



Undergraduate Academic Forum
St Andrews Students' Association

Thursday 12th March 2026
17:00-19:00
Old Union Diner, University of St Andrews

GENERAL INFORMATION

Meeting called by: Education Council Committee

Type of Meeting: Undergraduate Academic Forum

Chair: Emily Bannister (President of Education)

Note Taker(s): Nick Townsend (Academic Representation Intern)

ATTENDANCE

SA Attendees: Faculty Presidents, President of Education, Academic Representation Intern, Academic Representation Coordinator, School Presidents and Language Convenors.

University Attendees: Professor Shiona Chillas, Associate Dean for Students (Arts and Divinity), Dr Steven Tyre, Dean of Learning and Teaching, Dr Lenia Kouneni, Associate Dean of Education (Arts and Divinity), Dr Paul A. S. Cruickshank, Associate Dean for Students (Science), Professor Clare Peddie, Vice Principal Education (The Proctor), Ros Claase, Director of Student Experience, Karen Murphy, Academic Policy Officer (Quality).

Apologies: Dr Sharon Leahy, Associate Dean for Education (Science and Medicine).

Minutes for UAF 2

1) Welcome

President of Education and Faculty Presidents: (Overview)

- Thank you to everyone for attending, we really appreciate your time
- Please can we ask that comments are kept respectful and that discussion is aimed towards productive outcomes
- We should also note that some of the things discussed today are also being discussed at committees and EduExec. Therefore, some discussions here will be kept short in the knowledge they can be carried forward at a committee level

2) Transcripts: Hidden Costs- 10 minutes

(Arts and Divinity Faculty President, School President of Art History)

School President of Art History: (Overview)

- Presents and summarises report: *Please see attached Appendix.*
- Keen to let the report speak for itself and instead draw out a few key points worth mentioning in person
- This issue particularly irritated the student body but does not fit easily into feedback loops. It is not entirely an education issue, neither is it entirely an employability issue etc, but both are affected by the cost of the transcript
- Furthermore, we found out about this when we got an email in the summer – we did not know the system was being introduced before this. We were not at university at the time and could challenge the issue.
- Transcripts are important for students for a number of reasons, not least because students need them for their master's applications, as well as for jobs

Faculty President of Arts and Divinity: (Overview)

- We believe there are 2 main issues here. Firstly, the dissatisfaction at the cost and the fact we do not get it at graduation
- A further issue is that this system, when paid for, did not work effectively. We have lots of reports of delayed responses to emails
- Another aspect of this is the conversion service for transcripts. The university does not provide one and with such a large international student body who might need their transcript converted to another system for graduate education, there is a need for it.
- At the moment, the solution is to pay a third party transcription services, which can cost thousands

Discussion:

- Vice Principal Education (Proctor):
 - You are right to raise the question of cost for the transcripts and I hope that you have a productive conversation next week when the relevant people come to EduExec
 - It's not unreasonable to charge for the transcript, as seen in your comparison, but the exact cost is something for you to take further next week

- In terms of the Transcript translation, please do not underestimate the cost of it takes to convert grades. We currently translate grades for students who have studied abroad and this is a costly task which we maintain committed too
- Importantly, the University of St Andrews does take part in the Higher Education Achievement Record and mentions your major achievements that are non-academic. This is a major commitment which other universities have not continued with
- Many have stopped doing HEAR transcripts and we have continued not without cost to the institution
- There is a lot of administration that goes into the HEAR transcripts so that employers can see what extra activities you can do
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity):
 - It is important to note that the conversion service is a different process and separate from other issues you have raised here
 - We convert grades only with the universities we have partnerships with and that we can be confident in. This is very difficult
- Faculty President of Science and Medicine:
 - I have been speaking to the senior leadership of Birmingham University while I was working on the review team of Cardiff University and they pay a third-party provider. For all their students, they pay 80,000 a year and anyone can convert any grade for free. I make this point to illustrate that other Universities are providing this service.
- President of Education
 - Thank you all for your contributions, we can present this further next week

3) Consistency in Formative Assessment Practice- 15 minutes
(Science and Medicine Faculty President)

Faculty President of Science and Medicine: (Outline)

- *Presents report in Appendix*
- It is good academic practice that we get our past papers
- Quantitative Assessment: The issue is that we currently get some past paper questions but no answers, and this is not consistent across modules or schools
- There is a wide variety of approaches. Some modules/Schools offer solutions and marking while others do not
- Qualitative Assessment: Some schools/modules give model answers, other do not
- At Birmingham, it is very normal to have worked solutions, mock exams with solution sets and example essays in all modules
- Only in modules such as medicine are there not answers – for clearly articulates reasons
- We are looking for consistency across schools and a discussion about ensuring this is maintained

Discussion:

- Dean of Learning and Teaching:

- I am sure we will all have thoughts based on our disciplinary backgrounds
- We are in favour of consistent policy
- I come from an Arts school, on our side it's easier to expect really clear guidance for answers. We should have precise marking criteria which describe in a helpful way what we are looking for.
- That should be assessment-specific and I can only speak to my own school. I rewrote our marking criteria, removing the requirement of "originality" which was very unclear and made what qualified as a first class grade difficult to quantify
- We would be in favour of this – ensuring that assessment and assessment guidance is clear and helpful
- The problem with sample answer approaches is that it encourages safe, conforming answers, which we really do not want to do. We want to avoid funnelling students into specific answer types. Hypothetically, it is probably possible to provide a sample 14 answer. However, so much of what is good about is 20 is not replicable
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity):
 - Even if we do this in specific modules, it would not always be helpful. There is no one way to answer a question. By saying this is the answer – that highly limits other responses you might get.
- Faculty President of Science and Medicine
 - The example which provided a 14 was very helpful – I agree, thank you
- Dean of Learning and Teaching:
 - I think it is important to say that this is not replicable in all subjects, even within the Arts. In French, what is being tested there, is language sophistication. I think that is different from writing a diss in art history, where language skill is not being tested. Perhaps it would be useful for the French Convenor to explain their thoughts
- French Convenor:
 - I don't necessarily agree, but it is worth saying that the French department do a very good job at finding a balance in this conversation
 - We get 3 example dissertations that were in the upper first and 3 in the upper 2:1 range and that gave us a broad understanding of what is appropriate.
 - Furthermore, all dissertations shared have prior student consent of the students who wrote them (*minutes shortened that clarified this point*)
- Faculty President of Science and Medicine:
 - Going back to quantitative past paper point, I would like to explain a little more about what the current realities are for students where answers are not being shared
 - I was told by Business School that we should go and ask friends for answers
 - Students are also using AI to find an answer. This is leading to an unhealthy dependence and also the potential for wrong answers
- Associate Dean, Students (Sciences):
 - I would support a system that provides more feedback from humans
 - I think the willingness to give feedback amongst individuals varies significantly
 - One of the big issues in my own discipline is an over-reliance on worked solutions

- For each current module, there is a set of reasonably recent solutions. Part of the reason for restricting it is that we are trying to restrict the form of remembering/learning which involves memorising the answer for every single possible answer
- In Physics, Chemistry and Maths, the easiest way to get an answer and prepare for an exam is to find one of the 37 tutorial questions in which it probably very closely resembles that you have been doing during the semester
- You should be slightly careful in asking for uniformity – we need a uniform level of something here, not a uniform level of nothing
- Faculty President of Science and Medicine:
 - Unfortunately we have quantitative exams, but our tutorials are qualitative, so we do not get this kind of practice whereby our tutorials replicate our exam questions
- Associate Dean, Students (Sciences):
 - So you confirm, you don't have formative assessment that looks like the summative assessment?
- Faculty President of Science and Medicine:
 - No
- School President of Psychology and Neuroscience:
 - It is definitely an issue of having more consistency across schools and modules
 - In 3rd year psychology, we have lots of short modules which have 1 assessment for 100% of the grade. They provide no past papers and no ability to discuss feedback
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity):
 - Past papers is one form of formative assessment
 - I am much more concerned here, and the heart of the issue is the lack of formative assessment
- School President of Economics and Finance:
 - There is a difference in timing/time allocated between the tutorial sheets and mock papers
 - Past papers are very good at providing a benchmark of where we are when doing revision in the time you have
 - In the Business School, it should now be policy to have a mock paper and solutions to the mock paper
- School President of Management:
 - We get told to revises from textbooks – but we don't get given the answer to the textbooks. From my experience, students are told to buy a textbook, but students are not given answers
 - We don't get any mock questions and answers
 - All I have done for a summative exam on Monday is 2 tutorials
- Associate Dean, Students (Sciences):
 - I am slightly worried about insufficient formative assessment
 - I agree with Proctor and Steven
 - It sounds like you are saying that there are insufficient formative assessments
- Faculty President of Science and Medicine
 - Furthermore, your friend can get higher grades if they can pay for better resources that provide these answers

- Dean of Learning and Teaching:
 - We can make this a topic of conversation, especially in the Business School
 - Unfortunately, it is hard for us to give an encompassing response
 - We can have a generic discussion with DOTs about formative assessment
 - We should not be asking for students to do a final summative assessment, without them first getting formative assessment or at least a chance to practice what they will be assessed on
- The Proctor
 - We could look, when doing our end of year reviews, what is your approach to formative assessment?
 - We agree with you on this
- Dean of Learning and Teaching:
 - We are currently doing a review of assessment
 - I have had very interesting conversations with Directors of Teaching
 - It is becoming clear that formative assessment significantly varies between Schools
 - We are aware of all of this, but we are happy to take it further
- President of Education:
 - Action Point agreed for Dean of Learning and Teaching to take this further

4) The Future of Pulse Surveys- 30 minutes

(President of Education)

President of Education (Outline):

- *Presents Report, see Appendix*
- I am grateful that you are now all in a room together so we can discuss this fully
- One of the key points of the report that I wanted to bring out here is that these pulse surveys are subject to DOT power dynamics, where selective DOTs are able to control what they are willing to share with students
- Furthermore, it has negated the role of class reps and the roles of other role holders
- The quick changes that the surveys are inspired to make are good, while the Students' Association wants to do more than this. Our mid semester surveys were always about making bigger changes and were about making generational changes over time
- We will ask School Presidents here for their opinions and what improvements could be made

Discussion:

- School President of Biology:
 - We run 50 modules this semester. Over half of them did not meet the threshold for responses
 - Staff are concerned, they are not getting individual feedback and can't use that for promotion or demonstration of their teaching abilities
 - It is in week 3, which does not allow enough time for us to find the problems or suggestions
 - Class reps have very little purpose as when they go to meet staff, they repeat to staff what they already know

- School President of Classics:
 - Our class reps did not have access to the pulse survey results until an hour before the SSCC
 - Staff are telling students what the students tell them – this is now what the issue is
 - Class reps do not get to engage as a result, and it is very easy for them to see little point in engaging in their role.
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity):
 - Why will you not get the SSCC responses?
- School President of Classics:
 - That is what I was told was agreed.
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity)
 - That is not what was agreed by us centrally
 - This has been a big project and we need to figure out exactly where the problem lies here
- School President of Classics:
 - I understand the reasoning behind it but there are a lot of problems
- Dean of Learning and Teaching:
 - You said something about not being able to comment on specific modules. But if it is a module-by-module questionnaire, surely students were asked?
 - *Clarification made – students were asked.*
- French Convenor:
 - We were given a very generic set of 40 questions to choose from. In our department, we want to be able to ask specific questions to specific year groups
 - We now have a problem of SSCC's being essentially pointless
 - I had Module Coordinators saying, why don't we make the agenda for you since we know the feedback, when it is my job to make the agenda and decide what is discussed
 - The power dynamic has meant that the independence has been taken out of my hands
- Dean of Learning and Teaching:
 - So to understand you correctly – staff are controlling the SSCC
- French Convenor
 - I have managed to talk down the DOTs down from it, but yes, that was the original impression
- Dean of Learning and Teaching:
 - I understand the issue more now. So the sharing that was supposed to happen is not taking place
- President of Education
 - It has taken us out of the feedback loop and removed our ability to effectively feedback on key issues
- School President of English
 - My DOT said I could not have to data due to HR concerns
- Dean of Learning and Teaching:
 - Emily and I sent joint communication about what DOTs are supposed to be doing with the data

- It is disappointing to hear that DOTs are not following the policy we have asked
- Our responses might sound unhelpful, because colleagues are not using data the way we expected
- School President of English
 - We just decided to make our own surveys anyway
 - We will still have an SSCC with our own surveys
- School President of Physics
 - The most feedback I have received, is about these feedback surveys
 - From staff especially, class reps have nothing to contribute. We used to have a really good communication system and I have had staff come to me and say, this has driven a wedge between the staff and students
 - It was so nice to see students and staff get along and building professional relationships and this has restricted that dialogue
 - Our surveys might appear less formal but that was deliberately to try to attract comfortable, honest responses
 - It has jeopardised our enjoyable dynamic
- Spanish Convenor:
 - When I did my own surveys, I would send my reps to the module coordinators, and they would make questions together. It would be a joint exercise
 - I would put together questions based on those individual cohorts, and it was really useful to ask individual questions targeting 1st vs 4th years
 - But now I can't do this. The questions are not appropriate for all year groups
- School President of IR:
 - We had our SSCC yesterday and we as students had no access to any data
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity):

- School President of Social Anthropology:
 - Re-emphasises the concerns with the optional question list, and there was consensus that it was not ok that we could not choose our own questions
 - Our DOT could not get the data for the optional questions; there was a problem in accessing it
 - Recommends that we adjust the timeline and push it back or open it earlier – it does not work well. We need 7 to 10 days of the form being open
- School President of Medicine:
 - We had 50% turnout last semester, and this semester it was 6%
 - It highlights the difference between engagement as a result of the new surveys
 - There are automated messages which send the form out and this is much more robotic. It would be good to have a personalised message from School Presidents here
- Vice Principal Education (Proctor):
 - It is worth remembering what the high principles of this project originally were as we try to find a way forward with this

- Firstly, for the original mid-semester feedback, there were some extreme examples of poorly designed questionnaires which were asking very, very leading questions and being rude.
- We got a lot of feedback a year ago from the DOTs about the inappropriateness of the questions
- Dean of Learning and Teaching:
 - There have been surveys that have asked about the conduct of specific members of staff
- Vice Principal Education (Proctor):
 - The solution that we find must be that the questions that we ask are not inappropriate or create the concerns that we had earlier
 - We wanted you to make sure that your module organisers were telling you about your module
 - We started them early so that you would have information on things that might need changing quickly
 - But clearly, those are not working for your SSCC
 - What you have explained here about how feedback is being shared with you is not how it is supposed to happen
 - Partly because of all of this, I have argued we need to purchase 2 new software. Firstly, a redaction tool and secondly, Millie – a tool that will read all the comments and write a synopsis that has no bias, without someone having to write a full report
 - When you provide feedback about a module, we wanted you to be able to get a response from staff about how they were taking on the feedback
 - We are all open about how we change this and to binning the mid-semester feedback forms
 - But I would like to remember the high principles of why we started this
- President of Education
 - There is a lot of potential for how to organise and respond to student feedback
 - We can certainly look into other approaches such as better student rep training when it comes to organising surveys
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity):
 - It is important to note that the questions that became the optional questions were all provided by the Students' Association. You gave us those questions
- Faculty President of Science and Medicine:
 - Can you explain how you got all those questions and the process that went through?
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity):
 - As a pilot, there was a collaborative questionnaire between the University and the Union from Qualtrics
 - We took everything that was asked in the Qualtrics
- School President of Music
 - The sort of students who respond are the really keen students or the students with something to say
 - Class reps had an important role to play in censoring the bad feedback – this was an important role they played
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity):

- I have also seen the other side of this, when it was sent to everyone in the SSCC and there was no filtering by Class Reps
- French Convenor
 - The French department has a really good way of organising this. We did the mandatory questions that were the regular year-on-year ones
 - Then we got our class reps to go to the module coordinators to make the questions together. This ensured we had good questions
 - Module Coordinators and reps made the questions together. Then I put it into a collective form
 - Then you don't get bad questions
- Italian Convenor:
 - Another problem is that the questions did not create any discussion
 - The system from Greg worked very well last semester
 - I was only allowed 4 in this survey, and we had a wide variety of questions that needed to be asked. I could not involve the other class reps for their specific modules as there was not the space
- Associate Dean, Students (Arts and Divinity):
 - Looking forward to some solutions. I am concerned with the issues that you are having with the data, but I can remember the time when we did not have student feedback, relying on survey data at all
 - If you want to perhaps think about more innovative solutions, it might be worth thinking about other ways of using class reps
 - Surely there must be other ways that you can communicate with each other
- President of Education
 - We did do this, and Alex (Biology) did an amazing all-student forum to talk about assessment
 - The key problem is that university staff often demand quantitative feedback before they are willing to accept there is a problem that needs a solution
- Associate Dean, Students (Arts and Divinity):
 - I understand that, but just don't get obsessed with them. Student feedback is broader than surveys
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity):
 - Guiding us to some solutions
 - One issue here has to do with DOT power dynamics
 - The other is due to the logistics of the timing, timing and available questions of the survey
 - These, to me are actually very separate issues and especially the latter is solvable
- School President of Biology
 - Returning to the earlier point made regarding alternative sources of feedback, when I have 400 people responding to a survey, that is more useful than 30 people in a room
 - A big issue is a lack of clear guidance or a lack of enforcement on how DOTs behave with the data
 - Furthermore, while the Students' Association might have agreed to the questions in the past, we are not the same people as those who did this
- School President of Economics

- I run my questions through my DOT, which avoids the problem of bad comments
- My SSCC agenda includes a chat with the DOT beforehand
- School President of Medicine
 - To get a suitable response from staff, you have to have data behind what you say
 - To be productive, the quantitative data is key
 - If you have not got enough students responding, it is redundant and cannot power change
 - Solution: when you send the automated responses, have a message attached from your School President
- Vice Principal Education (Proctor):
 - For me, I want to make sure this works next year – we recognise there have been a lot of problems this year
 - I don't think we are going to get to a solution now, but we could get a joint student/staff working group started
- School President of English
 - Returning to an earlier point. If the purpose of the software is to redact and organise feedback, what would be the role of the School Presidents and the Reps?
- Vice Principal Education (Proctor):
 - I think it is all up for discussion
 - We have a better tool now than we used to, and we are making progress
 - Let's try to work together for another solution
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity)
 - There is the possibility of another solution, that the mid-semester survey is run by you. But we need to figure out how to set this up and if it is the right solution
- President of Education
 - I think that is the end of the discussion
 - We have an agreed conclusion that we shall set up a working group

5) Artificial Intelligence Open Conversation– 20 minutes

(School President of Social Anthropology)

School President of Social Anthropology: (Outline)

- *Presents Report*
- This is an ongoing process, and I appreciate that things will be happening behind the scenes
- However, we really need more clarification of the AI policy that is being put in place, and when it is appropriate to use AI and when it is not

Faculty President of Science and Medicine:

- To add to this, the lack of current clarity has led to staff either making things up, or themselves using AI checkers or other solutions
- I have heard from multiple schools that PhD tutors have said that student essays are being run through AI checkers and are being called out for it..These are scare tactics and are not appropriate
- This is why we need to understand what the AI policy is and make it is clear as possible

Discussion:

- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity) (comments on behalf of Dr Sharon Leahy, Associate Dean, Education (Sciences))
 - There is currently a lot of work on a draft policy, and I have a statement from Sharon, which might be useful here
 - The draft policy from AI in terms of teaching and learning is currently with student services, and it is expected to be finalised in May
 - There is then a large consultation in May
 - We hope that by May, we will have a comprehensive policy that brings together student and staff opinion
 - This includes whether staff have/should be using AI too
 - The policy is a response to your need for more transparency
 - We know that each school is going to need to have flexibility and we hope the policy incorporates this
 - At the moment, every module handbook has a placeholder for what approach the module takes to AI
 - The matriculation module suggestion was taken on board, but the problem is that the matriculation work is already quite heavy for new students
 - The official statement is that we do not use AI detection software, and we explain why
 - If anyone tells you otherwise, they are wrong and you can file a complaint against them. Please, please tell us if this is not being followed
- Associate Dean, Students (Arts and Divinity)
 - What we want to do is promote good academic practice
 - What we are doing in the review of good academic policy is looking very carefully at the categories of malpractice
 - Clarity is how you can and can't use it in assessment is key for communication
 - The problems of detection is hard as AI gets more sophisticated
 - Cases of AI misuse are currently based on academic judgment
 - We will review the T-Gap training to include something on sustainability regarding AI
 - There is an academic misconduct officer training that happens in a few weeks, and I will incorporate this into that
- Vice Principal Education (Proctor)
 - Groups are working on AI use in PhDs, postgraduates and undergraduates
 - It is changing how we think and work
 - What is the human nature of learning? How can you assess that?
 - We all need to be able to understand how to use AI, so we must think about the graduates of the future
 - It is not going to be an AI-proof environment. It is almost impossible to choose not to use AI
 - I teach on a module which would not make a difference if you used AI
 - People are starting to make very good tools for AI detection. Sharon and I are talking about educational software possibilities.
 - It is fair to say that some schools are really embracing AI, and others are trying to make things AI-proof

- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity)
 - The School of Social Anthropology is doing a good job in its approach to AI, with its module on AI as an anthropological experiment
- President of Education:
 - Please can we bring the AI and GAP policy to EduExec to discuss – yes
 - Ethical AI training module – I will come and talk about the relevant policies

6) Summary of Education Strategic Management Group and Student Experience Strategic Management Group topics and priorities– 15 minutes
(Director of Student Experience, Dean of Learning and Teaching)

Director of Student Experience: (Outline)

- See the appendix for ESMG and SESMG
- We wanted to ask if this kind of summary is useful for you as student representatives to receive?
- We recognise that it can appear as though the university is very slow-moving and not much is happening. However, there are a lot of things happening behind the scenes, and we want to make sure you are aware of this
- Is this a helpful item for you to have?

Discussion:

- School President of Biology:
 - Yes, absolutely, it is helpful to know what is going on
 - It would be good if it were more specific in places, and if there was some clarity about certain words/acronyms that we are not aware of
- Dean of Learning and Teaching
 - We are very happy to answer questions on anything that is here
 - What we are trying to assure you is that we are doing things and that the staff body is very active!
 - You are quite naturally thinking – why is this not being sorted today? These things take a really, really long time
 - They have to go through several committees. Change does happen, but it requires extensive consultation
 - Retaining your trust is important to us
- President of Education
 - I give a student report frequently and half of that is just the items and comments that comes up at EduExec
- Vice Principal Education (Proctor)
 - I heard a really good example in Senate yesterday
 - On the common credit framework, there were a number of schools who are pushing against a common credit framework
 - Emily was able to give very positive feedback about how we move towards removing over/under crediting. It was really good to hear
 - You sometimes hear from staff that it is not in the student’s interest to move forward with changes in Senate. To have Emily present and able to articulate student opinion, you ensure your views are heard and listened to
- Dean of Learning and Teaching

- It is common to hear in schools that you cannot do things because the university told us that we can't
- But the problem is that lots of their comments are tactical
- It is really helpful to hear your comments
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity)
 - Module Handbooks and Credit frameworks were raised last year, and now they are being sorted

7) Module Advertisement– 20 minutes

(School President of the Business School: Management and School President of International Relations)

School President of Management: (Overview)

- Presents Report, see Appendix
- At the Academic Representation Conference, student representatives from the Business School raised the introduction of advertising each module's relevant Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) within the module catalogue. This initiative has now been expanded to encompass all schools following School President interest.
- The Education Executive therefore, asks that the university advertise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of each module so that students can make more informed choices when picking their modules.

President of Education: (Overview)

- I want to be clear, we do not want to be targeting or limiting academic freedom with this, it is just a matter of signposting what is already in modules

Faculty President of Arts and Divinity: (Overview)

- This was brought up to sustainability in the curriculum group and there was a lot of interest
- It is a project which they are keen to continue with

Discussion:

- Vice Principal Education (Proctor):
 - We currently ask you about the graduate attributes
 - It would be interesting to leave it with the working group and look at how we could integrate this
 - I think it's a good idea
- Associate Dean, Students (Arts and Divinity)
 - I thought we did a project similar to this in management a while ago
- Director of Student Experience:
 - I think there was an exercise for an external submission that was looking at this and the question would be to take it to the working group
- Faculty President of Arts and Divinity
 - A lot of lecturers and researchers provide examples of what STGs they use as well, so there is potential crossover

- President of Education:
 - Action point – you have our support to carry this forward in the group

President of Education: (Overview)

- I also wanted to raise the problem of inconsistent module catalogues and request more accurate assessment details
- We really need a review of the module catalogue!

Discussion:

- Dean of Learning and Teaching
 - We know about this, and we have a plan to sort it out
 - We will have a tech-based plan. There will be no human getting in the way!
 - We are taking it really seriously, but it will take some time – we need a system where we capture the same data for each module
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity)
 - The way the current system works prioritises the flexibility of Schools to change their modules, such as their assessment, quickly
 - That is not a helpful set-up for us to collect the data, but we must maintain the ability of schools to change things quickly as they see fit
 - We need a system that is more agile for both College Gate and Schools
- School President of Art History:
 - Detail in exactly what assessment is present is key. There are situations in which students have chosen a module, in part because of the assessment offering, and then it changes, and they are unaware until they begin the module
 - It is possible that in the near future, we are going to have very different assessments introduced given AI concerns
 - To be 100% certain that the modules listed have the correct assessment is key to the student experience
- Associate Dean, Education (Arts and Divinity):
 - I agree, this should not happen. Students should know the assessment type before they begin their module
 - If any of you see examples of this, please let us know
- School President of Geography and SD:
 - In another example of this, presentations are a source of anxiety for a lot of students
 - Many students choose modules that do not have a presentation for this reason. To then have it introduced is very anxiety-inducing
- School President of Film Studies
 - Lots of the time, the module catalogue will say 100% coursework, but then 30% is a class test. So while it is not an end-of-semester exam, it is still very much exam-based
- School President of Economics and Finance
 - This point has been made a lot in SSCCs in the years before
 - I was given a categorical answer of this cannot happen, because Module Coordinators do not know what they are doing until quite late in the process
- School President of Biology

- If there are changes made to a module, it would be good to know as soon as possible
- In Biology, we changed this year to all in-person exams and it would have been good to have that communicated as early as possible
- Vice Principal Education (Proctor):
 - There are 2 projects from the Glasgow Report that have, rightfully, increased in importance recently:
 - Module information with dates and clarity
 - Ensuring consistent responses to the students with extenuating circumstances
 - These require significant time and resources, and these have both increased up the ladder of importance. As we work through these items, the module catalogue issue will be sorted, and it is high on our priority list.
- President of Education
 - In conclusion to this point then, there is a plan in place and it is a matter of time
- Associate Dean, Students (Sciences)
 - If students are choosing modules due to the type of assessment, they ought to discuss this with their advisors
- Faculty President of Science and Medicine
 - Lots of advisors are not very advisable

Any Other Competent Business- 5 minutes

(President of Education)

Academic Coordinator, Students' Association:

- Elections are happening now, and nominations have been extended to the 19th
- A nudge would be great for people! So please, if there is anyone you think you would be good with, you should nudge them
- Teaching awards – nominations will close on Monday at 5 pm so you have the weekend to submit them!

End of Meeting

Appendix

Welcome- 5 minutes (President of Education)

Transcripts: Hidden Costs- 10 minutes

(Arts and Divinity Faculty President, School President of Art History)

Context:

Academic transcripts provide a comprehensive record of a student's academic performance, showing the modules they have studied, and the grades received.

£20 access fee:

Student representatives are hearing increased dissatisfaction about the recent introduction of a £20 fee to download an official digital transcript, and decision to not provide students a physical copy of their transcript at graduation. Until last year, this digital service was free. Many current students only became aware of the fee when they urgently needed access to their transcripts for applications.

For students, transcripts are not optional documents. They are essential for postgraduate study, internships, scholarships, professional accreditation, and employment. Introducing a £20 charge to access our own academic record places an unexpected financial burden on students who are already paying significant tuition fees and living costs. Student representatives believe that access to a digital transcript should be included within those fees. Whilst we are incredibly appreciative of financial support plans in place for students who need this, it is frustrating for all students to pay £20 to access proof of their own work.

We understand that a third-party platform now operates the system and this carries administrative costs. However, students should not be disproportionately impacted by internal operational changes.

We respectfully ask that the Transcript Office reconsider this policy and engage in meaningful consultation with student representatives. We urge for a review of the fee, greater transparency about the rationale behind it, and consideration of restoring free digital access for students.

Transcript conversion service:

Different countries have varied educational and grading systems. As such, students may be required to convert their grades and marks to acceptable formats for university admissions abroad.

University of St Andrews students are currently having to pay a third party to convert their transcripts and there is no guarantee of good service- this can cost thousands of pounds. Academic *transcripts* provide proof that students have the necessary prerequisites for joining the postgraduate program they are applying to. As such, there is no way for students applying to postgraduate study to avoid these costs- this is a huge barrier to progress after graduation.

We do have some capacity for transcription services. For example, for William and Mary students the university converts their grades, and the same is true of study abroad students.

Without this translation, admissions committees might struggle to accurately gauge an applicant's qualifications.

Benchmarking within the sector:

The Students' Association has observed that the University of St Andrews is an outlier in sector-trends and expectations. From our research we have concluded that our institution must reshape its transcript model.

Institution	Transcript cost
Dundee	£15 + postage cost
University of the West of Scotland	Free.
Stirling	£7 digital transcript. £10 physical transcript.
Strathclyde	£10
University of the Highlands and Islands	£5
Queens, Belfast	Free for current students. £10 for alumni.
Nottingham	Free + postage costs
Birmingham	Free digital transcript. £20 physical transcript
Loughborough	Free. Charge for lost/ extra copies.
Teesside	£10 first copy. £20 second copy.
Liverpool	Free.
Bournemouth	£20 first year, £5 every year after.
Huddersfield	£25
Sussex	£20
Salford	£15
London's Global University	Free.
York	£10
London Metropolitan University	£20 first copy, £5 every additional copy.
Cambridge	£25
Oxford	£17
Glasgow	Free on demand transcript access. Printable pdf whenever a student generates a transcript report. Receive a physical transcript at graduation.
QMU	Free on the student portal. Receive a printed copy at graduation.
Stirling	Free but charge for a second copy. Receive a physical transcript at graduation.
Edinburgh	Free.

St Andrews	£20 digital transcript

Expectations from student representatives:

- A) Students to be provided a physical copy of their transcripts at their graduation ceremony.**
- B) A breakdown of what the £20 cost covers.**
- C) A full waiver of any unnecessary costs within this £20.**
- D) A commitment to explore introducing a transcription conversion service.**

- Discussion: Possible next steps to action the financial ramifications of this fee.

***NOTE: This discussion has been shortened from 20 minutes to 10 minutes because the Academic Registrar will be attending Education Executive on March 18th to speak to student representatives and listen to their concerns.**

Consistency in Formative Assessment Practice- 15 minutes

(Science and Medicine Faculty President)

Context:

As it stands, there is considerable variation in formative assessment practices both between Schools and across individual modules. Across the University, past papers are provided for modules, with students consistently reporting that access to these papers is very helpful in understanding exam format and expectations.

However, in most quantitative modules, students do not have access to answer keys or worked solutions for these papers. Without solutions, students are unable to check their work, identify errors, or determine where gaps in their understanding remain. This is where inconsistencies begin to emerge. In some modules, tutors allow students to submit answers to past paper questions and receive feedback. In others, module coordinators provide mock exams with full solution sets. In some cases, however, students are provided only with past papers and no way to verify whether their answers or approaches are correct. This creates inconsistency within and between Schools, with students in some modules having access to significantly more effective exam preparation resources than others.

A similar issue arises in qualitatively assessed modules. Some modules provide examples of past exam essays alongside explanations of how those essays were marked. These examples help students understand what distinguishes different grade levels and provide a benchmark for evaluating their own work. Other modules provide no such examples. Because many qualitative exams involve timed or in-person essay writing that differs from coursework completed during the semester, students report that additional guidance or examples would help them prepare more effectively.

In the absence of answer keys, model essays, or other forms of guidance, students increasingly report relying on AI tools to check answers or evaluate practice responses. While these tools can be a useful learning aid, they can also produce incorrect or misleading

feedback. The absence of proper guidance and learning resources risks pushing students toward an unhealthy reliance on AI tools as a substitute.

At the end of semester 1 AY2025/26, the President of Education and Academic Representation Interns carried out an audit and analysis of all UG and PG SSCCs. Across all schools and departments student representatives consistently requested greater clarity and guidance for coursework, examinations and class tests. They specifically requested mark schemes, grading criteria, model answers and specific assessment guidance to be made available from the start of the module. In light of this, the Students’ Association is focusing its attention on past papers- and past paper feedback- to aid students exam/ assessment readiness.

Good Practice: Student representatives have highlighted examples of good practice within the University. The School of Physics and Astronomy maintains a Past Paper Archive that includes past papers, worked solutions, and examiner reports, which students report as particularly helpful for exam preparation. Similarly, in the French Department, students receive past papers and example essays for core language modules, providing clear benchmarks for expected performance.

Benchmarking within the sector

In speaking to the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) at the University of Birmingham, it was noted that providing additional formative resources is fairly common practice across the sector, particularly within Russell Group institutions.

At the University of Birmingham specifically:

- **Quantitative modules:** mock exams are provided with full solution sets.
- **Qualitative modules:** example essays are provided to help students understand expectations.

The only instances in which solution sets are not provided are in modules where the answers may be too similar to the final exam questions, such as in some medical modules.

University	Policy
University of Oxford	Oxford states that students should have regular opportunities to practice assessment and receive feedback through formative assessment. Its policy also places strong importance on extensive formative assessment at undergraduate level, both to support learning and to help tailor academic support to students’ needs. (Oxford, Policy and Guidance on Undergraduate Learning and Teaching)
University of Birmingham	Birmingham states that all modules must include at least one formative assessment/feedback opportunity aligned with the summative task. Its guidance also makes clear that formative assessment is a required part of effective module design, especially in modules with only one summative assessment.

Expectations from student representatives:

A) Quantitative modules:

- a. Each module should provide past papers for completion.
- b. Solutions to past papers should be provided where possible.
- b. Where providing solutions to past papers is not possible, modules should provide mock exams accompanied by solution sets.

B) Qualitative modules:

- a. Each module should provide example exam questions for practice.
- b. Example essays from previous exams should be provided where possible.
- b. Where example essays cannot be provided, modules should offer additional guidance for essay-based exams, such as outlining common mistakes or clarifying expectations for strong responses.

- **Discussion:** next steps to improve consistency in formative assessment practice.

The Future of Pulse Surveys- 30 minutes

(President of Education)

Context:

In AY2024/25 the university and Students' Association began working towards a partnership approach to midsemester feedback. The aim was the increase survey response rates, reduce survey fatigue, standardise data and collection, reduce the time building surveys, and better close the feedback loop.

In summer 2025, the MFQ Project Board decided to hold off with the launch of Pulse Surveys to focus their attention on their upgraded Module Feedback Questionnaires (MFQs), and to ensure the Pulse Survey project was not rushed to be completed.

From October 2025 the President of Education took a paper on Pulse Survey and MFQ data access to Education Strategic Management Group and Learning and Teaching Committee for discussion. Following this, a short life working group comprised of members of the decanal team, Directors of Teaching, and Students' Association met to discuss student rep data access. A MFQ report sharing agreement that both the university and Students' Association supported was agreed in early February 2026.

Pulse Surveys launched in Semester 2 AY2025/26.

Student feedback:

The following points summarise Education Executive discussions from the past few months. In summary, the Pulse Surveys in their current form are not suitable for student representatives.

Power dynamics:

- There are clear DoT-School President power dynamics which created problems, particularly with the additional question process. For example, in the Business School, the Vice Dean Education decided not to include additional questions in a meeting where the two School Presidents were not invited- now their SSCCs have been cancelled/ rearranged.

SSCCs:

- The Pulse Surveys have forced a wedge between students and staff and the natural dialogue that used to exist in SSCCs.
- None of the medical students received additional questions to use at the SSCC.
- The Students' Association trained School Presidents in September to organise their SSCCs as soon as possible. As it was not known to us then when Pulse Surveys were to be released, School Presidents set their SSCC dates not knowing that they wouldn't have data in time.
- The module coordinator sees results before the Class Reps do. Therefore, an SSCC is now just Class Reps telling Module coordinators what they already know.
- SSCC cannot be held in the right week to review the data before staff close the feedback loop.
- There are multiple examples of SSCCs being cancelled because of a lack of feedback.
- The data was too confusing to use.
- The authority to organise SSCC as a School President is gone.
- Lack of personal connection with the student body is a key issue because the results are not an accurate picture of student views.

Class Representatives:

- Pulse Surveys caused a big loss for Class Rep attributes- building their own surveys was a good way for Class Reps to build their skills.
- Pulse Surveys negate the role of Class Reps- it no longer seems like they have much to do.

Survey outcome:

- The university sees the Pulse Surveys as an opportunity to do a quick check in with students to make sure they have all the materials they need to learn, and make quick changes during the semester.
- The Students' Association used their midsemester surveys as an opportunity to make quick changes during the semester AND make bigger changes which will likely not affect a current cohort but will affect future generations of students. Some examples from semester 1 include discussing the pricing of the medicine café, changing timings of assessments, exploring elitism within a school, introducing career events, and discussing student-staff ratios.
- These differing outcomes manifested in the questions asked.

Expectations from student representatives:

- A) Future Pulse Surveys will be implemented with an incorporation of student feedback presented at the Undergraduate Academic Forum.**

- Discussion: an open conversation into the successes and areas of development for the Pulse Surveys.

Artificial Intelligence Open Conversation– 20 minutes

(School President of Social Anthropology)

Context:

Use of AI:

Although the “Generative AI – FAQs for students” states that students can only use AI when explicitly allowed by their module coordinator, student representatives are reporting that the ambiguity of AI in individual handbooks and the differing approaches of different staff members is causing confusion amongst the student body. Students do not always know what the appropriate policy is.

What does “no use of AI” actually mean? It would be useful to have more directions both for students and staff.

Good practice- The Business School is trialling a traffic-light system in their modules which is decreasing student anxiety.

“Generative AI – FAQs for students” <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/policy/academic-policies-assessment-examination-and-award-good-academic-practice/generative-ai-faqs-students-guidance.pdf>

Detection of AI:

An anonymous survey shared by *The Saint* exposed that 70% of students are using AI for university work. Therefore, question isn’t if students are using AI, it is if the university can detect them. Currently, the use of AI is discovered through exercising academic judgement, not through a dedicated AI detection software. Whilst the university does not use a dedicated AI detection software some students are being warned by faculty members that they are- this is causing a lot of confusion amongst the student body.

There is a general feeling amongst the student body- exposed through student representatives and a recent video article posted by *The Saint*- that faculty members have no idea how to detect AI and are falsely calling students out for AI use.

As School Presidents are members of their school Learning and Teaching Committees and School Councils, they are often exposed to staff confusion surrounding AI detection. For example, a staff member in one school said that they believed- but could not prove- that AI was used and decided to dock a random number of marks from a student’s grade as a result. Another school brought their Academic Misconduct Officer to their SSCC who expressed that they did not know how AI worked. Both of these examples depict how distrust in AI detection has grown amongst student representatives. For the average undergraduate student, they notice inconsistencies in detection and punishment across schools and departments, but also within the same module.

Sustainability concerns:

Student representatives wish for the university to better acknowledge the environmental concerns of AI. As AI use grows rapidly, so do the environmental impacts- these span energy consumption, water usage, emissions, and misinformation risks. AI has a growing environmental footprint which students need to be educated about before interacting with AI in their learning.

Students must also be educated on biased results, but also the opportunities AI can provide for their learning and future careers.

Staff transparency:

Student representatives further report that there is demand amongst the student body for faculty members to be more transparent on how they are using AI. For example, signposting if a lecture slide or piece of research has been pulled from AI. There is a real question about the appropriateness of staff hiding their use of AI while telling students not to use it/ only use it if they are transparent about it.

Expectations from student representatives:

- A)** Introduce an Ethical AI Training module during matriculation. This would cover the environmental and ethical concerns surrounding AI, and the basic university guidelines on AI in assessment.
 - B)** Module-specific AI guidelines in module handbooks (before handbooks are standardised it should be standard for faculty to inform students of the guidelines at an introductory lecture).
 - C)** Clearer transparency about how AI is being detected and punished.
 - D)** Renewed training for Academic Misconduct Officers on AI detection in light of comments raised.
- Discussion: an open conversation about student use and perceptions of AI.

Summary of Education Strategic Management Group and Student Experience Strategic Management Group topics and priorities– 15 minutes

(Director of Student Experience, Dean of Learning and Teaching)

Context:

Please see the attached summary provided by the Director of Student Experience.

- Discussion: a discussion into the activities of ESMG and SESMG.

Module Advertisement– 20 minutes

(School President of the Business School: Management and School President of International Relations)

Sustainable Development Goals:

At the Academic Representation Conference, student representatives from the Business School raised the introduction of advertising each module's relevant Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) within the module catalogue. This initiative has now been expanded to encompass all schools following School President interest.

The Education Executive therefore asks that the university advertise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of each module so that students can make more informed choices when picking their modules.

For more information on each of the 17 SDGs, please see the United Nations website:

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

The Education Executive acknowledges that not all modules will include content that encompass SDGs, and that academics may see this as a student attempt to expand their curriculum to include SDGs. Therefore, we would like it made clear that no content needs to change as a result of this initiative, the change is to module advertisement so that students can make informed choices.

When raised at the Sustainability in the Curriculum working group by the Arts and Divinity Faculty President, this initiative was met with majority praise from students and staff alike.

Assessment clarity:

During pre-advising, students use the module catalogue to make informed choices about their modules for an academic year. It has come to the attention of the Students' Association that there are inconsistencies in module information advertised. For some modules there is a link to the most recent module handbook, a breakdown of assessment types, a module description, and intended learning outcomes. However, for others there is vital information missing.

For student representatives, our priority is to ensure that the assessment pattern section includes a breakdown of the type of assessment.

A brilliant example of this comes from AH1001 Art in Europe and Beyond to 1600, clearly breaking down what 100% continuous assessment entails: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/subjects/modules/catalogue/?meta_semester_sand=1&meta_modulecode=AH1001&meta_ayrs_sand=2026/7

An example of a module to be enhanced is BL1101 Biology 1, which states students will be assessed with 100% coursework, but fails to state what this coursework will entail: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/subjects/modules/catalogue/?meta_semester_sand=1&meta_modulecode=BL1101&meta_ayrs_sand=2026/7

Student representatives therefore ask that the module catalogue includes more information on the specific type of assessment, and a commitment to link the most recent module handbook to the module catalogue so that students can make a more informed choice.

Furthermore, at the beginning of semester 2, numerous students approached student representatives to report that there had been unexpected changes to their chosen modules that were advertised to them on the module catalogues. The changes were to assessment patterns with some modules advertised as 100% coursework but then students finding out in week 1 that the module now involved an exam. Without being provided specific module codes, student representatives were unable to action many of these reports.

As such, we politely ask for the module catalogue to be updated, and for staff attendees at UAF to prevent any module changes between pre-advising and week 1.

Expectations from student representatives:

- A)** All relevant Sustainable Development Goals for a module are signposted.
 - B)** All recent module handbooks are linked to the module catalogue, and module catalogues will include a more thorough depiction of assessment types.
 - C)** University intervention for any future modules that experience a change between advertisement and beginning of teaching.
- Discussion: a discussion into student views on module advertisement and possible actions.

Any Other Competent Business- 5 minutes

(President of Education)