<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6 December 2018 at 9am
in the Torridon Room, Charles Stewart House**

Present:

Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Dr Shereen Benjamin	Associate Dean (Quality Assurance) College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science
Megan Brown	Schools Engagement Officer, Edinburgh University Students' Association
Brian Connolly	Secretary to Senatus Quality Assurance Committee, Academic Services
Dr Gail Duursma	School Representative (Engineering), College of Science and Engineering
Dr Katherine Inglis	School Representative (Literatures, Languages and Cultures), College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science
Dr Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, College of Science and Engineering
Dr Claire Phillips	Director of Quality Assurance, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services

Apologies:

Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems and Administration
Brian Green	Deputy Associate Principal (Learning & Teaching), University of Strathclyde
Dr Jeni Harden	School Representative (School of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Nichola Kett	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Sarah McAllister	Head of Operations & Projects & Assistant Director, Institute for Academic Development
Diva Mukherji	Vice President (Education), Students' Association

1.   **Welcome and Apologies**

2.   **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 September 2018 and Notes of the electronic meeting conducted between 21-25 September 2018**

The Committee approved the minutes and notes of the previous meetings.

3.   **Matters Arising**

   a. **Quality Code**

   The Convenor noted that the QAA had published the advice and guidance underpinning the new Quality Code. Academic Services will now examine how this relates to current policy and regulations. In the longer term, this may be followed by a more fundamental reflection on the University's approach to the Quality Code.

   b. **School Annual Quality Reports – Actions**

   The Committee considered the School responses to the Committee's requests for further information in relation to the School Annual Quality Reports. The Committee was content that the responses met the original requests.

   For Discussion

4.   **Annual Reports 2017-18**

4.1   **Undergraduate Taught External Examiner Reports: Thematic Analysis**

The Committee considered an analysis of data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) covering undergraduate programmes for the academic year 2016/17.

The Committee noted the high number of commendations across the University and the low number of issues requiring attention, with no significant issues escalated to University-level. The Committee noted the wealth of information contained in the EERS and agreed that it should be more widely used across the University.

The main theme of commendation across all three Colleges was the assessment process and student feedback. Of the issues highlighted by External Examiners the most frequently mentioning were in relation to the provision of information and issues raised in a previous report. The Committee noted that while schools should reflect on and response to External Examiners' comments they are not required to take the action that an External Examiner recommends and a lack of understanding on this point may be a source of dissatisfaction. The Committee also discussed whether this dissatisfaction was indicative of an underlying issue or due to the way the question is framed on the EERS. The Committee also noted that a number of reports remain outstanding and discussed whether some of the outstanding reports are attributable to External Examiners coming to the end of their term of contract.

Action: Academic Services to include (a) more contextual analysis of External Examiner comments concerning issues raised in previous reports and (b) more analysis of reasons for the non-submission of reports (including a breakdown of how many are coming to the end of their contract) in next year's report.

> **Action: College Deans of Quality to ensure that the outcomes of the Committee's discussions in regard to the External Examiner Reports are made available to and considered by the relevant College committee(s).**

4.2   Academic Appeals – CLOSED PAPER

4.3   Student Discipline – CLOSED PAPER

4.4   Complaint Handling

The Committee considered a report on the handling of complaints to the University for the academic year 2017-18.

The Committee noted that there were no discernible trends in the complaint handling cases. The Committee agreed that terminology such as 'significantly' should be avoided unless it is clearly used to indicate statistical significance. The Committee discussed the frontline resolution process and the importance of signposting and transparency throughout the process in order to maintain student confidence in the complaint handling process. The Committee agreed that the Complaint Handling Officer should be invited to the next meeting to discuss the issue raised.

> **Action: Complaint Handling Officer to be invited to the next meeting of the Committee.**

4.5   Annual Review of Student Support Services

The Committee considered a report on the review of Student Support Service annual reports for 2017/18, highlighting areas of good practice and themes for consideration in the next reporting cycle.

The Committee noted that the revised reporting template and process was well received by support service areas and that the University Executive will consider the themes identified by the review. The Committee also noted that the Deputy Secretary Student Experience is currently considering how to set and measure service standards for the student support services in relation to the student experience.

The Committee noted that Estates participated in the process for the first time. The Committee agreed that in next year's report Estates should include more reflection on how they are managing current pressures on space and how they have listened to and responded to the needs of staff and students.

> **Action: Estates to include more reflective analysis in its 2018-19 report.**

The Committee approved the report and the areas identified for further consideration by the student support services.

> **Action: Academic Services to feedback to Student Support Services.**

5.   **Evaluation of Mid-Course Feedback**

The Committee considered an update on the evaluation of mid-course feedback carried out in March 2018.

The Committee agreed that the Assistant Principal (Assessment and Feedback) should carry out a follow up evaluation out in semester 2 to allow some longitudinal data comparison. This should be as light touch as practicable and include students, possibly via the SSLCs and using student representation structures.

The Committee agreed in principle that mid-course feedback should be extended to postgraduate taught provision (noting that this already takes place in many areas), and that it would consult with stakeholders on this proposed extension of the policy as part of the planned evaluation in Semester Two. The Committee also confirmed that it regarding mid-course feedback as relevant to online courses as on-campus courses.

The Committee also agreed that Schools should monitor the implementation of mid-course feedback through annual monitoring, review and reporting processes.

> **Action: Committee Secretary to feedback to Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback.**

6.   **Annual Monitoring, Reporting and Review – Minor Changes**

The Committee considered proposals for minor changes to the annual school and programme templates in response to feedback, an Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2015 recommendation, and the evaluation of mid-course feedback (see above).

The Committee approved the changes with the proviso that the Annual Programme Monitoring Template question 'How have students been/will students be informed of the actions that have been/will be taken in response to their feedback?' be amended to 'How has the feedback loop to all students been closed?'

7.   **Degree Classification Outcomes** **CLOSED PAPER**

8.   **Students' Association School Reports**

The Committee considered the reports detailing School engagement with the Students' Association.

The Committee welcomed the insight the reports offered to the student population at a local level. The Committee agreed that Academic Services should include the information in the reports in internal review documentation. The Committee agreed that the reports, with an executive summary/overview, should be submitted to the Committee annually and then circulated by the Students' Association to: Heads of School; Directors of Teaching; Directors of Quality; Senior Tutors; Deans of Students; Deans of Quality; Heads of Teaching Organisation; Heads of Support Services; SSLC Chairs. The Committee also suggested that in future years the Students' Association provide an institutional-level report, in addition to the School-level reports.

> **Action: Academic Services to include Students' Association School Reports in internal review documentation.**

> **Action: Students' Association to submit School and University level reports annually to the Committee.**

The full reports are published on the Committee wiki:
https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SQAC/Thursday+6+December+2018

9. **Personal Tutor (PT) System Oversight Group**

    The Committee approved a proposal from the PT System Oversight Group to change the timing of its annual meeting held to reflect on student survey results in relation to PT system. The meeting will now be held (either in person or via email) immediately after the National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey results are released in the summer. At this meeting, the PT System Oversight Group will consider the trends and implications for both Schools and the University and then feed comments on the PT system to the September meeting of the Sub Group considering the School annual quality reports. This will allow the latter group to make judgments and recommendations to Schools informed by the PT System Oversight Group's considerations. This will also allow the Committee to monitor the PT system within mainstream School/Deanery quality assurance processes.

    For Information and Formal Business

10. **Internal Review Reports and Responses**

    The Committee confirmed that it was content with progress implementing the recommendations from the Teaching Programme Reviews (TPRs) of Biomedical Sciences and Education Programmes.

    However, the Committee agreed that it was not wholly content with the progress implementing the recommendations from the TPR Medicine. The Committee recognised that while there are complex issues involved which require close working and negotiation with external partners, the number of actions still outstanding is disappointing. The Committee agreed that a further update on progress should be requested for submission to the 25 April 2019 meeting of the Committee. In preparation for this, the Convenor and Academic Services will hold a meeting with the team in Medicine to discuss progress and ways in which the University provide support.

    > **Action: Academic Services to feedback to the reviewed areas.**

11. **Thematic Review**

11.1 **Mental Health Services Review 2015-16 - Implementation Update**

    The Committee considered a progress update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Thematic Review of Mental Health Services, 2015-16.

    The Committee noted that all the actions linked to the recommendations had now been completed or are integral to the ongoing work of the Student Mental Health Strategy Group. Therefore, the Committee agreed that it was content that the recommendations had been

completed and that ongoing monitoring will be via the Strategy Group or mainstream reporting processes.

11.2   Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) 2018-19 - Progress Update

The Committee noted that the first meeting of the review panel will be held in January with the following panel membership:

- **Professor Rowena Arshad** OBE, Head of Moray House School of Education / Co-Director of the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES), (Review Convenor);
- **Professor Vick Gunn**, Head of Learning and Teaching, Glasgow School of Art;
- **Kai O'Doherty**, Vice President Welfare, Edinburgh University Students' Association (Student Representative);
- **Isabella Neergaard-Petersen**, Black and Minority Ethnic Officer, Edinburgh University Students' Association (Student Representative);
- **Laura Cattell**, Head of Widening Participation / Deputy Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions;
- **Dr Emily Sena**, Research Fellow, Centre for Clinical Brain Sciences (CCBS) / Co-convenor of The University of Edinburgh's Staff BME Network (Academic Representative).

12.   Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2020 - Update

The Committee noted an update on preparations for the University's next ELIR.

13.   Enhancement Themes Institutional Plan - Year 2

The Committee noted an update on the University's plan for year two of the Enhancement Theme, Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience.

14.   Knowledge Strategy Committee

The Committee noted an update on matters considered by the Knowledge Strategy Committee.

15.   Any Other Business:

Senate Committee Planning

The Committee was encouraged to respond to the email invitation (circulated on 4 December 2018) to comment on the priorities for student experience, learning and teaching that Colleges, Schools and support groups should engage with during the planning round.

16.   Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 27 February 2018, 10am, Raeburn Room, Old College