding powers prior to applying for research degree awarding powers.

For Information

5. Memorandum of Agreement

The Committee noted the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). Members were informed that the MoA had now been fully signed off by both partners, with updates to the MoA having been made in relation to postgraduate research

provision and students, data, fees and invoicing. It was explained that the invoicing process will now be conducted within Registry Services at the University of Edinburgh. SRUC noted their thanks for the expediency of the process this academic year.

The Convenor highlighted that any future amendments to the MoA will likely only be required within the appendices of the MoA.

6. Students' Association Update 2022-23

The Committee discussed the update on key SRUC Students' Association (SRUCSA) activities since the last meeting and commended SRUCSA on the excellent quality and value of the report.

The Committee particularly commended SRUCSA on their Organisation for the Wellbeing of Learners (OWLS) social club, which aims to create a safe space on campus and online that provides students with an opportunity to socialise and develop student community. Further achievements such as embedding peer-support groups and the co-creation of student support web content was also commended by the Committee.

SRUC members indicated that they would be happy for the report to be circulated more widely within the University of Edinburgh.

Action: University of Edinburgh to commend the report and its content to the Edinburgh University Students' Association.

For Discussion

7. Annual Report 2022-23

The Committee considered the Annual Report 2022-23. The Committee noted the excellent quality of the report and accompanying documentation, and commended the SRUC team responsible.

Institution-led Reviews

The Committee were informed that, although an institution-led review of the BSc Environmental Management programme is yet to take place, other programme reviews have been undertaken. This activity has identified common themes such as supporting industry input into SRUC provision, encouraging student feedback and partnership working with students. A thematic review within SRUC was held on workplace learning and modern apprenticeships. It was noted that there has been a substantial increase in modern apprenticeships at SRUC, with a 50% increase over the past two years.

External Review

Members were informed that SRUC held an institutional liaison meeting with

QAA Scotland during 2023 and that a Quality Enhancement and Standards Review visit took place in April 2024. An Education Scotland Progress Visit additionally took place which commended SRUC's activity in further education.

Annual Monitoring & Curriculum Review

The Committee noted that themes arising from annual monitoring activity have included diligent hard-working staff, commitment to students, and strengthening student voice.

SRUC is also continuing to embed the SEEDABLE curriculum, which is a competence-based approach to education embedding sustainability, enterprise, equality and diversity enabled by active and blended learning. SRUC has noted that the benefits of reviewing their curriculum via this approach have been evident in terms of programmes coming forward for validation with regard to alignment with sustainable development goals, enterprise and approach to assessment.

BSc Environmental Management

The Committee noted that while the intake of students on to the programme has dropped, there has been a 56% increase in applications this academic year. There has been no grade inflation on the programme, with the level of first class honours being awarded remaining at 18%, and the proportion of upper second-class degrees only rising by 1%. There has been a marginal increase in progression levels, with a steady return to pre-Covid levels.

The Committee commended SRUC on the very positive External Examiner Report for the programme during 2022-23, however specific comments relating to feedback variation across modules, and the recommendation to introduce rubrics on a couple of modules were noted. SRUC highlighted that they are seeking to harmonise the provision and delivery of feedback via platforms such as Turnitin. There has been an increased uptake on rubrics across modules, particularly in third and fourth year, which has enabled better visibility of marking to criteria for students and has sped up the marking process. The Committee was informed that the quality and consistency of feedback has improved, with concerted effort being made to make feedback as accessible as possible across multiple platforms. SRUC are working to ensure that students are clear on the feedback they receive in order to manage student expectations. More emphasis has been placed on feed-forward.

The Committee noted that continuous enhancement work is taking place in alignment with curriculum review decisions and the availability of new technologies such as automated feedback. SRUC are exploring use of generative artificial intelligence to generate rubrics in order to help save staff time in constructing nuanced information to populate rubrics.

SRUC informed the Committee that progress has been made in modernising assessment across the programme, ensuring that there is an alignment with the skills which are required by industry. Industry liaison days are held with partners to help map these skills into assessment design. Examples of innovative assessment formats include generating short policy briefs, collecting and synthesising data, and creating podcasts in order to improve student knowledge exchange with relevant communities. It was highlighted that SEEDABLE projects are bringing operational benefit to assessment design, making assessment more authentic for students.

The Committee noted that student feedback had raised module and programme organisation, including deadlines and feedback, as an area for development. Staff on the programme have been exploring how to issue timetables more expediently. Programme staff continuously update deadline diaries to highlight assessment deadlines in order to attempt to harmonise these for students. This enables some flexibility to move deadlines in cases where students have mitigating circumstances. More generally, a concerted effort has been made to enhance how staff communicate responses to student feedback, regardless of whether changes have been enacted or not.

It was noted that there were no appeals submitted on the programme during 2022-23. Similarly, there was a very low number of academic complaints submitted, although numbers have returned to more regular levels in 2023-24. The Committee noted that complaints can provide a beneficial opportunity to learn about and subsequently address certain issues.

The Committee were informed that SRUC are aware of the need to appoint a new External Examiner and that this is in progress. SRUC are considering potential candidates and will accelerate this process in the near future. The Committee noted that once a formal nomination was submitted, it will be considered by internal SRUC committees for approval. Once this step is complete, the nomination will be sent to the University of Edinburgh for formal endorsement.

Action: SRUC to submit External Examiner nomination to the University of Edinburgh for endorsement, once approved internally.

National Student Survey

The Committee noted that SRUC had generally performed better in the National Student Survey (NSS) for 2022-23, rising to 10th amongst Scottish higher education institutions. It was highlighted that it can be difficult to access programme-level data via NSS. Student numbers completing the NSS have been low, however SRUC are working to address this. Positive feedback was received regarding staff expertise across disciplines in SRUC. The Committee thanked these staff for their contributions.

SRUC – SRUCSA Joint Working

The Committee noted that the SRUC Academic Board has approved the creation of a joint working group between SRUC and SRUCSA. The group will be co-chaired between a SRUCSA sabbatical officer and a senior member of staff within SRUC.

Work is being undertaken on a review of the class representative system within SRUC, as well as enhancing the training and development of sabbatical officers and students in representative roles. Work to review the Student Partnership Agreement is ongoing, with efforts being made to optimise the culture of dialogue between staff and students within SRUC.

Student Demographics

The Committee noted the increase in female students and students with a declared disability across SRUC.

The increase in female students has primarily been as a result of expanding the provision in veterinary nursing, which has been extended to the Aberdeen campus as well as the introduction of a new modern apprenticeship in veterinary nursing. It was noted that there is now much greater female representation across SRUC's environmental programmes. The Committee agreed that this was a positive transition within professions which have historically been male-dominated. It was noted that all Boards of Studies within SRUC have action plans on gender and widening participation. Action plans are being utilised to address programmes which are gender dominated.

The increase in students with a declared disability has created workload pressures on student support staff within SRUC, however funding has been allocated to help alleviate this pressure. Stackable programme design and small class sizes within a safe, supportive environment have contributed to an increase in this cohort. SRUC seeks to maximise the opportunities available to students following the admissions process to raise their learning support requirements. SRUC recently launched a new strategy to underpin mental health support for students.

8. PhD Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies Update

The Committee were informed that the first intake of students on to the PhD programme took place in October 2023. All students have progressed through their 10-week reviews, with no substantial issues reported. The SRUC Doctoral Committee will review their 1st year reports over the summer and a meeting will be held in September 2024 for progression review.

The Committee noted that the PhD students are predominantly full-time and funded through SRUC studentships. The students are based across Scotland, with the majority centred around Edinburgh and the central belt. While the programme induction was held in Edinburgh, the 10-week review practice session was held in Aberdeen and SRUC will seek to share events across

their campuses in order to build a solid cohort for students, wherever they are based.

The first PhD conference was held in April 2024, which students have fed back positively on. Cohort community building has been taking place remotely and via targeted in-person events. Training sessions are being held online to ensure that they are accessible to all PhD students. The Committee commended SRUC on the efforts to build student community on the programme, particularly taking into account the small student numbers and their disperse spread across Scotland.

In terms of supervision, the Committee noted that all supervisory teams have at least one experienced supervisor who has overseen at least two successful completions within SRUC. SRUC operate supervisor training events and have encouraged supervisors to attend the PhD conference event. Staff representatives from the SRUC Doctoral Committee provide support for supervisors across all campuses.

The Committee noted that the External Examiner for the PhD programme cannot be sourced from the University of Edinburgh, and that non-examining chairpersons have been added to SRUC regulations as standard.

For Approval

9. Accreditation of BSc Environmental Management and PhD in Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies (and with Placement)

The Committee affirmed continued accreditation of the following SRUC programmes:

- BSc Environmental Management
- PhD Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies (and with Placement)

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business noted.

11. Date of Next Meeting: TBC

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 May 2024

**Annual Monitoring and Internal Periodic Review Themes 2022-23:
University Level Actions**

Description of paper

1. This paper updates the Committee on University level actions agreed in response to issues identified as areas for further development in School Annual Quality Reports 2022-23 and themes that emerged from Internal Periodic Reviews held in 2022-23.

Action requested / recommendation

2. For information.

Background and context

3. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) approved actions at University level in response to issues identified as areas for further development in School Annual Quality Reports 2022-23 and themes that emerged from teaching/postgraduate programme reviews held in 2022-23 (at the September 2023 SQAC meeting).

Discussion

4. See paper below.

Resource implications

5. Resource implications are considered as part of each action.

Risk management

6. Ensuring that students and staff are confident that the University listens to and acts on their comments and feedback is essential to ensuring their engagement with quality processes. This report represents an element of the feedback loop from the central University level to the local School and College levels.

Equality & diversity

7. The actions encompass equality and diversity issues.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

8. Academic Services will inform relevant areas.

Author

Brian Connolly

Academic Services

Presenter

Brian Connolly

Academic Services

Freedom of Information

Open

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

Annual Monitoring and Internal Periodic Review Themes 2022/23: University Level Actions

The following responses were received in relation to issues raised in the reports and reviews 2022-23:

Area for Further Development	Update
<p>Staff Experience - a strong theme across reports was ongoing concerns in relation to workload pressures, the implementation of new systems and ways of working, and ultimately the impact these have on staff wellbeing and morale. The gradual rise in recruitment numbers, the onset/fallout of the Covid pandemic, and now the cost-of-living crisis and industrial action have all be contributing factors. However, reports noted ongoing frustrations with systems such as People and Money, Diversity Travel, the Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) system, and Timetabling (delayed/late release) continue to have a detrimental impact on the staff experience across the University.</p> <p>In this context, reports noted limited appetite for large-scale University change initiatives highlighted capacity constraints in regard to engagement with Curriculum Transformation programme.</p>	<p>Response from Dr Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services and Convenor of the Staff Experience Committee:</p> <p>The Staff Experience Committee (SEC) ensures that the University is managing its people agenda and working towards achieving our People Strategy objectives effectively. It:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owns and guides the direction of our staff experience on behalf of the University Executive; • Ensures that the University is managing the people agenda effectively; • Oversees how staff contribute to improved organisational performance within the Strategic Plan and Values; and • Drives ongoing improvements in staff experience building on the strengths of the current offer and through acting as the main approver of policy changes. <p>SEC has representation from all Colleges and Professional Services Groups.</p> <p>Staff Wellbeing has been a strong theme in 2023/24. A sub-group of the University's Safety, Health & Wellbeing Committee has been established and is linked to the People Strategy (via the common Chair of SEC and USHAWC). A draft wellbeing strategy was discussed at SEC in March 2024 and a new Deputy</p>

	<p>Director of Health & Wellbeing has been recruited into the Health & Safety department with the aim of driving wellbeing initiatives consistently across the University.</p>
<p>Student Engagement - Schools and Deaneries have gone to considerable efforts to engage students in dialogue about their teaching and learning and wider student experience. However, student response rates to both centrally and locally organised feedback initiatives have been persistently low. This has in turn resulted in staff frustration and growing scepticism regarding the utility of feedback derived from such low levels of engagement.</p>	<p>Response from Marianne Brown, Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling, Registry Services:</p> <p>The University continues to work in partnership with the Students' Associations to promote and explore ways to support and develop engagement with student voice activities at local and central level.</p> <p>Together, we ran a series of focus groups across the academic year, exploring with students their preferences in providing feedback, the barriers they face in providing feedback and how we can best communicate with them. Outcomes from this work are being used to create resources to support best practice. These will be shared to support local planning ahead of next academic year.</p> <p>We are trialling a range of new methods of engaging students with institutional and sector surveys to encourage greater response rates. This includes an increase in outward facing events, with representation at high traffic areas on campus offering free coffee vouchers as an incentive for students completing the survey. We are also trialling a donation based approach, where 50p per response is sent to a local charity. We are building engagement with local areas to understand what is working and what is not.</p> <p>We have established a cycle of communications to students to close the feedback loop. At the beginning of semester we outline ways in which they can provide feedback to us. At the end of each semester we confirm some of the key things we have heard from their feedback, and how we have or will respond. We would like to</p>

	<p>continue to build on this; developing more innovative mechanisms for communicating to students.</p> <p>We have introduced a new institutional survey, the Student Life Survey, replacing our previous 'pulse survey.' This aims to gather feedback across students' experience at the University.</p> <p>Local areas continue to innovate in different ways and we are working to create mechanisms for sharing this practice better. Some examples which have worked well include increased partnership with students in quality assurance processes, for example, embedding students in the undertaking of Internal Periodic Review (IPR) to ensure student voices are at the foreground of the work.</p>
<p>Assessment and Feedback - assessment and feedback continues to remain a key priority, both following the Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) recommendation and the recent National Student Survey (NSS) results. A majority of Schools/Deaneries report ongoing plans to review or address assessment and feedback, aligning with the new Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities. Further conversations are required with these Schools/Deaneries to progress work in this area. Feedback timeliness is a key cause for concern from the recent NSS. This is very likely to have been affected by the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB), but since MAB also affected other institutions that does not explain why Edinburgh has performed so much worse than other institutions. The new Principles and Priorities put the onus on Schools/Deaneries to set and communicate</p>	<p>Response from Professor Tina Harrison, Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) and Convener of the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group and the External Quality Review Oversight Group:</p> <p>Assessment and Feedback was the focus of a key recommendation of this year's Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR):</p> <p><i>the University should take immediate action, within the current academic year, to ensure that the new Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities (developed in response to ELIR) are fully implemented in all Schools, that feedback turn-round times and quality are monitored effectively, and that prompt action is taken to address any shortcomings.</i></p> <p>In response we are focusing on monitoring feedback turnaround times and the quality of feedback provided to our students.</p> <p>The Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Board (SEDaMOB), chaired by the Provost, is gathering data on turnaround times from Schools to provide us with</p>

<p>feedback return dates to students. Many of the School Quality Reports noted inconsistencies in meeting feedback return dates, but were not able to quantify this, which should be a key focus for the coming year.</p>	<p>a baseline understanding of current practice and to help guide appropriate action. From 2024/25 we will implement an ongoing monitoring system using a standardised template. Work is also ongoing to ensure the use of marking rubrics.</p> <p>The Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group has discussed options for monitoring/addressing feedback quality and agreed three actions to be taken forward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an overarching statement on what is meant by quality feedback to be taken forward with the Institute for Academic Development (IAD); 2. embedding monitoring of feedback quality in moderation processes (asking moderators to comment on the feedback provided as well as the marking. This already happens in some areas, but not consistently); 3. Consider feedback audits (building on the approach developed in the Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences). <p>Further support for colleagues in assessment design and feedback quality is planned for 2024-25 with input from IAD.</p>
<p>Learning and Teaching Infrastructure - a number of issues have been grouped under a broad theme of Learning and Teaching Infrastructure covering estates/space and IT/systems. Reports noted some difficulties accessing suitable teaching and office space particularly given the move towards new ways of hybrid working and the expansion of various professional service teams (due to the new student support approach). It was also noted that the further roll out of digital on-campus exams is hampered by the limited availability of suitable computer rooms and IT support.</p>	<p>Response from Helen Wood, Head of University Space, on behalf of the Estates Committee:</p> <p>Learning and Teaching Space Connecting space to the student experience and the curriculum is critical to the University’s continuing success. The Space Advisory Group (Chaired by Colm Harmon, representative from all colleges and support groups, both academic and professional services) advise and guide on the optimal use and quality of our spaces for students throughout the estate. We’re engaged with Colleges to understand what the future needs may be in order that we can support requirements.</p> <p>Modern workplace design – Hybrid Working Policy</p>

The way we use our estate is constantly evolving. We currently have an opportunity to re-imagine how we use our spaces on campus, to make positive sustainable changes to the way we learn, teach, work, create and interact with our peers, colleagues and students, as well as industry partners and the wider community.

Changes to space must be supported by suitable technology and consider behavioural changes required. Each capital development Business Case submitted to Estates Committee for approval must illustrate how the proposals integrate modern workplace design concepts, and consider how our environment can positively impact staff and student experience and wellbeing, ensuring a focus on the core principles:

- o Creating a sense of community and team on campus
- o Effective utilisation of our spaces
- o Creating an equitable and accessible estate for all

Space optimisation and a focus on effective utilisation of our spaces is essential moving forward. More sharing and less individually owned spaces will allow us to re-purpose space where appropriate for alternative uses.

Student Support spaces

The new model, requires access to an increased number of rooms for 1:1 private conversations. Estates are supporting schools and student support to consider where these spaces can be provided.

Spaces for students – study space review

Estates and Information Services Group (ISG) are supporting student experience colleagues and are now engaged with all Colleges and support groups to carry out a review of all our spaces for students. We have appointed a consultant to assist us with this exercise. The initial focus will be on validating the data, we will then look at type of spaces with have now and how these might change, supporting our needs going forward. We will also benchmark the study space data against peers,

	<p>to understand the size and shape required. This exercise will be closely aligned to the future of our teaching spaces work and will report to the Space Advisory Group for learning and teaching and student experience.</p> <p>Digital on-campus exams space A paper has been presented to Space Advisory Group on PC enabled exam space. Often, PC enabled spaces are used for teaching, study and exams, which means open access labs are unavailable for study during exam periods. The group agreed teaching should be prioritised, followed by exam usage. Work is on-going with all Colleges.</p> <p>There is a strain on availability of physical spaces for exams/during exam periods (there was a 57% increase in demand for our exam service particularly at King’s Buildings – with 22 requests for placing student PCs into exam mode this year, up from 14 last year). The increase in demand for digitally enabled exams is being considered and reviewed in the FLORA (Formal exams, Learning, Online Rubrics and Assessment) project, to discover what is needed for ‘under exams conditions’ in a changing digital context and what other universities do. Professor Tim Stratford (Engineering) is chair of the project board and Professor Colm Harmon will be the sponsor of any recommendations for investment.</p>
<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - concerns were raised in a number of reports about the cost-of-living crisis and the impact this was having on current and prospective students. The lack of accommodation options in the city and increased cost of living has impacted students' time and ability to focus on their studies as they spend increasing amounts of time searching for suitable accommodation and/or on part-time jobs to allow them to meet the costs of living in Edinburgh. The Medical School runs an</p>	<p>Response from Professor Colm Harmon, Vice Principal (Students) and Convenor of the Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group and the Widening Participation Strategy Group:</p> <p>Cost of living We are acutely aware of the issues being faced by students in Edinburgh, as in many other cities. We can always do more. However, there are extensive plans already in place, and substantial support structures which have been enhanced. As examples:</p>

<p>undergraduate student pantry, offering food and toiletries to support students and a survey evaluation indicated that it was widely used and appreciated by the students (for example, one said “Thank you so much. You’ve allowed me to be able to make soup and stay warm while on placement”).</p> <p>A number of areas also noted that if fees continue to rise this may have a detriment impact on recruitment compared to competitor programmes (noted as a particular issue for the CMVM Deaneries). Furthermore, the cost-of-living crisis and high fees may become barrier to the University’s aspirations to widen participation and diversify the student population.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Student support funds were enhanced and the process to access simplified to ensure that students facing issues of hardship can be provided with appropriate support, including at exceptionally short notice with payments made in less than 24 hours. 2) Edinburgh continues to offer one of the most extensive scholarship programmes in the University sector, with additional supports provided to care-experienced and other WP cohorts. 3) The availability of budget but nutritious offerings in University provided outlets. 4) Reintroduction of participation grants for societies and sports clubs. <p>Accommodation</p> <p>Extensive promotion of the challenges of sourcing accommodation began in Feb/March of 2023 for the following September entry, and this has been repeated this academic year. The university sourced and financially underwrote (absorbing financial costs) an expanded accommodation offer to ensure that all our guaranteed students were housed but that we were able to make over 2000 additional beds available to returning students, at various price points. We dealt with cases requesting emergency housing on demand, and continued to use our market contacts to provide opportunities to students. It is worth noting however that despite the sense of urgency in student housing, some 300 beds remain unoccupied, which is a substantial cost to the University which may have been directed elsewhere.</p> <p>Plans continue to support students on this issue, against it must be said a decline in Government funding for this (the Scottish Government has withdrawn funding for digital poverty for example, putting the full costs of laptop loans and other digital supports back to the University). We continue to refine and simplify our student support funding access, and also our scholarship offerings, to make it easier for applicants to source funds. We continue to use our lobbying influence in conversations with city and government stakeholders around student housing.</p>
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	<p>Fees</p> <p>Fee strategy is first reflected in the establishment of a fee by programmes (through the College structures). The university does not set the fee, rather the programmes are developed with a fee structure in place which is shaped by the needs and demands of the providing School and College. If programmes are struggling with respect to competitor programmes, College can bring forward proposals on fees - however the overall provision of a programme in a manner that is remunerative does imply that lower fees are met with higher intakes - which is challenging in some domains due to student demand but also provision constraints (space, staffing etc).</p> <p>The University has for some time had one of the largest, if not the largest, undergraduate access scholarship programme, and also targeted scheme at students who have faced particular hardships, e.g. care experienced. We are looking to expand our postgraduate scholarship provision. Typically, the policy holds a clear 'sticker price' for a programme, but with scholarship provision allowing for an effective subsidy to the fee or living expense. It is important to note that such scholarships require extensive use of funds sourced via the work of our Development and Alumni team, and the investment in students by the University of Edinburgh Development Trust.</p>
<p>Staff support and development – Internal Periodic Review recommendations covered guidance, training and support for postgraduate tutors and demonstrators.</p>	<p>Response from Professor Antony Maciocia, Dean of Postgraduate Research (CSE) and Postgraduate Research Lead, External Quality Review Oversight Group:</p> <p>One of the University's current Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) 2023 recommendations is to “... <i>take prompt action, within the current academic year, to consistently implement its updated policy and to ensure that training for PGRs who teach is required at the university and school-level, and that this action is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that all PGRs are fully supported in undertaking their teaching duties.</i>” This follows previous</p>

recommendations from Enhancement Led Institutional Reviews (ELIRs) and was concerned exclusively with postgraduate researchers.

Senate Education Committee (SEC) approved the five key strands of the development of tutor and demonstrator policy:

- a) implement structural changes to the governance of tutors and demonstrators;
- b) augment the policy with guidance around training and recruitment;
- c) review aspects of the policy to ensure that cross College/institution tutoring is facilitated;
- d) raise awareness of the need for support and resources; and
- e) activate the tutor and demonstrator network, offer cross institutional support and bolster communication.

SEC also approved a supplementary guidance document for Schools/Deaneries to help interpret the Policy which addressed recommendation (b) above.

This year's annual Programme and School QA reporting templates will include the following questions directly related to the QESR recommendation in order to gather baseline information of current practice (with an understanding that responses may be limited due to current data and training monitoring procedures):

What percentage of the postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach in your School/Deanery have been trained before engaging in teaching activities? What system does the School/Deanery have in place to monitor this training and what changes are still needed to ensure that all PGRs who teach are systematically trained and fully supported?

	<p>A plan to address the QESR recommendation will be discussed at the May meeting of the External Quality Review Oversight Group and proposals will be submitted to the next meeting of Senate Education Committee in September.</p>
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Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16th May 2024

Committee Priorities 2024/25

Description of paper

1. The paper asks the Committee to note the final proposed priorities for academic year 2024/25 for endorsement by Senate.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee is asked to note the proposed priorities for 2024/25.

Background and context

3. At its meeting in April the Committee discussed draft proposed committee priorities. The feedback provided by members at the meeting was used to develop a further iteration of the proposal priorities which was shared on the Committee’s SharePoint site for further comment. Comments received on this iteration have been used to finalise the proposed priorities.
4. The Standing Committees’ proposed priorities will be reported to Senate in May 2024 for endorsement.

Discussion

Committee priorities 2024/25 for endorsement by Senate

Proposed priority	Responding to 2023 Quality Enhancement & Standards Review (QESR)
Rationale and fit with remit	This priority responds to the recommendations following the 2023 QESR and is relevant to the committee remit: 2.1 Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University’s quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements. 2.5 Support the University’s engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.
Area of focus and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to focus on the progress required against the QESR recommendations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Assessment & Feedback (turnaround times and quality of feedback) ii) Implementation of the Tutors & Demonstrators training policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) Promotion of academic staff based on teaching iv) Learning & Teaching Strategy v) Attainment gap monitoring vi) Pace of change: make progress on recommendations from external reviews which can be evidenced in the next academic year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to support and monitor the work of the External Review Oversight Group who are taking action to progress the above recommendations. The group will report to SQAC and SEC to allow the Senate Committees to monitor progress against recommendations and ensure that appropriate action is being taken. • Committee will also update wider Senate on developments and progress in order to facilitate understanding of QESR and related external QA requirements. • Committee to give particular focus to progress against Assessment & Feedback and T&D training which have been identified as time critical recommendations following the external review.
Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes. This is in response to recommendations made in the QAA ELIR 2021 Report and the later QAA QESR Report (published January 2024).

Proposed priority	Responding to the outcome of the Scottish Funding Council's Tertiary Quality Review
Rationale and fit with remit	<p>A sector-wide Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) for implementation within 2024-25 is being developed (the University has been represented during this development). As above, this fits with the remit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1 Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements. • 2.5 Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.
Area of focus and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to focus on identifying where policy, guidance and practice is updated to align with changes to the TQEF • In line with its remit, the Committee is expected to promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business. • Committee will also update wider Senate on developments and changes in order to facilitate understanding and engagement with the new TQEF. •
Regulatory/external requirement?	Yes – mapping to SFC Guidance on Quality is an external requirement.

Proposed priority	Evaluation and monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the new student support model (SSM)
Rationale and fit with remit	<p>Relevant to committee remit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5 Support the University’s engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives. • 2.6 Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee’s policy development.
Area of focus and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of the evaluation of the implementation of the model (continuation from 2023/24 academic year). The Committee will look to ensure consistency and identify good practice & lessons learned from the use of the SSM. Any relevant lessons learned from implementation will be shared with the University’s change management group. • Oversight of the development of an evaluation mechanism as the model transitions to business as usual – including how this mechanism integrates with existing quality assurance processes. • Committee to be responsible for assessing the effectiveness of the SSM, through the evaluation model and supported by data to evidence the impact.
Regulatory/external requirement?	<p>Yes. The University has made progress on the recommendation in ELIR 4 to progress with student support services. Under this recommendation, the University was asked to develop an effective mechanism to monitor consistency of implementation and allow it to evaluate the impact of these changes on the student experience.</p> <p>Equally, evaluation and institutional oversight of the SSM will be an ongoing piece of work that will be the responsibility of SQAC as a quality measure once the project team completes its work.</p>

Proposed priority	Student Data Monitoring
Rationale and fit with remit	<p>Relevant to committee remit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.6 Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee’s policy development. • 2.7 Consider the implications of the Committee’s work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.

<p>Area of focus and objectives</p>	<p>The Committee established a task group in 2019/20 but the work was impacted by Covid-19 disruption. The Committee intend to revive the task group with the objective to adopt a systematic approach to monitoring data at University level across key stages in the student lifecycle. The aim is to understand how well the University supports different student groups throughout their time at Edinburgh. This new systematic approach will fill a gap in our oversight of the student experience at the University and will focus on quality data and high standards of evidence collection and use. Where appropriate, the Committee will consult with APRC to understand relevant policies, behaviours & EIQA analysis.</p> <p>Some aspects of the work of this task group are in alignment with the attainment monitoring recommendation of the QESR. The QESR report requires the University to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the recommendation on attainment gap oversight, coordination and monitoring from ELIR 4, expediting progress to ensure that the work being undertaken is effective. • Pay particular attention to sharing good practice and supporting staff in understanding the causes of attainment gaps and taking effective action.
<p>Regulatory/external requirement?</p>	<p>Yes. This was a recommendation in the QAA ELIR 2021 Report and has been re-emphasised in the QAA QESR Report (published January 2024).</p> <p>Furthermore, it is an area of work that the Committee has identified for focus in previous years and now looks to prioritise the package of work that is required.</p>

Resource implications

5. Standing Committees’ work has implications not only for Registry Services, but also for the membership and stakeholders the Committee may need to consult and work with in relation to a particular priority. Resource implications should be outlined and considered on an ongoing basis as work on priorities progresses.

Risk management

6. Work on priorities is vital to the Committee fulfilling its remit. Failure to fulfil its remit raises potential risks associated with the University’s framework of academic policy and regulations and the student experience.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

7. This paper does not respond to the climate emergency or contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & diversity

8. Equality and diversity implications should be outlined and considered on an ongoing basis as work on priorities progresses.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

9. The proposed priorities will be reported to Senate in May for endorsement. Additionally, the Senate Committees' Newsletter provides information on standing committee business.

Author

Registry Services

8th May 2024

Freedom of Information *Open*

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 May 2024

Membership and Terms of Reference 2024/25

Description of paper:

1. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) Membership and Terms of Reference for 2024/25.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. The Membership and Terms of Reference are presented to SQAC for members to note and advise of any forthcoming changes not already highlighted.

Background and context:

3. The membership for SQAC is presented to Senate annually for approval. Due to the timing of the May Senate and SQAC meetings, Senate receive the draft membership subject to any amendments following SQAC's May meeting. Any subsequent amendments to the membership are reported to Senate at the next Ordinary meeting, usually held in October.
4. Senate Standing Committees formally report to Senate annually in addition to providing updates on recent and forthcoming business at each ordinary meeting of Senate. These committees feed into and out of College level committees (Undergraduate Education, Postgraduate Education, Quality Assurance) and specialist Support Services (the Institute for Academic Development, Registry Services) via committee membership. Therefore, a number of committee roles are ex officio, to ensure that committee members have the appropriate knowledge, expertise, responsibility and accountability to fulfil the committee remit. In October 2022, Senate agreed to expand the membership of each Standing Committee to include three elected Senate members. An election is held annually to fill the three positions. All committees include student representation. SQAC includes an external member from another Scottish university.

Discussion

5. The draft Committee membership for SQAC will be presented to Senate for approval at its May meeting. The membership of SQAC will be confirmed at the final meeting of SQAC in May, in line with the Terms of Reference.
6. Changes to membership to take effect from 1 August 2024 are highlighted.
7. The SQAC webpages will be updated with membership once all positions are confirmed.
8. The SQAC Terms of Reference remain unchanged and are published on the Academic Services website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/education/terms-reference>

Resource implications

9. No amendments with resource implications are proposed.

Risk management

10. Effective academic governance assists the University in managing risk associated with its academic activities.

Equality & diversity

11. The composition of the Senate Committees is largely determined according to defined role-holders (e.g. defined Assistant or Vice-Principal, Dean of Quality) or as representatives of particular stakeholders (e.g. a College or the Students' Association). The membership of SQAC is therefore largely a consequence of decisions taken elsewhere to appoint individuals to particular roles. Ensuring that appointment processes support a diverse staff body is part of the broader responsibility of the University.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed

12. SQAC's Membership and Terms of Reference are communicated via the Academic Services website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/education>

13. Senate Standing Committees are subject to an annual internal review process, and this is reported annually to Senate.

Author

Registry Services

May 2024

Freedom of Information: Open

SQAC 23/24 5K

Name	Position	Term of Office
Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Ex Officio
Professor Matthew Bailey (Vice-Convener)	College Dean of Quality (CMVM)	Ex Officio
Professor Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture (CSE)	Ex Officio
Dr Emily Taylor	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS)	Ex Officio
Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar	School representative of CMVM (Director of Quality)	1 August 2023-31 July 2026
TBC	School representative of CSE	
Dr Anne Desler	School representative of CAHSS (Director of Quality)	1 August 2023-31 July 2026
Professor Laura Bradley	Representative of Doctoral College	
Olivia Eadie	Representative of Institute for Academic Development	
Professor Nazira Karodia	Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching, Edinburgh Napier University (external member from within the Scottish H.E. sector with experience in quality assurance)	1 August 2023-31 July 2026
Dylan Walsh	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Ex Officio
Callum Paterson	Academic Engagement & Policy Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Ex Officio
Brian Connolly	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services	Ex Officio
Marianne Brown	Co-opted member (Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling)	1 August 2024 – 31 July 2027
TBC – election outcome not yet known	Representative of Senate	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
TBC – election outcome not yet known	Representative of Senate	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
TBC – election outcome not yet known	Representative of Senate	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025
Sinéad Docherty	Committee Secretary	