

# Learning and teaching

**2023/24 Handbook (5<sup>th</sup> edition)**

**University Committee for Learning and Teaching**

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# 1. Introduction to the University Committee for Learning and Teaching and the Handbook

The University Committee for Learning and Teaching is one of three Primary Committees of the [Senate](#) (link opens in new window) and reports jointly to the [University Executive](#) (link opens in new window). It was established on 1 August 2017.

The Handbook aims to provide a comprehensive overview of all aspects related to the role and operation of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching. The Handbook is updated annually.

The following links may be of use:

- [University Committee for Learning and Teaching](#) (opens in new window)
- [Learning and Teaching Academy](#) (opens in new window)
- [Academic Enhancement](#) (opens in new window)
- [Learning and Teaching Policy Bank](#) (opens in new window)
- [Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers](#) (opens in new window)
- [Learning and Teaching Strategy](#) (opens in new window)
- [Graduate Attributes](#) (opens in new window)

- The Chair of the Committee is Professor Malcolm Chrisp, Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life), [T.M.Chrisp@hw.ac.uk](mailto:T.M.Chrisp@hw.ac.uk).
- The Vice Chair is Professor Fiona Grant, Associate Principal (Student Learning Experience), [F.Grant@hw.ac.uk](mailto:F.Grant@hw.ac.uk).
- The Clerk to the Committee is Susan Orr, Governance Officer ([S.Orr@hw.ac.uk](mailto:S.Orr@hw.ac.uk)).

All communication with the Committee should be directed via the Clerk. Contact details for Committee members can also be obtained through the Clerk.



*[For further information on the reporting structure, please see section 2.8]*

## 2. The University Committee for Learning and Teaching: Terms of Reference

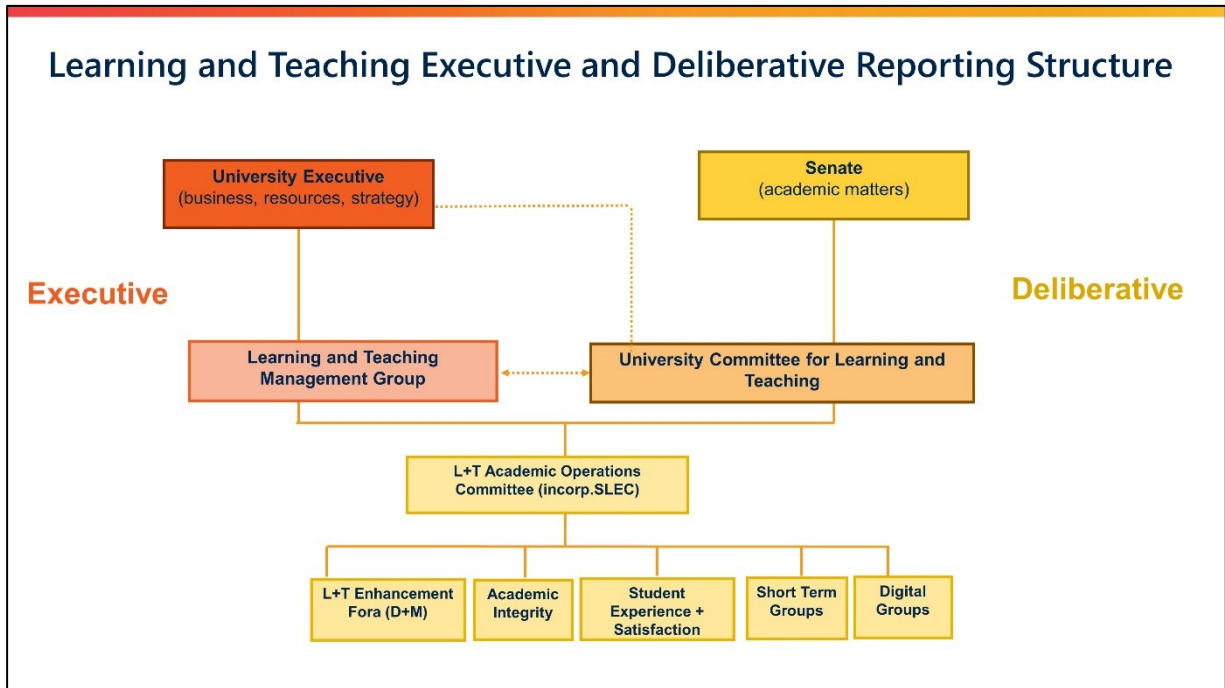
### 2.1 Constitution and Purpose

The University Committee for Learning and Teaching was established in 2017 as a Committee of the Senate and replaced the former Learning and Teaching Board (2002-2017). The Committee reports jointly to the [Senate](#) (link opens in new window) and the [University Executive](#) (link opens in new window) on matters of strategy and policy, as defined in its remit, and via both to the [Court](#) (link opens in new window), which is the University's governing body (please refer to this organisational chart of [University Committees](#). Link opens in new window). The University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT) reports to the Senate on specifically *academic governance* matters, such as Regulations (as the Senate is the primary academic body of the University) and to the University Executive (UE) on specifically *executive* matters, such as those relating to staffing, material and other resources (as the UE is the primary management body of the University).

The purpose of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching is to provide institutional-level leadership in the development and implementation of the academic vision for Learning and Teaching, via the [Learning and Teaching Strategy](#) (link opens in new window), in support of the [University's Strategic Plan](#) (link opens in new window). The scope of the Learning and Teaching Strategy encompasses all the University's modes and locations of delivery and study. [The term 'strategy' is used throughout this Handbook in reference to the institution's Learning and Teaching Strategy; 'Strategic Plan' describes the University Strategy].

In practice, the University Committee for Learning and Teaching delegates operational matters to its standing committee, the [Learning & Teaching Academic Operations Committee](#) [LTAOC] (link opens in a new window. The decisions & actions log is updated regularly). The LTAOC replaced the former Student Learning Experience Committee) in 2022-23.

The diagram on the next page presents the Learning & Teaching Executive and Deliberative reporting structure.



## 2.2 Terms of Reference

In common with all of the University's Committees, the [University Committee for Learning and Teaching's Terms of Reference](#) (link opens in new window) are published as a separate document in the public domain.

The Terms of Reference, which are presented in the University's standard template and cover all key aspects of the operation of the UCLT, are reviewed annually by the Committee via an assurance check. The assurance check provides an opportunity to consider the composition of UCLT (including gender balance and contributions from different campuses) as well as whether the Committee is effective in meeting its stated remit. The outcome of the assurance check is notified to the Senate and to the University Executive.

## 2.3 Remit

The Senate and the University Executive have delegated authority to the University Committee for Learning and Teaching to:

- provide strategic stewardship of the taught student learning experience.
- develop, recommend, monitor the implementation of, and report on the Learning and Teaching Strategy, and supporting Operational Plan and performance indicators.
- develop the strategic process for producing the Learning and Teaching Strategy to ensure that the Learning and Teaching Strategies/ Enhancement Plans of Schools and the Strategic Summaries/Enhancement Plans of the relevant Professional Services, are aligned with the overall Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- develop, recommend, monitor, and report on Ordinances and Regulations; and to make, monitor, modify, and revoke codes of practice, policies and procedures related to:
  - learning and teaching.

- academic quality enhancement frameworks for taught programmes of study.
- the development of the academic attributes of Students, and the academic practice and learner support skills of Staff and Students.
- the development of approaches for effective sharing of best practice in learning and teaching.
- consider and make recommendations with respect to:
  - the University's programme of annual and periodic academic quality enhancement reviews;
  - the findings of annual and periodic quality enhancement reviews and action plans arising from these;
  - the University's participation in external quality assurance and enhancement reviews, consulting as appropriate with the [University Committee for Quality and Standards](#) (link opens in new window).
  - the findings of external quality assurance and enhancement reviews and action plans arising from these, consulting as appropriate with the [University Committee for Quality and Standards](#) (link opens in new window).
  - findings of surveys and other reviews of Student experience and the destinations of graduates with respect to taught programme students and graduates;
  - the development of support in relation to the development of the academic attributes of Students and the academic practice and learner support skills of Staff and Students;
  - the development of the physical and virtual academic environment pertaining to learning and teaching;
  - the University's portfolio of taught programmes;
  - national initiatives in learning and teaching.
- jointly, with the University Committee for Research and Innovation, develop, recommend, monitor the implementation of, and report on Regulations and policies in respect of access to and use of the library services and academic-related information services.
- monitor the academic outcomes for taught programmes of study;
- receive regular reports from all Schools, including the minutes of the Schools' Learning and Teaching Committees;
- create and receive reports from such sub-committees and short-life working groups as are necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the Committee.

## 2.4 Composition and Membership of the Committee

### 2.4.1 Composition

The core composition of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching is as follows:

- The Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life) ex officio, who shall be the Chair;
- The Associate Principal (Student Learning Experience) ex officio, who shall be the Vice-Chair;
- A Dean of the University, who shall be appointed on behalf of the Senate;
- Three Senators, who shall be appointed on behalf of the Senate;
- The Directors of Learning & Teaching of each of the Primary Academic Units;
- The Presidents of the three Student Representative Bodies in Scotland, Dubai and

Malaysia;

- The Deputy Vice-Principal Dubai, the Deputy Vice-Principal Malaysia, and the Associate Principal (Access & Inclusion).

In addition, the University Secretary and Deans of the University who are not members of the Committee shall be eligible to attend meetings. Other role holders are invited to be 'in attendance'.

#### **2.4.2 Membership**

The composition and membership of the Committee are provided for information at the first meeting of each academic year. The full membership list is appended to the [Terms of Reference](#) (link opens in new window).

#### **2.4.3 Status of Members**

The Committee comprises members and individuals in attendance. Most members and those in attendance are not appointed for a specific period of time and, in consequence, when individuals demit office or leave their role, their membership of the Committee expires and they are replaced on the Committee by their successors in office or in post. Student Representatives and Members Appointed by the Senate (including Deans) are appointed for a specific period of time (congruent with their office as Student Representatives or Senators) and are replaced by similar categories of membership.

The Committee may co-opt members as appropriate for a specific time: for example, Project Leaders of strategic projects. Details of co-opted members are notified to the Senate and the University Executive.

#### **2.4.4 The Chair of the Committee**

The Chair of the Committee is the Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life) and the Vice-Chair is the Associate Principal (Student Learning Experience). Both are nominated by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor and approved by the Senate.

#### **2.4.5 Equality and Diversity in Membership**

The Committee exercises its responsibility, as far as possible, to promote diversity of representation within its membership and the membership of any working group or committee established by the Committee. The Committee will also act, in carrying out the business of the Committee, to promote equality of opportunity for all.

### **2.5 Roles of Members of the Committee**

All members of the Committee have a dual representative function, in that they represent not only the views of their own School, Campus, Professional Service or student community, but also the University as a whole.

The Chair and the Clerk will provide new members with an introduction to the Committee and their role, as well as an overview of key information related to learning and teaching (both internally and externally).

The agreed roles and responsibilities of the various categories of membership and those in attendance are:

### **2.5.1 Chair (and Vice-Chair)**

The responsibilities of the Chair, and the Vice-Chair, where appropriate, are to:

- provide leadership to develop and implement the institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy and ensure that the Committee achieves its overall objectives.
- chair meetings and ensure that meetings run efficiently and effectively.
- present the Committee's views to the Court, the Senate, the University Executive, and other committees as appropriate, and to provide feedback from committees to the Committee.
- provide specialist knowledge and input to discussions regarding quality assurance and enhancement.
- brief the Committee on institutional and external matters related to learning and teaching and to the taught student learning experience.

### **2.5.2 Directors of Learning and Teaching**

The responsibilities of the Directors of Learning and Teaching are to:

- discuss and report issues in Schools as appropriate via the School Learning and Teaching Committee, and to bring to the Committee the considered, collective views of Schools.
- review School strategy, plans, policies, and procedures to ensure alignment with the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- bring items to the attention of the senior management of Schools.
- implement the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy and its Operational Plan through the aligned School Learning and Teaching Strategy and Enhancement Plan.
- implement approved learning and teaching policies and procedures.
- identify strategy, policy, and procedural matters for consideration by the Committee.
- provide specialist knowledge and input to discussions.

### **2.5.3 Student Representatives**

The roles of the Student Representatives are to:

- provide elected representation (President or Vice-President Education/Academic).
- represent the collective views of School Officers, Class Representatives and the wider student body on learning and teaching matters.
- report to the Committee the collective views of students on learning and teaching



matters.

- provide an annual report on learning and teaching to the Committee.
- develop and implement the annual Student Partnership Agreement.
- implement the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy and its Operational Plan.
- provide specialist knowledge and input to discussions.

#### **2.5.4 Members Appointed by the Senate**

The responsibilities of Members Appointed by the Senate, including the Deans of the University, are to:

- provide specialist knowledge and input to discussions.
- link with the University Committee for Research and Innovation, the University Committee for Quality and Standards, and with the University Studies Committees to highlight issues for, and report back to, the Committee.
- provide cross-University experience.

#### **2.5.5 Members Appointed by the University Executive**

The responsibilities of Members Appointed by the University Executive are to:

- provide specialist knowledge and input to discussions.
- link with other committees and groups to highlight issues for, and report back to, the Committee.
- provide cross-University experience, including campus-specific experiences.
- discuss and report issues in their sections as appropriate and to bring to the Committee the considered, collective views of their sections or committees/groups within their areas.
- ensure that their strategies, plans, policies, and procedures are aligned with those of the University in relation to learning and teaching.
- implement the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy and its Operational Plan.
- develop and support the implementation of learning and teaching policies and procedures.

#### **2.5.6 Individuals in Attendance**

The responsibilities of individuals in attendance are to:

- provide specialist knowledge and input to discussions.
- discuss issues in their sections as appropriate and to bring to the Committee the considered, collective views of their sections.
- ensure that their strategies, plans, policies, and procedures are aligned with those of the University in relation to learning and teaching.
- implement the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy and its Operational Plan through the aligned Learning and Teaching Strategy and Enhancement Plan of their

Directorate.

- develop and support the implementation of learning and teaching policies and procedures.
- provide reports from the various committees or groups within their areas.

### **2.5.7 Clerk and Senior Professional Support**

In addition to the Clerk, the Committee is supported by a senior colleague from Registry and Academic Support. The roles of the Clerk and the Senior Professional Support are to:

- provide administrative support to the Committee.
- undertake background research and contextual analysis in drafting papers for the Committee's consideration.
- provide specialist input to discussions.
- collaborate with the Chair in developing and implementing the Learning and Teaching Strategy and Operational Plan.
- schedule items across meetings to ensure that everyone has opportunity to bring forward items for consideration and that items are not repeatedly dropped from the agenda.
- ensure that appropriate papers and information are provided to enable members to make an informed contribution to discussions.

## **2.6 Contribution of Members**

The success of the Committee in fulfilling its purpose and remit is dependent on the active engagement of its members both during and outwith meetings.

### **2.6.1 Preparation for Meetings**

For the Committee's meetings to be efficient and effective, members must be well-prepared and informed regarding the issues to be discussed. Such preparation includes reporting on the collective views of colleagues in response to consultations, as well as reading the papers circulated in advance of the meeting and being familiar with the key issues and proposals contained within the papers.

Coversheets for each paper on the agenda will highlight key points for consideration and the action required of the Committee, thereby enabling members to focus their preparation.

### **2.6.2 At Meetings**

Irrespective of their position, the contribution and views of all Committee members are regarded as equally valid. To that end, the Chair will ensure that representatives from the different sections of the University have an opportunity, particularly during meetings, to contribute to issues under consideration. As the situation demands, the Chair will actively invite all members (or particular categories of members) to contribute in order to ensure that the views of each person are heard during meetings.

### 2.6.3 Outside of Meetings

In addition to preparation for, and contribution to, meetings of the Committee, members will also be involved in additional Committee-related activities such as Away Days. Members are also expected to participate in events within the Committee's remit, particularly the University's annual Learning and Teaching Symposium and ceremonies for rewarding achievements in learning and teaching, such as the Student Union's Learning and Teaching Oscars.

Additional activities involving Committee members outside of meetings include: reporting to colleagues; disseminating and coordinating responses to consultations; and participating in working groups as required.

## 2.7 Delegated Activity: Responsibility of Committee Members

The University Committee for Learning and Teaching has overall responsibility for the Learning and Teaching Strategy and for enhancing the student learning experience, but in practice, some of this activity is delegated, particularly to sub-committees/groups of the Committee. This approach recognises that the successful realisation of the strategy is dependent on the engagement of staff (academic and professional services) and students across the University and reflects the Committee's ethos of collaboration and co-ordination.

### 2.7.1 Types of Delegated Activity

The Committee typically operates within a framework of four types of delegated activity:

1. **Events:** one-off sessions and key tasks or activities which may occur annually, such as the annual Learning and Teaching Symposium or the Learning and Teaching Oscars.
2. **Sub-Committees:** ongoing groups, reporting directly to the Committee and with representatives from Schools, student community and Professional Services, as appropriate. Principal functions include: implementation of relevant aspects of the Learning and Teaching Strategy; identification and dissemination of best practice; consideration of issues highlighted by the UCLT or other committees; reporting regularly to UCLT; and progressing the development of academic policies and procedures. There is one current, formally constituted committee of the Committee: the Learning and Teaching Academic Operations Committee (LTAOC), to which report the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fora and various sub-groups: Academic Integrity; Digital Groups; Student Experience and Satisfaction (see diagram under Section 2.8).
3. **Working Groups:** short to medium term groups, usually with a relatively small number of members, tasked by the Committee to develop strategies and/or implementation plans in areas of significant strategic importance. Remit, timescales and reporting mechanisms are determined by the Committee. Working groups have

been established to progress the priority areas for development identified within the Learning and Teaching Strategy. Recent working groups have included Personal Tutoring Review, HWU Award, Transforming Assessment.

4. **Projects:** short-term strategic activity related to a specific target with one of the strategic objectives or strategic enablers, usually taken forward by an individual on behalf of the University. The project brief is proposed by the Project Leader and approved by the Committee. Timescales and reporting mechanisms are discussed by the Committee with reference to others involved in the project. Forthcoming and planned projects will be outlined in the Learning and Teaching Strategic Transformation Operational Plan.

### 2.7.2 Role of Committee Members in Delegated Activities

Each delegated activity is usually taken forward by a Committee member (most commonly in the role of Chair), thereby ensuring that activity is continually influenced by strategy. In cases where a strategic activity is being led by a non-member, this individual will be invited to attend the relevant UCLT meetings for the duration of the working group or project.

## 2.8 Delegated Activity

The University Committee for Learning and Teaching delegates some of the more operational, routine tasks related to learning and teaching and to student learning experience to a number of groups. The Learning and Teaching Reporting Structure diagram below illustrates the various groups involved:



### 2.8.1 Learning & Teaching Academic Operations Committee

The University Committee for Learning and Teaching is supported by one formally constituted sub-committee, the Learning & Teaching Academic Operations Committee (LTAOC). The (LTAOC) has been constituted as a formal sub-committee of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching and Its core remit – and its principal function – is to support the Committee in operationalising the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The LTAOC has replaced the former Student Learning Experience Committee, which had, until February 2020, acted as operational sub-committee of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching. The LTAOC has also replaced the Learning and Teaching Groups which had been established in February 2020 and operated until August 2022 to manage the University’s learning, teaching and assessment response to the global coronavirus pandemic. The LTAOC became operational from 1 September 2022, and it subsumes the remits of both the Student Learning Experience Committee and the Learning and Teaching Groups, and it retains the broad membership of the latter. The Chair is the Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life).

The LTAOC is, in turn, supported by campus- specific Learning and Teaching Enhancement for a for Dubai and Malaysia and three groups: Academic Integrity Group, the Digital Transformation Groups and the Student Experience and Satisfaction Group.

### **2.8.2 Learning and Teaching Enhancement Forum (, Dubai, Malaysia)**

There are two Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fora: for the Dubai Campus and the Malaysia Campus. Each Forum provides a mechanism for in-depth discussion of campus-wide learning and teaching issues, including learning spaces, and for disseminating learning and teaching initiatives for implementation through Schools. Each Forum reports separately to the LTAOC.

The Fora are chaired by the Deputy Vice-Principals in Dubai and Malaysia. The LTEF functions at the Scottish Campuses are undertaken through a range of other groups, such as the meetings of the Directors of Learning and Teaching, estates groups and specialist interest groups related to learning and teaching.

### **2.8.3 Academic Integrity Group**

The Academic Integrity Group (AIG) has been constituted as a formal group of the Learning and Teaching Academic Operations Committee (LTAOC) to facilitate policy and operational matters related to Academic Integrity Framework. The LTAOC reports to the University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT). The AIG operates on a collaborative and consultative basis, with wider consultation being progressed beyond the group through its members, ensuring an inclusive approach to decision-making.

The overarching purpose of the AIG is based on the following key principles: promoting and protecting the academic integrity among students and staff is a crucial interest and obligation of all members of HWU; the reputation of the

University, our students and our staff depend on upholding the highest levels of academic integrity; students and academic staff play a key role in promoting and protecting academic integrity and they should be supported with relevant resources and information; and academic integrity education is more effective when coordinated and consistent.

#### **2.8.4 Learning Technologies Steering Group**

The Learning Technologies Steering Group The steering group ensures a strategic and global approach to the use of technologies to support and enhance learning, teaching and assessment within the University. The group is co-chaired by the Learning & Teaching Academy and Information Services and reports into the University Committee for Learning and Teaching for information on a regular basis and for decision-making as required. The chief remit of the group is to have oversight of resourcing requirements associated with technology enhanced learning plans, including the purchase of hardware, software and associated equipment; and training and guidance for staff and students; ensuring that technology enhanced learning initiatives are consistent with the strategic objectives of the University and to monitor their delivery and lessons learned; and considering initiatives and innovations in use more widely across the sector and their potential for use within the University.

#### **2.8.5 Student Experience & Satisfaction Group**

The SE&SG is new for 2022-23 and Terms of Reference are currently under development. This section will be updated in due course.

### **2.9 School Directors of Learning and Teaching and School L&T Committees**

Information on the formal remit of the Directors of Learning & Teaching and the management and support of Learning and Teaching Committees in Schools can be found in the [Academic Management Structures at Multiple Campuses](#) document (link opens in new window).

### **3. Learning and Teaching Strategy**

#### **3.1 Strategic Process for Learning and Teaching**

The Committee follows an established *Strategic Process for Learning and Teaching* for the development, approval, monitoring and review of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy and its Operational Plan. This *Strategic Process* also incorporates arrangements for the development of the Learning and Teaching Strategies and Enhancement Plans of Schools and relevant Professional Services, including alignment with the institutional strategy and plan.

The current Learning and Teaching Strategy, the supporting Operational Plan and the underpinning Strategic Process can be found on the Learning and Teaching Strategy SharePoint site [here](#).

#### **3.2 Development and Management of the Strategy and Strategic Transformation Operational Plan**

The Learning and Teaching Strategy undergoes a major revision - a new version is produced - approximately every five to seven years, with the exact schedule being determined by the development of the institutional Strategic Plan. The structure of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is not prescribed and will vary with each version according to institutional requirements, external influences etc. The tabular template format of the accompanying Operational Plan remains unchanged unless the institutional planning framework has been modified.

Typically, the Strategy is constructed around a few key, over-arching strategic objectives, which are in turn synthesised and progressed, where appropriate, through cross-objective projects to provide a focus for a step-change in strategically significant areas. Cross-objective projects are designed to progress the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy in a co-ordinated, integrated and inclusive manner, and are seen as more effective in achieving the Strategy's key aims than a proliferation of smaller scale, seemingly unrelated activities.

The strategy is developed on a wholly collaborative basis, with active involvement from staff in Schools and Professional Services as well as student representatives and the wider student community. The University Committee for Learning and Teaching is responsible for developing the strategy and managing, through the associated Operational Plan, its implementation. In practice, these tasks are devolved to the Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life) and the Head of Academic Quality, and, in turn, to various working groups.

#### **3.3 Approval, Monitoring and Review of the Strategy and Operational Plan**

Once developed by the University Committee for Learning and Teaching, the Learning and Teaching Strategy and the Operational Plan are approved by both the Senate and the University Executive.

Implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy and the Operational Plan is evaluated by the University Committee for Learning and Teaching through: Summary Report on School/Service Annual Learning and Teaching Strategy Review and Discussion Meetings; the Committee's Annual Terms of Reference Assurance Check; and progress reports on individual projects.

Since 2010/11, externality has been provided at local and institutional levels: at a local level, this is done via the Annual Monitoring and Review process; at an institutional level, through the UCLT's annual Terms of Reference Assurance Check, which is submitted to the Senate and the University Executive for monitoring purposes and for comment. The University Committee for Quality and Standards reviews the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy on a periodic basis through Academic Review (Schools) and Academic-Related Professional Services Review (outcomes from these periodic reviews are also considered by UCLT in an annual summary report).

Evaluation of implementation is based upon a series of performance indicators and a range of more qualitative measures specific to the operational activities of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The reports from individual Schools and Services on their progress towards the University Learning and Teaching Strategic Transformational Operational Plan (as documented in the School/Service Enhancement Plan) also provide qualitative information to inform the overall annual evaluation of implementation.

The processes for approval, monitoring and review of the [Learning and Teaching Strategy](#) (link opens in new window) are fully integrated into the University's framework for quality assurance and quality enhancement.



## **4. Operation of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching: Meetings and Attendance**

### **4.1 Schedule of Meetings**

In each academic year, there will be five scheduled business meetings of the UCLT, together with a Strategy Away Day. A schedule of meetings, including the annual Away Day, for each academic year is issued at the start of the academic year. Meetings are arranged to coincide with meetings of the Senate. Meetings are usually scheduled for two and half hours, with the start time of 09.00 UK to facilitate participation by members in Dubai and Malaysia.

Additional meetings of the UCLT (including meetings in conjunction with other bodies) may be required for more detailed consideration of items. Additional meetings require approval by the Chair.

Cancellation, rescheduling or inclusion of additional meetings will be notified to members by the Clerk as soon as possible, and within not less than five working days.

### **4.2 Typical Meeting Structure**

The order of business at each of the Committee's meetings typically proceeds as follows:

- Welcome and Apologies
- Strategic Change in Learning & Teaching
- Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- Matters Arising
- Strategic Items
- Student Voice
- Items for Endorsement & Approval
- Items for Consideration
- Matters for Information
- Any Other Competent Business
- Next Meeting: Date and Key Items

The Key Annual Strategic Activities and Standing Agenda Items will prescribe the order of business at particular meetings during the session. Items being sponsored by a non-Committee member will be brought to the top of the agenda so that the sponsor does not need to remain for the duration of the entire meeting.

### **4.3 Attendance at Meetings**

Since meeting dates are notified for the full academic year several months before it commences, all members are expected to have made arrangements to attend every meeting. As per all Committees of the Senate, the UCLT adheres to the Senate's Attendance Policy and is required to maintain a record of attendance at each of its meetings.

### **4.4 Quorum**

The quorum necessary to transact business is five full members of the Committee, at least two of whom must be Directors of Learning and Teaching, and at least two of whom must be members of the Senate. Substitutes and co-opted members are not included in the quorum.

Members who are participating in a meeting by means of audio-visual conferencing are deemed to be present at the meeting and to count towards the quorum.

## **4.5 Non-Attendance and Substitute Attendance**

### **4.5.1 Committee Members**

Any members who are unable to attend a meeting of the Committee are requested to notify the Clerk in advance and are invited to nominate a substitute to attend in their place. Once agreed, the Clerk will provide access to agenda and papers.

Members and their substitutes should discuss any items requiring a collective view in advance of the meeting so that the substitute can respond on behalf of the School, Professional Service or student community. If no alternative representative is available at meetings where decisions will be taken, Committee members are invited to submit their views in writing prior to the meeting.

In the case of Directors of Learning and Teaching, substitutes should normally be the Director of Academic Quality.

### **4.5.2 Chair**

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will act as Chair for the meeting. In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair, the members present will appoint one of their number as Chair for that meeting.

### **4.5.3 Clerk**

In the absence of the Clerk, the Policy and Governance team will provide a substitute Clerk.

## **5. Operation of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching: Agenda Items, Papers and Transacting Business**

### **5.1 Principles of Operation**

In fulfilling its terms of reference, the Committee follows the principles as agreed by the Senate to enhance academic governance seeking:

- closer alignment between the decision-making structure and the University's strategic objectives, to ensure that the decision-making structures are fit for the delivery of the strategy.
- a more efficient approach to the decision-making process, leading to clearer lines of reporting and accountability, a reduction in time taken to reach business-critical decisions, and high-quality outcomes.
- a focus on matters of strategy and policy by main committees, with operational matters being dealt with by the relevant colleagues in consultation with ad hoc working groups as required.
- minimisation of business considered by numerous different groups and with appropriate accountability for decisions taken.
- an assumption that decisions will be reached by consensus wherever possible.
- an assumption that each committee will address business internationally.
- appropriate delineation between governance and management.
- papers containing clear, evidence-based proposals for consideration.
- use of IT facilities for circulation of the agenda and papers, with members of committees and others being able to access committee papers via the appropriate digital platform with appropriate access authorisation.
- effective communication of decisions to all relevant parties throughout the University.

### **5.2 Key Annual Strategic Activities**

Within the Committee's schedule of business/standing agenda items, there are four key, inter-related strategic activities which occur on an annual basis:

#### **5.2.1 September: Learning and Teaching Strategic Transformation Operational Plan**

At the first meeting of each session, the Committee finalises the Learning and Teaching Strategic Transformation Operational Plan and Key Areas of Development for the session. The Plan and Key Areas may be adapted in response to changing institutional priorities or to common activities emerging from local plans.

#### **5.2.2 November: Institutional KPI's for Learning and Teaching**

In November, the Committee considers the latest institutional Learning and Teaching Key Performance Indicators, with presentations given by the Planning Manager. The core categories, which cover all modes and locations where appropriate, are at undergraduate

level: Entry Scores; Widening Participation; Retention or Completion; Student Satisfaction; Graduate Destinations. Since 2016, the Learning and Teaching Key Performance Indicators also included contextual data in areas such as gender, disability, ethnicity, age group and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Evaluation of Good Degree Classification was re-introduced in 2017.

### **5.2.3 February: Strategy Away Day**

The Committee's annual Away Day in February (usually Week 6 of semester) provides a focused session for discussing key strategic issues in depth, further developing particular activities or reviewing the strategy and operational plan as a whole. Key topics vary from year to year, depending on emerging priorities.

### **5.2.4 June: Learning and Teaching Evaluation**

At the final strategic discussion meeting of the session, the Committee considers a range of annual summary reports related to learning and teaching (including relevant external summary reports, e.g. institutional quality reports of all Scottish HEI's). An over-arching Summary of All Annual Summaries enables the Committee to evaluate progress on the past year and to plan its schedule of activity for the year ahead.

The Committee will also receive the Annual Institutional Report on Quality for the Scottish Funding Council, which is then passed up to the Senate, the Court, the University Committee for Quality and Standards and the University Executive.

## **5.3 Standing Agenda Items**

Items considered by the University Committee for Learning and Teaching vary in accordance with the priorities of the institution in learning and teaching, but there are standing items which occur on an annual or more regular basis at particular meetings. A forward agenda plan is maintained by the Clerk of the Committee and is used to compile the agenda for each meeting.

## **5.4 Agenda and Papers**

Agenda items considered by the Committee are a combination of University-level issues, campus-specific issues and issues raised by Schools, Professional Services and the student community (Student Voice is a standard item).

Although slots on the agenda are available for issues to be raised by, most of the agenda is usually given over to institutional matters related to the Learning and Teaching Strategy, to standing items or items identified by, for example, the Senate and/or University Executive.

### **5.4.1 Notifying agenda items**

The agenda is typically set two weeks in advance of each meeting: possible items should be notified to the Clerk no later than 10 days before the meeting. Items notified to the Clerk after this date will be included on the agenda only with the prior agreement of the Chair;

otherwise, they will be held over till the next meeting. Tabled papers will not be considered, as there is insufficient time for consideration and informed discussion.

The Chair, the Clerk and the individual providing senior professional support will determine whether notified items are matters for the Committee, for the LTAOC (or one of its sub-groups) or for another of the University's Committees (typically, the Studies Committee or the University Committee for Quality and Standards).

Members are requested to identify all matters to the Clerk in advance of the meeting, including any urgent, late issues, in preference to tabling papers or raising matters not previously notified under AOB.

#### **5.4.2 Preparation of papers**

Papers are prepared by the Chair, the Clerk and the individual providing senior professional support in conjunction with other members of the Committee or individuals outwith the Committee as appropriate.

#### **5.4.3 Circulation of agenda and papers**

The agenda and papers are provided in electronic format and made available on Admincontrol a minimum of one week in advance of each meeting. Notification about the meeting and the distribution of papers will be emailed to members.

Additional circulations, typically including 'to follow' papers, are kept to a minimum, but on some occasions are unavoidable (e.g. if papers are being provided by other Committees). Every effort will be made to ensure that all such papers are available before the meeting, so that members have an opportunity to consider them in advance.

Particular actions for the Committee are identified on the agenda itself and, in detail, on the cover sheet of each paper.

#### **5.4.4 Access to the Committee's agenda and papers**

Key documents for the University Committee for Learning and Teaching are available on Admincontrol, which is updated before and after each meeting, and features agendas, minutes, papers, presentations and background documents for information.

Policies approved by the Senate and endorsed by the Committee are located in the [Learning and Teaching Policy Bank](#) (link opens in new window) and are summarised in the [Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers](#) (link opens in new window).

## **5.5 Transacting Business**

Scheduled meetings provide a regular, structured means of transacting the Committee's business. The Committee will, however, use other mechanisms where it is more efficient and effective to do so. *See Section 2.8 Delegated Activity for additional information.*

### **5.5.1 Actions taken by the Committee**

The University Committee for Learning and Teaching may apply the following actions to each

item of business:

- Approve
- Note
- Receive
- Consider
- Endorse
- Recommend
- Reject

### **5.5.2 Decision-Making and Voting at Meetings**

Normal practice is that wherever possible decisions are reached through consensus. All members of the Committee are entitled to vote in any vote of the Committee (in this instance, the reference to 'members' is restricted to actual members of the Committee and excludes those individuals who are 'in attendance') except:

- when the Committee is required to vote on the exercising of delegated powers of the Senate, those persons present who are not Senators will be invited to abstain from voting.
- when the Committee is required to vote on a matter that is solely under the purview of the University Executive, then only those persons who are members because of their executive positions will be eligible to vote.

The Chair will rule on instances where a vote is required, and whether any matter under consideration relates to the Senate or to the University Executive. The Chair has a deliberative vote and a casting vote. Persons who are 'in attendance' at meetings of the Committee are not entitled to vote.

### **5.5.3 Reports from Schools, Services and the Student Community**

Members are required to provide formal, written reports to the University Committee for Learning and Teaching as part of the Committee's Standing Items and in response to specific areas for action.

As part of the Committee's remit, Schools provide regular reports to the UCLT via the Minutes of School Learning and Teaching Committees. In addition, the Committee requires regular action reports from members on a number of key matters throughout the academic year, such as retention, student surveys and implementation of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, as well as annual reports from the Student Representative Bodies.

The Clerk will notify members of the following with regard to reports: due dates, format and follow-up actions.

### **5.5.4 Reports from Consultations**

As the Committee is responsible for institutional matters related to learning and teaching, it will frequently require the views of staff and students across the University on proposed strategy and policy developments. The Clerk will provide Committee members with discussion papers, questions for consideration and details of format and timescales for responses for all such consultations.

Members are responsible for circulating consultation papers within their Schools, Campus, Professional Services and the Student Community, as appropriate, and for determining the most appropriate means of gaining the collective view of their colleagues. The consultation

must include colleagues at all campuses, and responses should make it clear that the views of colleagues at non-UK campuses have been sought. The matters identified by the Committee for consultation are usually designed for consideration by a wide spectrum of staff and students; it will be only on a very rare occasion that the Committee will request a local "management only" view.

Responses returned to the Clerk must be representative of the shared view of those consulted, not the personal opinion of the individual Committee member. Members should highlight in their responses whether the views expressed are collective or individual. Members are also responsible for synthesising the various views from their colleagues to produce a single view of the relevant Campus, School, Professional Service or Student Community; a list of individual views should not be provided and does not constitute a "Campus View", "School View", "Service View" or "Student View".

#### **5.5.5 Proposals to the Committee**

Members of the Committee, or other individuals outwith the Committee, who would like to present a paper to the Committee for consideration should contact the Clerk in the first instance. The Clerk will liaise with the Chair and the individual providing senior professional support to determine whether or not the paper should be forwarded to the Committee for consideration.

If the paper is accepted, the Clerk will advise the sponsor of details such as the meeting at which the paper will be considered and the format of the paper. If the paper is not accepted as being suitable for the Committee, the proposer will be notified by the Clerk of the correct route and the appropriate person to contact.

Non-members who wish to bring an issue to the attention of the Committee are encouraged to communicate with the Committee via the Clerk, rather than emailing the Committee directly. In this way, there is a consistent line of communication and a means of ensuring that only matters of relevance are circulated to the Committee.

#### **5.5.6 Items by Correspondence**

Often it is necessary – or more efficient and effective - to transact some of the Committee's business by correspondence, rather than at a scheduled meeting. Email and e-versions of papers are used for progressing items outwith meetings, which most commonly consist of requests to members to comment or endorse revised versions of proposals considered originally at a meeting. In this instance, correspondence is used to ensure that finalised proposals are either approved by the Committee, or forwarded to another Committee for consideration and approval, within a particular timeframe and can, therefore, be implemented at the specified date.

If any item requires a decision, as a matter of urgency, outwith a scheduled meeting of the Committee, the Chair will determine the decision to be taken and, if possible, will do so in consultation with such other members of the Committee as might be available. Any such decisions taken will be notified to the Committee at its next meeting (typically through Matters Arising).

#### **5.5.7 Participation in Working Groups and Projects**

As outlined in Section 2.7, much of the Committee's activity in developing and implementing the strategy is devolved to working groups, project groups and formally constituted committees and their sub-groups. All members are expected to volunteer as participants in such groups, particularly as Chairs, to ensure that the work of the group is continually influenced by the Committee's strategic objectives and to facilitate reporting to and from the Committee.

Members are also encouraged to invite their colleagues to participate in the Committee's various activities, thereby providing a wider spectrum of views and experiences. The Clerk will provide details such as the remit (as endorsed by the Committee), number of meetings, duration of activity and expected commitment to assist members in seeking volunteers. The Clerk will also advise groups on methods of reporting, administrative support, etc.

#### **5.5.8 Strategy Away Days**

The Committee holds a Strategy Away Day each January to provide a focused opportunity for discussing key strategic issues in depth. Topics vary from year to year, depending on emerging priorities. Possible topics for the Away Day are discussed by the Committee in November to provide an appropriate timescale for preparation. The Chair, the Clerk and the individual providing senior professional support will organise the day, including the production of discussion papers and presentations. Members will be invited to undertake some background preparation. Preparatory activities are designed to ensure that the Away Day is both productive and informative.

Non-Committee members are frequently invited to the Away Day to inform and progress discussions.

The outcomes of the Away Day, which are recorded in the form of a Report and Action Plan, are used for a variety of means, such as taking forward strategic initiatives and shaping the next version of the Operational Plan.



## **6. Operation of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching: Reporting**

### **6.1 Minutes and Action Points**

The Minutes of each meeting are produced by the Clerk and signed off, after required amendment, by the Chair. In the case of both Minutes and Reports (see section 6.2 for the latter), the Chair will approve the redaction of any information deemed necessary for reasons of confidentiality. Minutes and reports of the Committee will denote those areas of reported business which are deemed to fall within the designation of information which is 'exempt' under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act.

Minutes are circulated electronically to Committee members within one week of the meeting; action points and details of the next meeting are also notified in the circulation. Members are invited to notify any factual errors in the minutes to the Clerk before the next meeting; these will be announced by the Chair at the next meeting prior to the Committee being invited to accept the minutes as an accurate record.

Routine 'Matters Arising' from the minutes are reported to the Committee through a separate report, which is issued with the agenda and papers for each meeting. The 'Matters Arising and Actions Log' aims to minimise reporting on routine matters from the previous meeting and increase time for considering scheduled items of business.

### **6.2 Reporting to the Senate, the University Executive and Court**

#### **6.2.1 The Senate**

The Committee's report (i.e. coversheet, minutes and any appended papers) is presented to the following ordinary meeting of the Senate. Key points from the minutes of each meeting, particularly any matters for consideration and/or approval, are summarised by the Clerk in the coversheet accompanying the Minutes, with papers appended as required.

Each Senate meeting features an item for discussion. Topics for discussion are based on matters of institutional importance. There is at least one learning and teaching discussion item per semester. Views emerging from the Senate's discussion of key learning and teaching issues are used to inform subsequent discussions at the Committee.

#### **6.2.2 The University Executive**

By virtue of his/her office, the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) also regularly reports on learning and teaching matters at UE meetings. Items reported are typically broader than those considered by the University Committee for Learning and Teaching, and can include, for example, major quality assurance activities.

#### **6.2.3 The Court**

Learning and teaching issues are occasionally discussed further at the Court, particularly as part of the broader consideration of such standing items as performance indicators and the Strategic Plan. Since 2008, the Court considers the annual report to the Scottish Funding Council on the University's quality assurance and quality enhancement activity; a draft of the report is considered in advance by the Committee at its May/ June meeting. The Committee

also reports to the Court, via the Senate and the University Executive, on the outcomes of the QAA External Review and progress towards identified actions, and the development of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

#### **6.2.4 Other Committees**

The Committee brings relevant matters, either for consideration or information, to the attention of the other Committees, particularly the University Committee for Quality and Standards Committee (*see section 7*).

The Committee will also delegate policy and procedural matters and operational issues to the committee which reports to it, ie the Learning and Teaching Academic Operations Committee.

### **6.3 Reporting to Campuses, Schools, Professional Services and the Student Community**

"Communication and consultation" are integral to the successful operation of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching. The Committee's discussions and decisions must be reported to Campuses, Schools, Professional Services and the Student Community. Such reporting is the responsibility of the representative on the Committee. All Committee decisions and discussions should be communicated widely; papers and outcomes of debates are very rarely identified as confidential.

In the case of Schools, each Director of Learning and Teaching (DLT) should ensure that his or her Executive Dean is informed of pertinent issues and decisions so that the Executive Dean can in turn contribute to the Senate's and the University Executive's discussions of learning and teaching matters and can, where appropriate, endorse the Committee's recommendations as being supported by his/her School. DLTs should also ensure that staff, and students where appropriate, are properly informed and that individuals who may be directly affected are fully briefed.

Similarly, all other members of the Committee should ensure that their colleagues are properly informed of the Committee's discussions and decisions.

The Clerk and the senior individual providing professional support to the Committee will liaise directly with Committee members regarding information to be communicated more widely across the University, and will provide summaries to assist representatives in this process. Such communication is particularly fundamental in the case of major strategic initiatives and is necessary to ensure the effective engagement of staff and students in such activities. These summaries will also include the series of "Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers", which aim to provide a concise, informative overview of key policies, and include links to relevant procedures and templates.

## 7. Learning & Teaching Support and Related Committees

Within the University, there are several committees whose functions are related to learning and teaching at the operational and policy level. The University Committee for Learning and Teaching engages in particular with the University Committee for Quality and Standards and the University Studies Committee. The development of a new Learning and Teaching Strategy and a new Research Strategy is facilitating increased links with the University Committee for Research and Innovation.

The links between the Committee and these committees are further facilitated by joint membership (including the Chairs) and by the fact that the functions related to quality enhancement, quality assurance and programme approval are, at the School level, within the overall remit of the Director of Learning and Teaching (with the latter two normally delegated to the Director of Academic Quality).

### 7.1 Learning & Teaching Academy

The [Learning and Teaching Academy](#) (link opens in new window) was established in 2019 to support the University's ambition to be Pioneering in Education and to realise the Inspiring Learning vision of the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2018-2025.

The Learning and Teaching Academy supports this by:

- Delivering a portfolio of development opportunities for colleagues engaged in learning and teaching
- Opening creative space for exploring and developing innovative approaches to learning and teaching
- Providing a focal point for celebrating the inspiring teaching that flourishes across the Heriot-Watt community
- Offering specialist input to learning and teaching developments across the University
- Facilitating strategically-aligned pedagogic research, scholarship and evaluation

### 7.2 University Committee for Quality and Standards

The [University Committee for Quality and Standards](#) (UCQS) (link opens in new window) of the Senate contributes significantly to the monitoring and evaluation of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching's projects and activities within its remit of assuring quality and standards. Progress, at the School level, towards the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is evaluated through the Annual Monitoring and Review (AMR) process. An annual AMR report is considered both by UCLT and UCQS.

Implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is evaluated periodically through the Academic Review (Schools/disciplines) and Academic-Related Review (relevant Professional Services) processes, with reports from each being considered by UCQS and outcomes by UCLT.

The UCLT's remit specifies that it should consult with UCQS on the preparation for, and outcomes, of external quality assurance and enhancement reviews.

### 7.3 University Studies Committee

The [University Studies Committee](#) (link opens in new window) is responsible for the approval of all taught programmes and academic matters relating to undergraduate and postgraduate (taught) studies. The policies, procedures and guidelines for the management and operation of the activity of the Studies Committee are developed collaboratively by it and the UCLT (usually via LTAOC) or UCQS, as appropriate.

Responsibility for postgraduate programmes of research rests with the Research Degrees Committee, which is a sub-committee of the University Committee for Research and Innovation.

### 7.4 University Committee for Research and Innovation

The development of a new University Strategic Plan and of new institutional strategies for Learning and Teaching and for Research is providing an opportunity for the University Committee for Learning and Teaching to collaborate with the [University Committee for Research and Innovation](#) (link opens in new window) in effecting cross-institutional research-teaching linkages.

The UCLT's remit specifies that it should, jointly with UCRI, develop, recommend, monitor the implementation of and report on regulations and policies related to access to, and use of, the library and academic-related information services.

### 7.5 Regulations, Codes of Practice, Policies and Procedures

An extensive series of policies, procedures, guidelines and codes of practice related to the activities of the above Committees of the Senate are available at:

- [Learning and Teaching Policy Bank](#) (link opens in new window): programme approval; student-related matters)
- Academic Quality [website](#) and [SharePoint](#) (link opens in new window): quality and standards policies, codes of practice, processes etc.
- University's [Ordinances and Regulations](#) (link opens in new window)

## 8. Strategic and Operational Management of Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement

The strategic and operational aspects of quality assurance and quality enhancement are the ultimate responsibility of the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) and are managed on his behalf by the Academic Quality Division within [the Registry and Academic Support Directorate](#) (link opens in new window). The staff development and the student learning skills functions of quality enhancement are managed by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Services as part of the Information Services Directorate.

### 8.1 Useful resources

- Academic Quality: [SharePoint](#) and [Website](#) (link opens in new window)
- [Learning and Teaching Academy](#) (link opens in new window)
- [Information Services](#) (link opens in new window), with links to learning technologies
- [All types of University Policies](#) (link opens in new window)