

**Draft minutes – for approval at meeting to be held on 9 October 2019**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)  
held at 2pm on Wednesday 22 May 2019  
in the Liberton Tower Room, Murchison House, Kings Buildings**

**1. Attendance**

<b>Present:</b>	
Professor Stephen Bowd	Dean of Postgraduate Studies (CAHSS)
Ms Megan Brown	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Academic Engagement Co-ordinator (Ex officio)
Ms Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (Ex officio)
Professor Iain Gordon	Head of School of Mathematics (Co-opted member)
Ms Shelagh Green	Director for Careers and Employability (Ex officio)
Professor Judy Hardy	Director of Teaching, School of Physics and Astronomy (CSE)
Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)
Dr Sarah Henderson	Acting Director for Postgraduate Taught (CMVM)
Ms Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division
Professor Charlie Jeffery (Convener)	Senior Vice-Principal
Ms Nichola Kett	Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services
Ms Diva Mukherji	Vice President (Education), Edinburgh University Students' Association (Ex officio)
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Dr Sabine Rolle	Dean of Undergraduate Studies (CAHSS)
Professor Mike Shipston	Dean of Biomedical Sciences (Co-opted member)
Mrs Philippa Ward	Academic Services
<b>Apologies:</b>	
Professor Rowena Arshad	Head of Moray House School of Education (Co-opted member)
Professor Sian Bayne	Director of Centre for Research in Digital Education (Co-opted member)
Dr Velda McCune	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Ex officio, Director's nominee)
<b>In attendance:</b>	
Dr Paddy Hadoke	CSE
Dr Antony Maciocia	MVM
Mr Tobias Thejll-Madsen	Employability Consultancy, Careers Service
Dr Jon Turner	IAD

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

LTC approved the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2019.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **3.1 Electronic Consideration of Student Experience Action Plan (13 March 2019 meeting, agenda item 5.8)**

The Committee noted members' feedback on the latest draft of the Student Experience Action Plan which had been circulated electronically after the March meeting of LTC.

### **4. Convener's Business**

#### **4.1 Vice-Principal Students Post**

The Convener advised members that the new Vice-Principal Students, Professor Colm Harmon, would take up his post in October 2019. Professor Harmon had visited the University the previous week, and would also be attending the Learning and Teaching Conference in June 2019.

#### **4.2 Learning and Teaching Conference**

Members noted that all places at the Learning and Teaching Conference had been filled within 36 hours of registration opening. There was a waiting list in operation and the Director of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) advised members that this was being managed to ensure that a spread of academic and professional services staff from all areas of the University were in attendance. Arrangements were being made to livestream some of the Conference sessions, and the possibility of holding the conference in a larger venue next year was being considered.

### **5. For Discussion**

#### **5.1 Careers and Employability Update**

The Director for Careers and Employability advised members that the paper provided a brief update on activity previously recommended by LTC in support of careers, employability and graduate outcomes. There was further work to do, but progress had been made against the five priority areas identified by a Careers and Employability Task Group of LTC in May 2018, and there was a sense that the internal landscape was changing.

The most recent development was the completion of a light-touch mapping of current practice within Schools. Tobias Thejll-Madsen was thanked for his significant contribution to this work. It was noted that the mapping had asked Schools and Subject Areas to mark against 10 measures, with no expectation that every Subject would mark against these in the same way. The mapping had identified an encouraging range of activity and examples of best practice. Work would now be done to ensure that this best practice was shared effectively.

'Enterprise Education' and 'Reflection' had been identified as areas for improvement. The mapping had also identified the need for Schools to be more explicit about their provision to ensure that both staff and students were fully aware of the employability-related aspects of their curricula. Members noted that the exercise had not mapped specifically for digital skills, and that there may be benefit in doing this in future.

The Committee supported the proposed priorities for 2019/20, and particularly the proposal to review the University's graduate attribute framework. It was recognised that there was a need to adopt both institutional and School-level approaches to the development of employability, and that employability and graduate attribute development should be central to any discussions around curriculum review and reform. Members noted staff concerns about workload and the need, therefore, to ensure that any developments in the area of employability were properly supported.

The Committee also supported undertaking a piece of work to gather student views on careers and employability. It was agreed that this could be done by consulting Programme Representatives, and members suggested that there may also be benefit in trying to consult a group of less-engaged students.

The Director for Careers and Employability was encouraged to feed into the University's ongoing Student Support Review, and specifically into discussions around the careers-related aspects of the Personal Tutor role.

## 5.2 Enhancing Doctoral Training Provision

Dr Maciocia advised the Committee that the landscape for Postgraduate Research (PGR) training was changing, and that, in this context, there was a need for the University to present a coherent picture of its provision. To facilitate this, the University needed to put in place horizontal structures that cut across and promoted better communication between its existing, vertical structures.

Members also noted that a task group was in the process of reviewing the structure and effectiveness of Senate and its Standing Committees, and had proposed the abolition of Researcher Experience Committee (REC), with its PGR-related activities transferring to Learning and Teaching Committee. With that in mind, an early consideration of PGR issues at LTC was sensible. The Committee was aware that the Service Excellence Programme was considering PGR systems and processes.

The paper proposed the creation of a 'Doctoral College': a small, central unit consisting of an academic director, an administrative director and an administrative assistant, with additional input from existing staff in the Colleges and Support Groups. A high-level, short-life working group would be established to draw up precise design details for the proposed structure.

Members strongly supported the proposal noting both the limitations of the University's existing PGR governance structures, and recommendations in the previous Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) around PGR provision. As such, it was agreed that the proposed working group would be established, and that a representative of the Service Excellence Programme would be invited to join the membership. It was hoped that it would be possible to bring more detailed plans to the October 2019 meeting of LTC.

<p><b>Action:</b> Authors of paper to establish proposed working group, and to invite a representative of the Service Excellence Programme to join the membership.</p>
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### **5.3 UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Approach to Advice and Guidance**

The UK Quality Code sets out the fundamental principles that should apply to Higher Education across the UK. The paper outlined recent changes to the Code and asked members to discuss and approve an approach to using the Code's underpinning advice and guidance.

Members noted that the newly-introduced version of the Code consisted of mandatory expectations; core practices (applicable UK-wide); common practices (mandatory for Scottish but not English institutions); and non-mandatory advice and guidance, although QAA Scotland expected Scottish institutions to map down to the 'guiding principles' level of the advice and guidance in order to demonstrate that they were meeting the Code's mandatory expectations. Committee members expressed disappointment that Scottish institutions were being asked to map down to this level, but were supportive of the paper's proposal to undertake an initial mapping in Semester 1 2019/20 with the aim of identifying any gaps in provision. Provided no gaps were identified, each University policy and practice would then be reviewed within its planned timescale. Comprehensive mapping would be completed in time for submission of the University's ELIR Advanced Information Set in summer 2020. LTC agreed that, wherever possible, mapping and review should be light-touch, and that the University should be identifying opportunities to make efficiencies whilst still ensuring that policies and practices were effective.

### **5.4 Mid-Course Feedback: Follow-Up Evaluation**

The paper outlined the results of evaluation of mid-course feedback undertaken in March 2019. Members noted that the staff responses gathered were broadly positive and consistent with those received in academic year 2017/18: use of mid-course feedback was high amongst respondents, and it was valued by those who used it. Postcards were the most popular method for gathering feedback, and most issues identified through the feedback were being resolved within the course timeframe. Over a third of respondents noted that the feedback had brought to their attention issues which they would otherwise not have been aware of. Limited confusion appeared to exist amongst staff and students on account of there being multiple points for gathering feedback from students.

The Committee supported the 5 recommendations outlined in the paper, namely that:

1. Mid-course feedback should also be used in taught postgraduate (PGT) courses. It was agreed this should be encouraged from September 2019, with the understanding that colleagues would be given time to adjust and put appropriate systems in place.
2. Guidance on what constitutes mid-course feedback should be produced. Members agreed that this should include guidance on situations where the use of mid-course feedback might not be appropriate, and should make clear to Schools and Course Organisers that there was flexibility to use mid-course feedback in the way that worked best for their provision.
3. Existing examples of mid-course feedback should be shared.
4. Mid-course feedback should be standard for courses running for 10 weeks or more.
5. The term 'mid-course feedback' should be used consistently, with 'mid-semester feedback' being avoided to make it clear that only one opportunity for mid-course

feedback needed to be provided for courses running over two semesters. Members noted that care would need to be taken to avoid confusion with end of year questionnaires.

The importance of closing the feedback loop when using mid-course feedback was highlighted. This should include discussing with students changes that were not being made in response to the feedback received.

It was agreed that Colleges would be consulted about the proposed introduction of mid-course feedback for PGT provision, and that the matter would then be taken to Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for electronic approval. A repeat evaluation exercise would be undertaken in 2019/20 to allow the impact of the PGT changes to be measured.

**Action:** Ms Kett to consult Colleges about the proposed introduction of mid-course feedback for PGT provision before taking the matter back to QAC for electronic approval.

## **5.5 Final Report of the Task Group to Review the Operation of Section 6.1 of the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)**

The Committee noted and approved the principles to be applied when considering whether or not an activity should be included in Section 6.1 of the HEAR (subject to clarifying heading 1, 'Additional Awards').

Members also agreed, in response to questions raised by Student Systems, that there would be benefit in including information about professionally accredited programmes and work and study away on the HEAR, and in offering any student of the University a HEAR, whether they were studying on campus or at a distance. The Committee recognised that facilitating these changes would require substantial resource.

**Action:** Secretary to publish the approved principles and to advise Student Systems of the Committee's views on the questions raised.

## **5.6 Senate Themes for 2019/20 Meetings**

Members suggested the following possible themes for Senate meetings in 2019/20:

- Postgraduate Research students and Early Career Researchers
- The role of the Library – future role, including the role of the digital library
- Co-creation of the curriculum
- Student and staff wellbeing (to coincide with the opening of the 'Wellbeing Centre')
- Curriculum review
- Community

The proposed themes would be discussed with the Principal.

## 6. For Approval

### 6.1 Review of Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy (AILP)

Members considered the revised Policy and recognised the benefit of linking this to the University's newly-introduced Lecture Recording Policy. However, it was agreed that there would be benefit in making additional changes to ensure that AILP fully reflected current practice. The Director of the Learning Teaching and Web Services Division of Information Services would work with the Director of the Student Disability Service to make the required changes, and the Policy would be signed off electronically by LTC over the summer for implementation in Semester 1 2019/20.

**Action:** Director of the Learning Teaching and Web Services Division to work with the Director of the Student Disability Service to make the required changes. Revised Policy to be signed off electronically by LTC over the summer for implementation in Semester 1 2019/20.

### 6.2 Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group: Proposed Update Name, Remit and Membership

The Committee approved the proposed name ('Support for Curriculum Development Group') and membership for the Group. It agreed that some minor amendments should be made to the proposed remit to make it clearer that the group was operational in nature.

**Action:** Dean of Undergraduate Studies, CAHSS to make required changes to the Group's remit.

## 7. For Information and Noting

### 7.1 Review of Common Marking Schemes: Update

Members noted that progress with the review had been limited on account of changes in senior management and other areas of activity. However, it was anticipated that a review of the Common Marking Schemes would be incorporated into upcoming, broader curriculum review discussions.

### 7.2 Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee (Meeting 22 March 2019)

The report was noted.

### 7.3 Space Strategy Group Report

The Committee noted that the Learning and Teaching Spaces Strategy had been approved and that all staff were now being encouraged to engage with its implementation.

### 7.4 Student Representation: Programme-Level System Update

LTC was advised that, in the first year of the new system, there had been a 35% decrease in Student Rep numbers and a 15% increase in the number of Reps completing training. 66% of this year's Reps had produced handover documents for their successors, and 96% of these had stated that they would recommend the role to others.

Areas for further development included looking at the best way for Reps to communicate with their students, sharing relevant data (eg. high-level NSS and PTES data) with senior Reps at School level, and identifying clear routes for dealing with issues that could not be addressed at Student-Staff Liaison Committee level (eg. University-wide transport issues).

The Committee was satisfied with the progress that had been made and agreed that the Programme-Level System appeared to be working effectively.

## **8. Any Other Business**

The Committee thanked those members whose terms of office were coming to an end for their service: Students' Association Vice-President Education; Head of the School of Mathematics; Head of the Deanery of Biomedical Sciences; Head of Moray House School of Education; and the Director of the Centre for Research in Digital Education.

Members also thanked the Dean of Learning and Teaching, CSE for his commitment to the work of the Committee over a number of years, and wished him well in his retirement.

Philippa Ward  
Academic Services  
31 May 2019