College of Science and Engineering  
College Learning and Teaching Committee  
Minutes of meeting held on 25 March 2014

Present
Prof G Reid  Convener, Dean of Learning and Teaching
Dr P Bailey  School of Chemistry
Dr T Bailey  School of Mathematics
Ms L Henderson  Academic Affairs Officer
Dr W Hossack  School of Physics & Astronomy
Dr P McLaughlin  School of Biological Sciences
Dr A Simpson  School of Informatics
Dr S Warrington  School of Engineering
Dr D Williams  Head of Academic Affairs
Prof W Williams  School of GeoSciences
In attendance:
Hazel Christie  Institute of Academic Development (Item 4)
Linda Archibald  Secretary

1. APOLOGIES  

Apologies were received from Alan Murray (Dean of Students), Maurice Gallagher (School of Biological Sciences), Michael Rovatsos (School of Informatics)

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2014 were approved.

2.1 MATTERS ARISING

- Resits for visiting students.

A background paper had been written regarding whether resits should be available for visiting students and was issue was discussed at CSPC. No conclusion had been reached as yet and the matter had been passed to the University Resits Work Group to consider solutions.

Schools were advised to continue with their current practices in the meantime, taking into account three basic principles:

i) There should be no detriment to the student;
ii) Decisions should be based on the relationship between the University of Edinburgh and their home institution;
iii) The opportunity for resits.

- Electronic Voting Systems

The Convener had discussed the financing of any change-over with the Head of College.
The current clicker system had been developed and funded by the College of Science and Engineering. As the College of Humanities and Social Science had also expressed interest in this system, it was thought likely that any new system would be a centralised service.

Mark Wetton was currently leading on procurement of a new system. As a result of consultations, he was now keen to explore systems that involve students using their own mobile devices (rather than hybrid) with the provision of a small amount of University owned handsets for those who do not have their own equipment.

It was thought important to get a new system in place for September 2014 and if this system was software-based, the lead-in time should be fairly short.

- **Innovative learning week**

A report on this matter is in the process of being commissioned. The Convenor would advise members as information becomes available.

3. **Convenor’s Report**

A package of assessment related messages is in the process of being sent to Schools. This information will include details of procedures on the communication of assessment outcomes.

4. **College Links with Institute of Academic Development**

Hazel Christie led a brief discussion regarding ways of forging a closer relationship with the Institute of Academic Development (IAD). It was noted:

Dr Christie had already met with most Directors of Teaching and was aware that a range of working practices existed within the College.

Members were asked to give thought to what kind of activities their School would find most useful, such as tailored courses, programmes or strategic issues.

An issue was raised regarding groups of students who were keen for Schools to video all lectures. Some research regarding the pedagogical value of this exercise by IAD would be appreciated. A workshop on lecture capture, specifically aimed at Science and Engineering might also be considered.

The provision of workshops by IAD within the King’s Buildings for staff development would substantially improve College participation as staff are often inhibited by travel and timing issues.

Scope exists for the training of laboratory demonstrators to be improved with a more coordinated programme specifically targeted at Science and Engineering laboratory demonstrators. It was important that training and support for tutors and demonstrators should be
School specific as different elements and requirements exist.

An induction workshop for Course Organisers which also includes mentoring would be valuable. Some commonality will exist between Schools in terms of standards and practice.

A workshop targeted at people with responsibility for undergraduate courses should be set up for the next academic year. This workshop should include course administration and communication to the Teaching Administration team and specific issues such as engagement of students and shared best practice.

Help was also needed with the promotion of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the range of opportunities for professional development. There was the need for collaboration between IAD, Human Resources and representatives from Schools to boost the awareness of benefits.

It was thought that IAD should work in partnership with each School to create a school-specific workshop each academic year. Members were asked to give thought to possible themes.

A web-based discussion forum where Schools could seek advice or make use of case studies would be very helpful.

5. **DISTANCE EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

A paper received from Informatics on their proposed DEI bid was considered (Paper B) and members asked to give comments. It was noted:

- The proposal is for two MSc programmes by distance education: Masters in Data Science, available in 2016 and Masters in Robotics and Autonomous Systems, available the following year.

- The marketing of these programmes was thought to be extremely important as was the setting of fees at a sufficiently early stage.

- It was thought that the title of the programmes need not contain ‘by Distance Education’ as this would not appear on the student’s certificate. There was a need, however, to distinguish these courses from the standard MSc version.

- Investigation should be made regarding the fee structure of similar programmes which exist within other Schools. Approval for fees would be sought through the Central Fee Strategy Group.

- Contact should be made with Ninette Premdas, who manages distance learning, in the University’s Market Research Team.

6. **COLLEGE LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY**

Members received a revised version of the College Learning and Teaching Strategy for consideration (Paper C). It was noted:
- The Convenor had implemented suggested changes from the previous meeting and produced a simplified version of the Strategy.

- It was hoped that this Strategy might be more widely used and staff should be encouraged to utilise this as much as possible.

- Minor changes included the change of ‘PDR’ to ‘Annual Review’, the incorporation of ‘integrity’ and a statement regarding the reduction in assessment.

- As most items were no longer relevant, David Williams would ask IAD to close the Learning and Teaching associated knowledge base wiki.

- Members were asked to give any further comments regarding the Strategy to the Convenor as soon as possible.

7. **ENGINEERING TEACHING PROGRAMME REVIEW**

Members received a brief verbal report from the Director of Teaching of the School of Engineering regarding the TPR Year-on Report.

It was noted that the School had responded to all areas of action highlighted by the TPR.

8. **ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNICATION OF MARKS**

Schools had provided a statement and web template for the assessment and communication of marks.

Schools are required to have a web page in place for 20th April and have identified staff available to meet demand at appropriate times. Difficulties often arise with special circumstances cases and students should be made aware of possible limitations.

Central University will create a main web page which is easily accessible to students, giving links to Schools and guidance on regulations.

A communication had also been sent to Teaching Organisation Administrators advising that a preview of the uploaded software was available in advance of the go-live period.

9. **REPORTS FROM SENATE COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS**

**Curriculum and Student Progression Committee**

A number of changes have been made to the Assessment Regulations and Procedures. These changes will be publicised more widely and also covered in the training for Board of Examiners Best Practice and Assessment Administration Workshops.

A report on Resits and Supplementary Assessments was received. Courses examined in semester 1 will have resits in the semester 2 diet unless there is a sound academic reason for holding them in August.
It was suggested that examination scripts should be given to students for their retention. At the current time, students are only permitted to view scripts but they are retained by the School.

It was thought that an initial controlled viewing of scripts would be necessary in order to identify any discrepancies in marking such as incorrect addition of sub-marks. Once exam scripts had been formally collected by a student, there could be no recourse.

The College Learning and Teaching Committee would return to this subject once official minutes were received from CSPC.

**Senate Learning and Teaching Committee**

An item was received on the mainstreaming of adjustments.

A number of adjustments were mainstreamed last year including the use of microphones and lecture outlines. Emphasis should be given on consolidating ‘standardised’ adjustments, with measures such as the wearing of microphones and provision of lecture outlines or Powerpoint slides becoming a matter of routine.

Difficulties may arise in the recording of tutorials for a student’s own use such as copyright or privacy issues. David Williams would raise this matter with Records Management and report back at the next meeting.

Recommendations from the Credit for Study Abroad Task Group were in the final stages and an outcome was expected in the near future.

A communication to all staff was expected within the next few days regarding the UCU marking boycott which will include guidance for Boards of Examiners.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**PATH**

The PATH system had now run for three years in Mathematics with Physics and Engineering participating this year. The feedback from all Schools has been extremely positive.

The system covers three areas:
- browse course which is used mainly by students
- browse programme which employs an interface to the DPT and will be valuable to Personal tutors
- build your own programme is used to a much lesser extent as it does not tie-in well with the DPT, making the results unreliable.

The PATH team are keen that the whole of Science and Engineering engage with this system next year. This will also create better links in
the DRPS between joint courses and will allow the system to work much more efficiently.

It is expected that most use will be over Summer or in Freshers' Week when queries are made regarding courses available.

The overhead of running PATH is very small and can be accessed by simply switching on through the IS website – Path.is.ed.ac.uk

**New Programme Teaching Resources**

The issue was raised at the College Library Committee. It was important that proposers should give thought to resource issues associated with any new programmes. Notification should be given to IT and the IS Library Service of any required resources within a reasonable timescale.

This issue would be raised again at the Programme Approval Meeting in April.

**Feedback**

Members noted that the School of Chemistry recently released student marks at the same time as feedback. This had been well received by students.

It was noted that Schools have also found that giving feedback a few days before marks often works well and has proved to be very useful to students.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Programme Approval Meeting – 1 April 2014 @ 2.00 p.m.

College Learning & Teaching Committee – 22nd April @ 2.00 p.m.