



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Electronic Senate Report of Electronic Business of Senate conducted between Wednesday 13 September and Wednesday 27 September 2023

Confirmed Report

A full summary of comments raised via e-Senate can be accessed at [e-Senate comments](#) (EASE login required).

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL	
1.	<p>Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita (e-S 23/24 1A) For approval</p> <p>Senate agreed to confer the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita on those professors listed in the paper.</p> <p>Three members submitted comments on this item. Two members acknowledged the contribution of Emeritus Professors on the University. Two members observed the gender and ethnic disparity among Professors listed for the conferral of Emeritus status observing a majority of male Professors and a lack of representation from ethnic minority backgrounds. One member was critical of the procedural approach to using e-Senate to confer the status of Emeritus and expressed a hope that the e-Senate process be reviewed now that the external review has concluded.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>
ITEMS FOR COMMENT	
2.	<p>Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2022/23 (e-S 23/24 1B) To note and comment</p> <p>The report was provided in draft format from 13 – 20 September for comment alongside an electronic business meeting of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC). The final report was circulated to Senate on 20 September with comments welcomed until e-Senate concluded on 27 September.</p> <p>Senate formally noted the annual report and comments were received from three members.</p> <p>The comments collectively express a range of concerns and recommendations regarding the Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council (e-S 23/24 1B). Members identified several elements of the report where they felt the summary provided was inadequate, there were discrepancies or inaccuracies. Common themes across all commenters included concern with staff workloads, student engagement, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion concerns impacting on students with specific examples given including reliance on food banks, inflated</p>

	<p>housing costs and the provision of support for students in University-managed accommodation. Some commenters called for greater evidence of the claims made within the report, and nuanced evaluations of the initiatives and success of some elements referred to within the report.</p> <p>One member raised concern with the governance process for the report emphasising the importance of Senate’s contribution to the annual report. During initial circulation of the draft report, the member stated that they would not approve the report as presented and following the circulation of the final report, they rejected the statement that the content of the report was approved by SQAC and identified this as being factually inaccurate.</p> <p>The member outlined concern with the process for finalising the report and that the decision to deem the report as final as exacerbating distrust in Senate as reflected in the feedback provided in internal and external reviews. The member stated Court’s responsibility for approval of the final report and expressed concern regarding unresolved queries regarding the content of the report as raised by Senate members relaying their comments via their representative member on SQAC.</p> <p>Another commenter deemed the report not to be appropriate for approval and raised concerns with the governance process undertaken by the Committee that changes to the report should be made to the satisfaction of the Committee.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Court Resolutions (e-S 23/24 1C) To comment</p> <p>One member submitted comments on this item. The commenter sought additional detail on the reason for renaming the chair in resolution 113/2023 after Thomas Bayes indicating a general preference for naming chairs after academic subjects rather than after individuals with reference to the University’s recent experiences with honorary degree rules and the renaming of 40 George Square as rationale for exercising caution.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Rector Election Date – 2024 (e-S 23/24 1D) To comment</p> <p>Comments were received from two members. Commenters supported an extended nomination and a longer voting period for the Rector position. They encouraged greater efforts to actively seek suitable candidates in advance of election period and greater support for approaching potential candidates for the position of Rector.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Senate Elections 2023/24 – key dates (e-S 23/24 1E) To comment</p> <p>Comments were received from three members. Commenters supported an extended voting and nomination period in the Senate Elections. They highlighted the important of increasing the opportunity for staff</p>

	<p>engagement, especially during teaching and potential periods of further industrial action.</p> <p>One member provided comment on the election of Senate members to Standing Committees and queries whether this could take place during a later timeframe. The member also emphasised the temporary nature of the arrangements for electing Senate members to Standing Committees, as agreed in October 2022.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>
<p>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION OR NOTING</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Senate and Senate Standing Committee Election Results 2023 (e-S 23/24 1F) To note</p> <p>Senate formally noted the election results. Comments were received from one member. The commenter expressed their belief that Senate owes a note of gratitude to the Senate Clerk for their commitment to rigour and transparency as reflected in the paper.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Senate (e-S 23/24 1G) To note</p> <p>Senate formally noted the plans for the annual review.</p> <p>Comments were received from nine members. Several members highlighted concerns about monitoring the impact and strategic relevance of Senate’s work, with reference to the goal outlined in paragraph 12(c) of the paper. Members requested that the annual effectiveness review include a summary of Senate decisions and an overview of the progress and completion of actions where relevant. Members called for greater transparency in the reporting and accountability process, with specific mention of Senate papers S22/23 1F, 2D, 2G, 2I, 2J, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 5I where action taken is unclear. Several commenters asserted members’ rights to question the status and outcomes of Senate decisions and objected to a paper submitted for e-Senate seeking to address this not being included in the September 2023 e-Senate papers.</p> <p>One member suggested twice yearly updates on the progress toward actions arising from the review rather than yearly updates.</p> <p>A new member indicated that their involvement with Senate would be contingent on members’ right to question the outcome of decisions. A new member expressed efforts to understand the internal review process highlighting a reliance on feedback from Senate members and a lack of detail on the implementation and outcome of decisions as an omission for an effective review process.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>

8.	<p>Report from the Senate Exception Committee (e-S 23/24 1H) - CLOSED To note</p> <p>Senate formally noted Report from the Senate Exception Committee.</p> <p>Comments were received from two members. Both members indicated that an update on the measures taken to prevent a recurrence of the error would be valuable with one member stating that this was also raised by the Senate Exception Committee. One member noted that it would be useful if the report had clearly indicated the number of students missed off the graduation list.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>
9.	<p>Communications from the University Court (e-S 23/24 1I) To note</p> <p>Senate formally noted the communications. Comments were received from five members.</p> <p>Item 2: Principal's Report One member registered their protest to the Principal's response to the demands of the University and College Union (UCU). The member reflected on the erosion of morale across Edinburgh's academic community worsened by punitive deductions, alleged bullying and problematic working conditions. They criticised senior leadership for hiding behind UCEA instead of leading negotiations.</p> <p>Item 5: Estates: Residential Strategy 2023-2030 Two members reflected on the growth of the University and the impact of record recruitment as creating further pressure in a challenging housing market. One commenter welcomed the recognition of the housing challenges whilst another commenter felt that the University was doing too little to fulfil its responsibility to protect and support students.</p> <p>Item 9: People and Money System Update. Four commenters expressed their concern with the update provided. Two members expressed their disagreement with the suggestion that user error was to blame for ongoing issues, and identified the cumbersome nature of the software and insufficient training and guidance provided to users as having an ongoing impact on staff and the wider institution. One member expressed a concern regarding the move to a centralised system of support and reflected on value of the specialised support offered by local contacts and concern that a centralised support system would result in slow response times, generic responses and exacerbate problems for staff and students.</p> <p>Two members reflected on the ongoing impact of People and Money on staff and that the Principal should make the University Court aware of this. Both commenters expressed discontent with the response of senior management with one member calling for greater transparency and decisive action from university leaders. Both commenters expressed their discontent that an e-Senate paper which collated staff feedback on People and Money was not included on the September 2023 e-Senate agenda.</p>

	<p>One commenter expressed support for the comments provided by other members and reflected on their experience of providing detailed comments on the Communications from the University Court and a lack of evidence of Senate comments being taken onboard. They expressed a belief that Senate-Court-University Executive relations would benefit from concrete commitments from Court and the University executive on the importance of Senate contributions.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee (e-S 23/24 1J) To note</p> <p>Senate noted the report of the Knowledge Strategy Committee. Comments were received from one member. The commenter reflected on the external review and internal priorities for Senate and its Committees and expressed a hope that the Knowledge Strategy Committee would also consider its effectiveness, the configuration of joint Senate and Court Committees and involving Senate in strategic decisions related to the promotion of research and conditions of research-led teaching.</p> <p>The commenter also considers the timetabling transition as an opportunity to rebuild staff confidence in central infrastructure projects.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Report from the Central Academic Promotions Committee (e-S 23/24 1K) For information</p> <p>Senate noted the report of the Central Academic Promotions Committee. Two members extended their congratulations to the new Professors and Personal Chairs.</p> <p>One commenter expressed a hope that the new appointments would consider standing for election to Senate and emphasised the need to fill vacancies at a Grade 10 level. The commenter suggested that the new Personal Chairs be invited to stand for Senate to raise awareness of the opportunity and the importance of their potential contribution to the University community.</p> <p>The comments were passed to the author of the paper.</p>