THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

24 October 2023, Torridon Room, Charles Stewart House/Microsoft Teams

Web Version   **Minute**

Present:	Siân Bayne, Senate appointee (by videocall) Richard Blythe, Court appointee Patrick Hadoke, Senate appointee Carl Harper, Student member Tina Harrison, Senate appointee Melissa Highton, Senate appointee Sarah McAllister, Court appointee (by videocall) Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University
In attendance:	Mark Hay, Head of IT, CMVM (by videocall) Nichola Kett, Interim Director of Academic Services Barry Neilson, Director of Strategic Change (by videocall) Bryne Ngwenya, CSE representative Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning Jamie Tait, Governance Manager Dan Wedgwood, Head of Court Services Shannon Vallor, Baillie Gifford Chair in the Ethics of Data and Artificial Intelligence (for agenda item 3) (by videocall) Gail Redford, Project Manager (for agenda item 4) (by videocall) Stephen Roy, Digital Transformation Programme Manager (for agenda item 4) (by videocall) Tony Weir, Director of IT Infrastructure (for items 6 and 8)
Apologies:	Shereen Benjamin, Court appointee Jo Craiglee, Head of Knowledge Management & IS Planning Anne-Marie Coriat, CMVM representative Lee Hamill, Director of Finance Colm Harmon, Senate appointee Liz Lovejoy, CAHSS representative Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services

1   Minute   Papers A1, A2

Tina Harrison, Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement), welcomed members and attendees to Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC). It was noted that Colm Harmon, Committee Convener, was participating in a parliamentary reception at Westminster and had requested that Tina Harrison convene the meeting in his absence.

Patrick Hadoke, the new Convener of the Senate Academic Policy & Regulations Committee, was welcomed to his first meeting, replacing Paul Norris on the Committee. This was also the first meeting for Dan Wedgwood, Head of Court Services, who was attending as an observer.

It was reported that two Court appointees have now left the Committee since the last meeting: Joyce Anderson (who has retired from the University) and Sue Currie (due to other work commitments). The process for replacing them on KSC would be taken forward by Governance and Court Services.

Post meeting note: Liz Lovejoy, Registrar in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) and CAHSS representative on KSC, has also now left the University and a new CAHSS representative will attend future meetings.

The minute of the meetings held on 30 May 2023 and by correspondence that concluded on 10 July 2023, were approved.

It was highlighted that the minute regarding the discussion on University Firewall Website Controls – Plagiarism Sites (agenda item 10, paper F) noted that KSC suggested "it would be helpful to include a message on any website blocked with an explanation of why the site has been blocked and the dangers of interacting with essay mill companies…any message could also highlight support available to students." It was confirmed that this recommendation had not be included in the paper to either the Senate Education Committee or University Executive, and it was agreed that the Secretary would liaise with the Interim Head of Academic Services to ensure this was taken forward at the next meeting of the Senate Education Committee.

2   Matters Arising   Verbal

There were no matters arising.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3   Artificial Intelligence and Data Ethics (AIDE) Advisory Board update   Verbal

Professor Shannon Vallor, Baillie Gifford Chair in the Ethics of Data and Artificial Intelligence, gave a presentation on University priorities and challenges in ethical artificial intelligence and data practice. It was noted that the University has been a leader in AI for over 60 years, with an interdisciplinary culture of collaboration unique in the UK. The following was covered:

- An overview of the AI and Data Ethics Advisory Board (AIDE), formed in 2019 by the University Executive and comprising of subject matter experts with academic, professional services and student representation.
- Opportunities for the University with AI developments, as well as emerging and urgent issues.
- Key University community needs and ambitions for responsible AI at the University.

The Committee welcomed the detailed presentation, and discussed the issue of how online training for all staff and students on responsible AI dimensions could be taken forward, as well as how the embedding of generative AI and associated governance and oversight are being approached. The following points were raised:

- It was noted that this is no longer a niche training need, and there were recent examples of other training to learn from that had gone through governance approval routes. Key points on training included: different audiences are likely to require different training levels and needs; this is a skill and should not be seen as a one-off training task or requirement; although short high-level training would be beneficial, it is essential to follow-up with further resources; for students, this could be embedded in the curriculum and built into academic expectations; and it is important that postgraduate students (particularly postgraduate research students) are not lost in the general approach to student training, as they are likely to need specific, focused training/advice and also specific, targeted communication.
- The University has a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on "Data Ethics, AI and Responsible Innovation". This is owned by the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) and was created in 2019, with EFI currently in the process of getting the MOOC updated.
- A Digital Skills Programme online course on "Data and AI ethics". This is a one-hour webinar designed to introduce staff and students to the basic concepts, with managers able to assign this to their staff. Over 100 colleagues have completed this training since March 2023.
- In conclusion, KSC were supportive that a suite of learning materials to complement existing resources be developed, with the Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) to discuss the issue of curriculum transformation with the Vice-Principal Students and Director of Strategic Change.

In discussion the following points were also raised:

- A short-life working group, chaired by Professor Michael Rovastos, has been formed which will consider various key initial uses of AI and governance. It was noted it would be helpful for KSC to receive updates direct from this working group.
- Generative AI is one of Senate Education Committee's (SEC) priorities for 23/24 and SEC will join up with the short-life working group on its discussions/outputs.
- Generative AI is already embedded in existing software products and is being used by staff and students.
- Student interns in the Learning, Teaching and Web Services directorate produced a helpful report in summer 2023 on where AI could make a difference at the University.
- The University published Generative AI guidance for staff and students earlier this year. As the technology, ethics, and use of AI is a fast-moving area, these guidance documents will be updated as necessary.

The Convener thanked Professor Vallor for her presentation and noted it would be helpful for KSC to receive a further update from the AIDE Board at a future meeting.

4   University Digital Strategy Update   Verbal

Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal and Chief Information Officer, and Librarian to the University, Stephen Roy, Digital Transformation Programme Manager, and Gail Redford, Project Manager, gave a presentation on the University Digital Strategy. A

background to the digital estate was provided, followed by a summary of the Digital Estate Prioritisation (DEP) Group, who are responsible for prioritising the major digital estate investments (over £2m total project costs capital and revenue) in the digital estate over the next 5-10 years. Three subgroups have met to carry out detailed discussions on possible priority areas, with the DEP Group now having agreed 6 areas to be taken forward to full business case: MyEd personalised student portal; Sports and Exercise platform replacement; Estates Facilities Management; SMART campus; Hardware and Software Asset Management; and Hotel Platform. These will all progress through appropriate standing governance committees for consideration and approval. An update on the Digital Strategy implementation was also noted.

Post meeting note: The Hotel Management system has been descoped from this list at this time, however work is underway to consider a larger business case for the Accommodation, Catering & Events (ACE) accommodation and catering system that would include the hotel functionality.

The Committee welcomed the update and discussed the ethical implications of the SMART campus proposal, which aims to deliver more effective and efficient operation of both the physical and digital estate through the use of Internet of Things (IoT) sensors and Wi-Fi data capture, analytics and visualisation techniques. It was confirmed any proposals would be submitted to the AIDE Board for approval, with any subsequent changes also requiring Board approval. It was also confirmed that there were strict standards to adhere to, for example in occupancy management with data being anonymised. It was also noted this had links to SeatEd, the University's study space management mobile app, and although this was not going to full business case, a number of pilot areas were currently in use, including the main library.

5   Chief Information Officer Update   Verbal

Key activities and updates since the last meeting were reported, including:
- **University-wide IT community event**. It was noted that half of the IT spend across the University was in ISG, with the other half in Colleges and Schools. In order to bring staff across the IT community together, the first of a planned quarterly event was scheduled to take place in November 2023, with the IT community invited to contribute to the agenda.
- **Information Governance Review Group**. This group, co-chaired with the Vice-Principal and University Secretary, has been tasked with looking at overall information governance at the University. The outputs of this Group will be shared with KSC amongst others in due course.
- **Wider IT sector issues**:
  - Global supply chain disruptions reported at previous meetings have now improved, although shortages for some specialised equipment still remain.
  - Primarily a result of the impact of Covid, it was noted that some software manufacturers have implemented increases in annual charges at rates and in ways which required continued scrutiny and negotiation, including on a sector-wide basis through the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC).

- **Artificial Intelligence**:
  - ISG was currently working on two AI products for general use across the University, including a Chatbot for use on EdHelp. These will be submitted to the AIDE Board for approval.
  - Acceleration of software development through AI was noted, with the cost of making educational technology substantially reduced. This has resulted in application proliferation and software of varying quality.
- **Challenges facing the digital estate.** In addition to the 6 areas that the DEP have agreed to be taken forward to full business case, it was noted there are three further areas to highlight:
  - Future updates to the student record (EUCLID), which will be key to the curriculum transformation project. A presentation on this will come to a future KSC meeting.
  - Data centre space will be a major consideration going forward. The Committee also welcomed the recent announcement that the UK Government announced the University was the preferred location for the exascale supercomputer, which will be housed in the EPCC's Advanced Computing Facility.

6   Data Centre Capacity   Paper B

An update describing the ongoing work on the University's data centre capacity planning was presented. In discussion, it was noted that through negotiations by EPCC (part of the University of Edinburgh and the UK's leading centre of supercomputing and data science expertise), there was a national carbon efficiency saving as a result of hosting national facilities. It was also confirmed that carbon accounting for external cloud services was not currently accounted for, but the Sustainable Information Technology Group was looking into this issue.

It was noted that discussions with Colleges and Schools on their data centre requirements would continue, with a potential paper submitted to the December Estates Committee on plans should investment be identified as being required.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

It was noted that items 7 and 8 had been selected in advance by members and attendees for discussion and that the other items would be noted or approved without the expectation of discussion.

7   Proposed Amendments to Information Technology Committee   Paper C
          Terms of Reference

The Committee discussed a proposed amendment to the Information Technology Committee's (ITC) terms of reference, primarily to bring it in line with the Delegated Authority Schedule (DAS). The governance approval routes were noted, and it was agreed it would be helpful if a more detailed report from the ITC could be provided to KSC in future, given the proposed approval level be raised from £500k to £1m (where the budget holder has confirmed the funds are available). Subject to the more detailed reports, the Committee approved the amendment to the ITC terms of reference.

8   Digital Research Services Programme 23/24 Approval   Paper D

The Committee discussed a paper noting the initial 2023/24 Digital Research
Services (DRS) programme investment, and the budget allocations for the DRS
programme were subsequently approved.

9   University Digital Strategy – Digital Estate Update   Paper E

Following on from the University Digital Strategy presentation, an update on
progress around the Digital Estate area of the University Digital Strategy was noted.

10   Information Security Update   Paper F

The regular Information Security update paper, providing a summary of the current
external cyber threat environment, together with details of ongoing centrally
managed technical control improvements that will further enhance University cyber
security controls, was noted.

11   Windows Programme   Paper G

An update on the planned development and rollout of the Windows 11 supported
desktop environment was noted.

12   Information Services Group Capital Envelope 2022-2028   Paper H

An update on the Information Services Group's 5-year capital envelope, 2022-28,
was noted.

13   Network Replacement Programme Update   Paper I

A progress update on the University's Network Replacement Programme was noted.

14   IT & Library National Student Survey Results 2023   Paper J

A paper that detailed the result of questions 18 ("The IT resources and facilities
provided have supported my learning well") and 20 ("I have been able to access
course specific resources when I needed to") of the 2023 National Student Survey
was noted.

15   Finance Helpline and People & Money support overview   Paper K

A paper with an overview of the management of the Finance Helpline and People
and Money support was noted.

16   People and Money Systems Update   Paper L

An update on the implementation of the People & Money systems and processes
was noted. It was confirmed that a Research Stabilisation Group had been set up to
focus on the research finance aspects of the plan, as some processes were not yet
fully stabilised. The Director of Strategic Change agreed to look into a query
regarding the generation of cost codes and a bottleneck this was causing.

17   Timetabling and Exams replacement project – Update on Progress   Paper M

An update on the implementation project to replace the systems to support teaching timetabling, room booking and exam scheduling, was noted.

18   Committee Reports
- **IT Committee**   **Paper N1**
- **Library Committee**   **Paper N2**
- **Digital Research Services Steering Group**   **Paper N3**
- **Estates Committee**   **Paper N4**

The reports were noted.

19   Any Other Business

It was noted that a post-project discussion on Learn Ultra would be discussed at a future meeting.

20   Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 25 January 2024, 14:00 – 16:00