



SENATUS ACADEMICUS

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS

Held in-person at Lecture Theatre A, 40 George Square on Wednesday 25
May 2022 at 2pm

OPEN SESSION

This session is open to all members of staff. Approximately 130 members of staff attended.

1. Convener's Communications

The Convener noted the following points

- The publication of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) gives cause for pride in the achievements of the University, especially for the researchers, technical staff and all staff involved in the submission. The University has emerged well and congratulations were extended to all involved.
- The QS World University Rankings are to be published in June 2022. The University of Edinburgh has risen to fifteenth in the world.
- Professor Moira Whyte, who has been very unwell, has been discharged from hospital and is making excellent progress in her recovery.
- The University is performing well in terms of finance and demand for student places as demonstrated by student application numbers. This is a positive indication of the University's reputation. The Convener noted that there will be ongoing challenges around staff workload, morale and satisfaction and there is a great deal of work being done in this area.
- The Convener extended apologies to colleagues unable to attend the in-person meeting, and noted that requests were received for the 25 May meeting to be held in hybrid format. Efforts to arrange a hybrid meeting were ongoing until the meeting took place, however could not be achieved for the 25 May meeting. The Convener identified that the technology in large lecture theatres was insufficient to facilitate a hybrid meeting, however this will be taken forward ahead of future meetings.
- The Convener also noted the unsuitability of the venue for wheelchair users. The venue had been chosen for its size. Accessibility will be taken into account for future in-person meetings.

The Convener invited questions from the audience and responses to these are noted below:

- The Convener reiterated his apologies to colleagues unable to attend the in-person meeting and the pros and cons of hybrid or fully online meetings will be considered in future. The technology in the large lecture theatres available was insufficient to facilitate a successful hybrid meeting of Senate on this occasion.

2. Strategic Presentation and Discussion

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Outcomes and Actions

Attendees received the following presentations.

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Outcomes and Actions

- **Introduction and overview of ELIR response:** Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
- **Update on approach to student support:** Lisa Dawson, Deputy Secretary, Students (interim); Dr Chris Mowat, Director of Teaching, School of Chemistry

- **Update on approach to assessment and feedback:** Dr Sabine Rolle, Dean for Undergraduate Studies, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance

Key points made during the presentation:

- ELIR is the method used by the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) to review and assess the effectiveness of higher education institutions' approaches to securing academic standards and the quality of the student experience.
- Edinburgh's review took place in February/March 2021, with the final report received in July 2021. Edinburgh received a positive outcome, and the judgement was of effectiveness, which is the highest judgement that can be achieved.
- The University is required to provide an update on the progress against the recommendations made by QAAS by July 2022. The response to the review is being managed by the ELIR Oversight Group, who are responsible for leading and driving forward the recommendations. A draft ELIR Report has been discussed by the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and the University Executive. A copy is also included in the 25 May Senate papers for comment. University Court is responsible for approving the final report which will be submitted to QAAS.
- The two priority recommendations given are Student Support and Assessment and Feedback. QAAS has asked to see demonstrable improvement in these two areas.
- Student Support:
 - ELIR Recommendation: *"make **significant progress** in implementing plans to ensure an effective approach to offering personal student support ... The University should make **demonstrable progress within the next academic year** in respect of ensuring **parity of experience for students and effective signposting to support services and delivery of an agreed and consistent baseline level of provision**. As part of its approach, the University is 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**."*
 - The University has worked to develop a new student support model in response to the ELIR recommendations. The new student support model will be implemented from September 2022, with the intention that this will be embedded by September 2023.
 - The new model focussed on providing an ecosystem of support, which was endorsed by QAAS.
 - There has already been investment made in supporting students and recruitment is underway to fill professional services roles including Student Advisor and Wellbeing Advisor positions with staff to commence in July/August 2022.
 - Academic Cohort Lead are an academic staff role, which is separate to the support provided by professional services staff. The Academic Cohort lead will provide academic support and develop community within a cohort. There is an assumed ratio of 80-1 however there is flexibility within this. It is up to Schools to plan how they intend to implement the ratio and define cohorts. The Academic Cohort Lead is to consider developing relationship building between students and staff, and facilitate co-curricular, extracurricular or social activities for cohorts.
 - Further information is available on the new student support model are available from the [Student Support - Briefing Resources for Schools and Deaneries - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#).
- Assessment and Feedback:
 - ELIR Recommendation: *"The University is asked to **make demonstrable progress, within the next academic year**, in prioritising the development of a **holistic and strategic approach** to the design and management of assessment and feedback"*.
 - The task group considered assessment, feedback, marking schema and academic year. They focussed on assessment and feedback as the most pressing issues for the ELIR review.
 - A set of Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities have been established for implementation from the 2022/23 academic year. These principles and priorities set the baseline expectation for quality and practice and take a holistic and strategic approach. Principles and priorities were developed against benchmarking across other institutions, especially those who perform well in the National Student Survey.

- Support for staff in implementing the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities will be developed through building a community of best practice through Director of Teaching networks.
- Principles and priorities were co-created with students, and guidance for students will be developed. There is a strong emphasis on working with students as partners in developing assessment and feedback.
- Further information on the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities is available in the Senate Education Committee papers.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- It was noted that the 80-1 ratio for Academic Cohort Leads may be an unmanageable load for staff, it was noted that the new model would reduce interactions with academic staff and may erode the one-to-one relationship between academic staff and students.
It was reiterated that the new model is not trying to fit the current student support model that is in place. The 80-1 ratio is given as a guide and Schools are able to invest further if they wish to. The ratio gives consistency around wellbeing support for students. It was noted that some staff are disappointed that they will no longer have interactions with students as Personal Tutors, however it was reiterated that colleagues will be able to continue supporting students via other roles, for example via interactions via teaching or supervision.
- A question on how QAAS will measure demonstrable progress was received. It was noted that QAAS will determine if sufficient progress has been made from the ELIR Year-on report. Early conversations with QAAS are positive, though if insufficient progress is made then there will be follow up conversations held.
- In response to a question on whether Student Advisors were a professional services or academic role, it was confirmed that Student Advisors would be professional services roles, and training will be focussed on triaging students to seek relevant support. This may involve referring students to meet with the Academic Cohort Lead, or other relevant staff. This will continue to be monitored during the roll-out phase and tweaks will be made as necessary.
- The idea of a Student Support Statement was raised. It was noted that a statement, similar to that of the Personal Tutoring statement, may be beneficial to manage expectations on the support provided by Academic Cohort Leads. It was confirmed that Academic Cohort Leads have flexibility to tailor the approach to the needs of students, the academic layer of support can be responsive and contextualised to the type of student being supported by the Leads.
- Facilitating engagement of students and staff with the Assessment and Feedback guidance being developed was received. It was noted that details around the guidance are still to be confirmed and it is intended that this will be created in consultation with students.
- A question regarding the budget and resource for implementing the student support model and assessment and feedback principles and priorities was received. It was confirmed that work on the Curriculum Transformation project was ongoing, and work is being done to embed the new model into the existing systems.
- It was confirmed that a paper would be presented to Academic Policy and Regulations Committee to relax the fifteen working day turnaround for marking in 2022/23, with emphasis to be on providing useful and meaningful feedback to students.

The Convener thanked the presenters.

Research Excellence Framework 2021

- **Introduction and Overview of Results:** Professor Christina Boswell, Dean of Research for CAHSS and incoming Vice Principal for Research and Enterprise
- **Funding and the Research Excellence Grant:** Ms Pauline Manchester, Deputy Director of Planning and Policy
- **Perspective from Physics:** Prof Ken Rice, Unit of Assessment Coordinator, Physics
- **Perspective from Art and Design:** Dr Kamini Vellodi, Director of Research Excellence, Edinburgh College of Art

Key points made during the presentation:

- An overview of the University's REF submission was received. Edinburgh returned submissions for 28 of the 34 subpanels and there was a significant increase in submissions for 2021 when compared with 2014.

- It was noted that in 2014 Edinburgh included all research in the REF submission, whereas other institutions may have included only their highest performing research. In 2021, all research was to be included for all institutions. This may indicate substantive growth in research at other institutions, though this may not be an accurate reflection of actual growth.
- There was overall growth across the main panels, though not all of this will be substantive growth in research numbers.
- Edinburgh did very well on Research Environment.
- Impact wasn't as glowing, and Edinburgh is now lagging behind institutions that made investment in impact.
- Outputs are just below the Russell Group average, and a focus on fewer and higher quality outputs is important.
- The importance of REF was explained, and it was noted that REF is a source of income, and has reputational importance to attract students, staff and funding.
- The funding received as a result of the REF will depend on how the University performs in relation to Scottish competitors. The Research Excellence Grant is a flexible funding source and the funding received from this grant will be determined by the REF. In a Scottish context, Edinburgh generally performs well and Edinburgh has received 31% of Scotland's total for over 10 years. In 2021-22 the University received £82 million in funding from the Research Excellence Grant.
- The REF drives good practice. When compared with 2014, there is an average of 2.5 outputs over 7 years. REF helps to identify gaps in support, identify EDI issues, and provide support for early career researchers.
- Some further analysis on the data collected, including gender representation, will be undertaken.
- Professor Ken Rice spoke to the experience of The School of Physics and Astronomy and noted that the School had suffered from a lack of diversity, and REF had provided an opportunity to examine the School's EDI position. The REF is not a major driver of EDI, however it is key that EDI is assessed in the REF Environment Statement. Positive outcomes from the REF include a fewer outputs and greater inclusivity. Post-REF, there has been an increase in the number of female Chairs with an increase from 1 to 9 chairs held by female colleagues in 2021.
- Dr. Kamini Vellodi spoke to the experience of Edinburgh College of Art (ECA). The REF has been a driver for positive change in ECA, with a range of research types being included in the submission. There was an increase in researchers included in 2021, when compared with the 2014 submission. It was noted that a number of colleagues did not see their work as research, and ECA has a large part-time staff community and many of these colleagues do not produce outputs under the badge of the University. ECA submitted representation of research and included output as process, rather than only works produced.
- The Future Research Assessment Programme review is underway and this will tweak the process for the next REF.
- Focus towards the next REF will be on gathering insights on reviewing across panels, enhancing support for impact, understanding inequalities in the submission and strengthening good research culture.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- It was noted that the University adopted a policy to not inform colleagues of their ranking, whereas other universities in the sector and within the Russell Group did share rankings with staff. It was queried whether this policy would be revisited in the future. The University saw REF as a collective effort and the decision was taken to decouple staff from their outputs in a way that was consistent with the Code of Practice. It was noted that the way REF was approached by the University enabled the REF to be undertaken with a lower level of anxiety than colleagues at other UK institutions. With the results of REF now available, some institutions are announcing substantial redundancies, it was queried what the University Executive are doing around this. The approach taken by Edinburgh has allowed for the link between performance and REF to be diluted, though this does not dilute institutional impact. Universities UK are responsible for taking forward conversations around research concentration.
- The division of funding allocated by the Scottish Funding Council was raised and it was questioned how the budget is divided. The funds received go into an overall budget pool. Data is used to inform the process, however the division of funds is a nuanced process.

- It was noted that the GPA awarded for digital artefacts is higher than books or monographs. It was queried how the results of REF may feed into the digital strategy. This was noted by the presenters.
- It was noted that University systems, including PURE, are underutilised and colleagues were encouraged to use PURE to catalogue and promote research.
- It was noted that the University had some very highly ranked submissions and a very high number of researchers from across disciplines. Congratulations and thanks was extended to all staff involved in REF.

The Convener thanked the presenters and attendees.

A recording of the presentation and subsequent discussion is available on request from SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk.

FORMAL MEETING OF SENATE

This section of the meeting is open to Senate members only.

Present: The Principal, ANDREW Ruth, ANDREWS Richard, BARAKAT Ammir, BARANY Michael, BENJAMIN Shereen, BLYTHE Richard, BOSWELL Christina, BUDD Adam, CAIRNS John, CALVERT Jane, CAQUINEAU Celine, CHUE HONG Neil, COHEN Shalhavit Simcha, CONNOR Andrew, CRUZ Juan, CUNNINGHAM-BURLEY Sarah, DANBOLT Jo, DESLER Anne, DIMARTINO Simone, DONOVAN Kevin, DUNLOP James, EFERAKORHO Jite, FISHER Bob, GORDON Iain, HARDY Judy, HARMON Colm, HARRISON Tina, HILLSTON Jane, HUNTER Emma, KINNEAR George, KIRSTEIN Linda, LORETTO Wendy, MACCALLUM, MacPHERSON Sarah, MARSLAND Rebecca, MENZIES John, MIELL Dorothy, MORAN Nicola, NORRIS Paul, NOVENSON Matthew, NGWENYA Bryne, O BRADAIGH Conchur, OOSTERHOFF Richard, PATON Diana, PULHAM Colin, RICE Ken, RILEY Simon, ROLLE Sabine, SIMPSON Beth, SIRO Reka, SMITH Sarah, TAYLOR Emily, TERRAS Melissa, TRODD Tamara, TURNER Adam, TUZI Nadia, VELLODI Kamini, WEIR Christopher

In attendance: DAWSON Lisa, HAYES Olivia, MACGREGOR Sue

Apologies: ALIOTTA Marialuisa, ANDREANGELI Arianna, ARGYLE David, BALTARETU Ioana, BARLETTANI Diego, BAYNE Sian, BOMBERG Elizabeth, BOND Helen, BRADFIELD Julian, BRANIGAN Holly, BRENNAN Mary, CRANG Jeremy, CRITCHLEY Hilary, DAVIES Mia Nicole, DU PLESSIS Paul, ELLIS Heather, EUSA VP Welfare, EVANS Mark, EVENSEN Darrick, EWING Suzanne, FERNANDEZ-GOTZ Manual, FRIEDRICH Daniel, FRENCH Chris, GENTZ Natascha, GRAY David, GRAY Gillian, GREWAL Nisha, HAYCOCK-STUART Elaine, HEYCOCK Caroline, HIGHTON Melissa, HOLLOWAY Aisha, HOLT Sophie, IBIKUNLE Gbenga, JACOBS Emily, JENKINS Kirsten, JIWAJI Zueb, KENNY Meryl, KENWAY Richard, KHATTAR Medhat, LLORENTE PRADA Jaime, LLOYD Ashley, McARA Lesley, McQUEEN Heather, MACIOCIA Antony, MARTIN Catherine, MATTHEWS Keith, MEIKSIN Avery, MOLE Damian, MORAN Carmel, MORLEY Steven, MORRIS Andrew, MORROW Susan, MURRAY Jonny, NAVARRO Pau, NICOL Robbie, NOWAR Silmee, PHILLIPS Claire, REYNOLDS Rebecca, REYNOLDS-WRIGHT John, ROBBINS Jeremy, ROBERTSON David, ROSS George, SCHWARZ Tobias, SECKL Jonathan, SHAW Jo, SIMM Geoff, SORACE Antonella, STRATFORD Tim, TAYLOR Paul, TERRY Jonathan, THOMAS Robert, TUFAIL-HANIF Uzma, TURNER Jon, WAD Shrikant, WAHI-SINGH Pia, WARWICK Shona, WARRINGTON Stephen, YILDIRIM Alper

The Convener welcomed Senate members to the meeting, and noted that the meeting was not quorate. The Convener confirmed that those in attendance may provisionally deal with such unopposed business as the Convener shall judge to be of a non-contentious character. Such business shall not include the approval of the Minutes of any previous Meeting. All other business shall be held over until the next Ordinary Meeting.

Senate members raised the following points, which were noted by the Convener:

- The presentations were informative, though these take time from the formal meeting and can be pre-recorded.

- A hybrid meeting may facilitate quorum. It was emphasised that Senate has been quorate when meeting in a remote format over the past two years. It was noted that multiple colleagues with disabilities, medical vulnerabilities, and other barriers to attendance requested and were denied the reasonable accommodation of a hybrid or remote meeting. It was requested that consideration be given to the timing of the meeting to facilitate attendance from colleagues who have caring commitments. It was noted that School commitments, such as School Away Days prevented attendance from some members.
- Members requested that they be able to submit written comments for inclusion in the minutes by email following the meeting as there may be insufficient time to receive these during the meeting.
The Convener confirmed that written comments are welcome, though these may not be included verbatim.

3. Senate members' feedback on the presentation and discussion topic

Senate members were invited to make any further comments on the presentation and discussion topic. The following points were discussed.

- The size of the cohort for student support and the 80-1 ratio identified during the ELIR presentation was noted as a concern. It was noted that large ratios may mean that students would be overlooked, and students would not have the personalised interactions with staff available under the existing Personal Tutor system.
The 80-1 ratio is a guideline and there is opportunity for flexibility around this. The ratios were established following the initial consultation which took place.
It was noted that support available under the existing Personal Tutor model is patchy, and emphasis was made that the new model is a *new model* and does not intend to replace or replicate the old, nor remove a relationship between staff and students. Consultation looked at other institutions and the new model is informed by the findings of this.
- There was concern raised that a valuable feature of the existing Personal Tutor system would be lost under the new model, as students will no longer have a compulsory meeting with their Personal Tutor in each semester. It was suggested that pre-Honours students could be most acutely impacted as there is no requirement to engage with academic support under the new system. It was noted that the compulsory nature of the meeting forced students to engage in a relationship with academic staff, and was an opportunity for students to review their course marks with their Personal Tutor. Meetings would now be by request only.
The new model will provide a consistent and enhanced level of student support and schools have extensive control over how they would like to implement the new system. The aim of the new model is to improve systems of support and local control over this will be available.
- A query was raised regarding whether the right systems are in place.
On the technical systems point, there are some systems still to be put in place and processes still to shift, work on this is in progress.
On the systems contained within the new model. The social aspect and community building are not included in the current student support systems, and data indicates that many students have never met with their Personal Tutor.
The new system challenges the premise that a one-to-one meeting is the cornerstone of an academic relationship and empowers the cohort lead to develop the social aspect and support activities around this.
The University is moving to a radically different way of managing student support. The new system moves away from a single point of failure, to a four pillars approach and there is opportunity for students to strengthen and build relationships. Schools should not be limited by the changes, but find opportunity to build on the new system. Academic Cohort Leads will have the opportunity to build a sense of community, in addition to providing support for professional development.
- Student members were invited to comment on their experience of student support. Student's experiences of the existing system is varied, and it was noted that the one-to-one meetings with a Personal Tutor (PT) at the start of a student's programme helps them to form a good relationship with their PT. It was also suggested that consideration be given to the 80-1 ratio. Some students may benefit from a personalised experience and the new model may be a challenge for students who may feel as though they are "just another number". It was noted that students may also be reluctant to reach out to a staff member they do not know.

Senate members were invited to submit any further comments in writing via email.

Comments received by members via email following the meeting:

- A query was received on the ELIR Outcomes and Actions presentation. Senate approved a draft “direction of travel” for the ELIR response at the 7 October 2021 meeting, and members raised concerns at the time of approval. It was queried what action had been taken to address the concerns raised.
- A concern was raised on the expectation of staff to align teaching practices with the teaching and assessment principles. Specifically, the autonomy of teaching staff to determine the best teaching and assessment practices within their respective fields.
- It was queried how programme-level oversight and coordination would apply to those courses not owned by, or not aligned with, a specific degree programme.
- A comment was received regarding attainment gaps and it was noted that we have been aware of these for some time. It was queried why there is not implementation of evidence-based remedies in the ELIR response, as opposed to further studying and reviewing these.
- A comment was received regarding the comparison of the new Student Advisor roles to “para-academic” roles in the American system. It was noted that para-academic roles are commonly held by staff with postgraduate qualifications relevant to the subjects they support, or in areas of student support and wellbeing. It was queried what evidence demonstrates that UG and PGT students require the transactional support being proposed and introduced under the new Student Advisor position, which does not require postholders to have subject-specific or student support related qualifications.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4. Senate minutes (S 21/22 A)

4.1. Approval of the minutes:

- Minutes of Senate meeting held on 9 February 2022
- Report of E-Senate held from 27 April – 11 May 2022

This item was not considered as the meeting was not quorate.

4.2. Matters arising

- 4.2.1 Presentation and Discussion topics – selection process ([Senate paper S 21/22 D](#) - Appendix 1, Suggested actions in response to 2020/21 review)

The Convener and advisers will consider and comment on the suggestions put forward for the presentation and discussion topics for next academic year. Members will be informed of the topics chosen once confirmed.

- 4.2.2 Senate Standing Committees ([Senate minutes 12 November 2021, item 2](#))

This item will be addressed under Paper E.

- 4.2.3 Report of Curriculum Transformation Programme costs ([Senate minutes 9 February 2022, item 4](#))

Professor Harmon will circulate an update to members via email.

5. Revocation of Honorary Degree – CLOSED (S 21/22 B)

For formal noting and approval

This item was not considered as the meeting was not quorate.

6. Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees (S 21/22 C)

For formal noting and approval

The Convener of Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) gave a verbal update on the 17 May meeting of APRC which was held to consider relaxation of regulations under Regulations 70 and 71 of the Taught Assessment Regulations due to disruption from ongoing industrial action. Key points made:

- An unconfirmed minute from 17 May meeting was circulated to members with the 26 May APRC papers.
- APRC agreed there was significant risk of disruption as a result of the industrial action and considered relaxing regulations. All concessions approved were conditional on the proposed industrial action having an impact. Since the 17 May meeting the industrial action has been suspended and it is anticipated that a widespread relaxation of regulations is not required.
- If Boards are impacted by industrial action, then these will be considered by APRC on a case-by-case basis.
- A member raised a query on the volume of external examiner concessions approved, and the reason for these.

The Convener of APRC confirmed that there was a small number of cases of external examiner concessions approved due to external examiner resignations. These have been dealt with on a case-by-case basis and is in line with action taken in previous years. The Convener of APRC agreed to update Senate on action taken in relation to external examiners over the coming weeks.

Some comments received by members via email following the meeting are outlined below:

- A query was raised on the detail included in the annual report and whether this was consistent with effective Senate oversight. Senate Standing Order 22 (b) was referenced.

Senate was invited to approve the annual report by a show of hands. The annual report was opposed and therefore this paper was not approved as the meeting was not quorate.

A motion was moved and seconded to move to item 16 on the agenda, *Proposed Revision to the Sustainable Travel Policy*. The Convener invited members to vote on the motion and this motion was passed. The Convener confirmed that items 7-11 would be considered first, as approval was required ahead of the 2022/23 academic year, and would then move to item 16 on the agenda.

7. Senate Standing Committees: Membership and Terms of Reference (S 21/22 D)

For formal noting and approval

It was noted that minor changes to the titles of CAHSS members included on the Senate Education Committee would be required to align with a recent restructure in the College. These changes would be sent by email following the meeting.

Senate members were invited to raise comments on the paper. The points below were made:

- It was highlighted that there is no Postgraduate Taught representative on the Senate Education Committee.

The Convener of the Senate Education Committee accepted this point and noted that the existing membership is a result of the last review. He would support this addition being made when amendments to the membership can be considered by Senate.

It was noted that the Doctoral College is represented on the Committee.

Members asked to put forward amendments to the paper. It was confirmed that as the meeting is not quorate, amendments could not be considered. The Convener proposed that a continuation of the previously approved terms of reference continue until a new set are approved.

8. Proposal to bring forward External Effectiveness Review (S 21/22 E)

For formal noting and approval

The Convener noted that the proposal to bring forward the External Effectiveness Review can be considered, however as the meeting is not quorate the detail included in Appendix 1, including the Terms of Reference cannot be amended or approved by Senate.

Senate members were invited to raise comments on the paper. The points below were made:

- There is limited involvement and contribution to Senate business by student members. The involvement of student members does not appear to be as effective as it could be.
- Concern was raised with the process for conducting the review, including adequate representation of Senate members' views in the review.

Senate was invited to approve bringing forward the external review by a show of hands. The proposal received unanimous support and therefore the proposal to bring forward the external review was approved.

The contents of Appendix 1 including the Terms of Reference, process for appointing an external reviewer and the process for conducting the review, were not considered because the meeting was not quorate. This detail would be considered at the next quorate meeting of Senate.

9. Court Resolution: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations (S 21/22 F)

To comment

Senate members were invited to comment on the paper. Final approval of the Degree Regulations is a matter for Court.

A member noted that Regulation 24 of the Postgraduate Degree Regulations state that students are expected to attend and participate in-person. It was suggested that flexibility around this point may be of benefit to students. An example was given where students may be required to conduct research abroad or have built valuable connections in their home country which they can utilise in conducting their research.

Some comments received by members via email following the meeting are outlined below:

- It was queried whether the revisions to Regulation 24 of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations consider the lessons learnt throughout the pandemic and allow suitable flexibility for students who experience barriers to in-person attendance, where suitable accommodations can be made without compromising learning.
- It was queried whether the revisions to Regulation 26 of the Undergraduate Degree Regulations, and Regulation 30 of the Postgraduate Degree Regulations are appropriate matters for inclusion in degree regulations as visa and immigration status are matters for the Home Office.

10. Court Resolution: Amendment to the Blackie Memorial Prize (S 21/22 G)

To comment

Senate members were invited to comment on the paper. Final approval of the Resolution is a matter for Court.

No comments were received during the meeting.

One comment was received by a member via email following the meeting. It was questioned whether the proposal is in line with the University's commitment to move away from casual contracts, and whether an alternative proposal to support a permanent post, or converting a casual post to a permanent post, could be considered.

11. Court Resolution: Personal Chairs (S 21/22 H)

To comment

Senate members were invited to comment on the paper. Final approval of the Resolution is a matter for Court.

No comments were received during the meeting.

The Convener then moved to item 16, the **Proposed Revision to the Sustainable Travel Policy (2021)**.

12. Clarification to Senate Election Regulations for Vacant Elected Positions (S 21/22 I)

For formal noting and approval

This paper will be considered at the next quorate meeting of Senate.

13. Proposal to hold a By-Election to Fill Senate Vacancies (S 21/22 J)

For formal noting and approval

This paper will be considered at the next quorate meeting of Senate.

14. Guidelines for Senate Committee Papers (S 21/22 K)

For formal noting and approval

This paper will be considered at the next quorate meeting of Senate.

15. Regulations Experts and Senate Capacity Building (S 21/22 L)

To comment

This paper will be considered at the next quorate meeting of Senate.

16. Proposed Revision to the Sustainable Travel Policy (2021) (S 21/22 M)

For approval

The Convener noted that the Sustainable Travel Policy did not fall under Senate's remit, and that proposed revisions could not be approved by Senate. However, the paper could be discussed and comments would be collated and fed back to the University Executive for their consideration.

Senate members were invited to raise comments on the paper. The points below were made:

- Members are aware that the Sustainable Travel Policy does not fall under Senate's remit, however efforts to raise concern with the policy and the contracted travel management company elsewhere have been unsuccessful.
- There are severe concerns with the use of a single travel management company for arranging travel and accommodation bookings for an institution of the University's size. Members raised concern with the use of a single travel management company and the monopoly this creates.
- Members highlighted the difficulties in confirming travel arrangements and noted that significant time was spent trying to arrange travel with the contracted company. The service and support received from the travel management company was inadequate.
- Members noted that the travel management company do not take local knowledge into account when arranging travel and there is serious concern with the safety of arrangements made via the service, especially around accommodation.
- A number of members shared their experiences of arranging travel through the contracted company. Members described instances where they were forced to pay for travel and arrangements out of their own pocket, where a preferred travel route or mode was not taken into account (for example, travelling by train versus by plane), or where there were inflated prices for the journey when compared with self-managed travel arrangements.
- Inflated travel costs will impact on the use of research grants.
- The process for seeking exception from following the Sustainable Travel Policy, or from using the contracted travel company, are time consuming.
- The process for selecting the contracted travel management company was of concern. The Convener confirmed that a standard procurement process was followed for selecting the contracted company.
- Members are in support of having a sustainable travel policy, though hold significant concerns with the use of a single travel management company for arranging travel.

- Members requested that the mandatory requirement to use the contracted travel management company to arrange travel be removed in time for research travel to be taken over summer 2022.

The Convener also noted that an upcoming meeting of the Academic Strategy Group would be discussing the Sustainable Travel Policy and the service being provided by the contracted travel management company. Members were encouraged to feedback concerns and comments to their Heads of School ahead of the meeting. Members were also invited to submit further comments via email.

The Convener thanked members for a useful discussion and this would be fed back to the University Executive and raised at the upcoming Academic Strategy Group meeting.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL OR NOTING

17. Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Report (S 21/22 N)

For comment

Senate members were invited to submit comments on this paper to the author via email.

18. Senate Exception Committee Terms of Reference and Membership 2022-23 (S 21/22 O)

For approval

The Convener noted that Senate are asked to approve a minor change to the membership of the Senate Standing Committee, which is an update to the Student Association representative on the Committee.

Senate members were invited to approve the updated membership.

Members asked to put forward amendments to the paper. It was confirmed that as the meeting is not quorate, amendments could not be considered. The Convener proposed that a continuation of the previously approved terms of reference continue until a new set are approved.

Senate was invited to approve the paper by a show of hands. The paper was opposed and therefore this paper was not approved as the meeting was not quorate.

19. Report from the Central Academic Promotions Committee (S 21/22 P)

For information

Senate noted the report.

20. Annual Review of Effectiveness of Senate (S 21/22 Q)

For noting

Senate noted the paper.

21. Report from the Senate Exception Committee – CLOSED (S 21/22 R)

For noting

Senate noted the paper.

The Convener confirmed that any business not considered by Senate would be held over to the October 2022 meeting of Senate. The Convener confirmed that no presentation and discussion would be held

before the October 2022 meeting and expressed his disappointment that there would be insufficient time for the presentation and discussion session, which is valued by Senate members and non-Senate colleagues.

The Convener noted the importance of the sustainable travel policy on the ability of colleagues to make travel arrangements required for research being conducted over the summer period.

A requisition for a special meeting was received by the Convener and signed by 12 members as required by Standing Order 2.

The Convener advised that as stated in Standing Order 2, *Special Meetings will not normally be held outside semester*. This is due to difficulties in achieving quorum, equity of involvement of members over the summer period which is generally reserved for research, and involvement of student members in Senate business. Semester 2 concludes on 27 May and it is not expected that a special meeting will be held outwith Semester 2.

The Convener acknowledged that the Standing Orders do not preclude a meeting from being held outwith Semester, however would consult with the University Secretary to confirm the urgency for holding the next meeting of Senate earlier than the next scheduled meeting in October 2022.

Post-meeting note: after further discussion with colleagues and having received representations from a small number of Senate members it has been agreed that we should take the unusual step of holding a meeting outside term time. This is now scheduled for 11th August and will be held online in order to facilitate attendance by anyone not in Edinburgh on that date.