

**Meeting to be held on Thursday 10 December 2015 at 2pm
in the Hodgson Room, Weir Building, the King's Buildings
AGENDA**

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|----|-----------------------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| 1. | Welcome and Apologies | | |
| 2. | Minutes of previous meeting held on 29 October 2015 | | QAC 15/16 3 A |

3. Matters Arising

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|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| 3.1 | Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2015 | | QAC 15/16 3 B |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------|

4. Convener's Business

5. For Discussion

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| 5.1 | Annual report on Student Complaints | | QAC 15/16 3 C |
| 5.2 | Annual report on Student Appeals | | QAC 15/16 3 D |
| 5.3 | Annual report on Student Discipline | | QAC 15/16 3 E |
| 5.4 | Annual report on External Examiner Themes | | QAC 15/16 3 F |
| 5.4 | Annual report on cross-cutting themes from annual complaints, appeals and discipline reports | | QAC 15/16 3 G |
| 5.5 | University Quality Framework Review: | | QAC 15/16 3 H |
| | i. Feedback from Colleges | | |
| | ii. Workshop - Simplification | | |
| 5.6 | ELIR Outcome | | QAC 15/16 3 I |
| 5.7 | Principles for Student Staff Liaison Committees – Update from Schools | | QAC 15/16 3 J |

6. For Approval

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| 6.1 | Internal Review Reports and Responses: | | QAC 15/16 3 K |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TPR of UG Business and Accounting – year on response• TPR of Informatics 2014/15 - 14 week response• PPR of Online Distance Learning Postgraduate Taught Programmes in CMVM – 14 week response | | |

7. For Information

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| 7.1 | College Quality Assurance Priorities 2015-16 - CMVM structures | | QAC 15/16 3 L |
| 7.2 | Green Paper:

Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice | | |
| 7.3 | Subject Benchmark Statements | | |

- Revised:
[Biosciences](#)
[Biomedical Sciences](#)

8. Electronic Business

- 8.1 Internal Review Reports and Responses: QAC 15/16 3 M
- PPR of Maths - year on response
 - PPR/TPR of Law - year on response
 - TPR of History - year on response

9. Date of Next Meeting

- 9.1 Thursday 4th February 2016 at 2pm in the Raeburn Room, Old College

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29 October 2015 at 2pm in the Raeburn
Room, Old College**

Minutes are draft until approved by the next meeting of the Committee

Present:	
Dr Linda Bruce	Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services
Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Dr Sheila Lodge	CMVM Head of Academic Administration
Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka	EUSA Academic Engagement Co-ordinator
Dr Robert Mason	Associate Dean (Quality Assurance) College of Humanities and Social Science
Ronnie Millar	Director, Student Counselling Service, Representative of Student Services
Barry Neilson	Director, Student Systems
Dr Claire Phillips	School Representative (Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Professor John Sawkins	External Representative. Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), Heriot-Watt University
Dr Inger Seiferheld	School Representative (Business School), College of Humanities and Social Science
Professor Michael Summerfield	School Representative (School of GeoSciences), College of Science and Engineering
Dr Jon Turner	Director, Institute for Academic Development
Tom Ward	Director, Academic Services
Imogen Wilson	Vice President (Academic Affairs), EUSA
In attendance:	
Joy Candlish	Head of Academic Affairs CSE
Brian Connolly	Secretary to Senatus Quality Assurance Committee
Apologies:	

Erin Jackson	Co-opted Member: Distance Learning & E-learning
Professor Jeremy Bradshaw	Director of Quality Assurance, CMVM, Assistant Principal Researcher Development
Dr Gordon McDougall	Dean (Quality Assurance), College of Science and Engineering

1. Welcome

The Convener welcomed Joy Candlish, Head of Academic Affairs CSE, attending in lieu of Dr Gordon McDougall.

2. Minutes of previous meeting held 28 May 2015

QAC 15/16 2 A

The Minutes of the meeting of 28 May 2015 were approved as an accurate record with the following amendment: Convenor's title to be corrected to Professor.

3. Matters Arising

- 3.1 The following matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2015 were noted:

Item 5.3 - University Quality Framework Review

The Convenor reported that initial discussions with the Deans about how to highlight and spread good and innovative practice from internal review and annual reporting had pointed towards potential changes to the annual 'Learning from Internal Review' event. The Convenor would meet with Senior Vice Principal Jeffery to discuss how this could contribute to the celebrating positives strand of his actions on teaching and learning.

Item 7.5 – Annual Report of the Senate Committees

The Convenor reported that at Convenor's Forum Senior Vice Principal Jeffery had established the following priorities for his new responsibility for student experience, learning and teaching across the University: Simplification; Celebration of positives; Leadership; Performance Management. It was noted that the Committee's review of the quality framework, and the current work on student dashboards and improved data, would support these priorities.

Item 6.2 - Draft Principles for Student Staff Liaison Committees

The Convenor suggested that it would be useful for the Committee to receive updates from the Schools regarding their experiences during the first semester of the changes to the student representation process. This would feed into the semester two communication.

Action: College representatives to gather feedback from Schools and report to the Committee meeting of Thursday 4 February 2016. (*Post meeting note: this action will be considered at the Committee meeting of Thursday 10 December 2015.*)

4. Convener's Business

- 4.1 **SFC agreement to reschedule Teaching Programme Review of Medicine from 2016/17 to 2017/18**

The Convenor reported that the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) had agreed to reschedule the TPR from academic year 2016/17 to 2017/18 to align with the General Medical Council (GMC) review due to take place in November 2017.

5. For Discussion

5.1 College Quality Assurance Priorities 2015-16

College of Humanities and Social Science

QAC 15/16 2 B

The College of Humanities and Social Science Quality Assurance priorities 2015-16 were noted as follows:

1. Engagement with the review of the University Quality Framework

Consultation was due to take place during semester 1, with work continuing throughout the year. The review would be responsive to any issues emerging from the Enhancement-led Institutional Review and to the Scottish Funding Council's review of the Quality Enhancement Framework.

2. Support for the development of an online system for course and programme monitoring at the College level

Work had taken place in order to define the needs and goals of such a system, and it was hoped that development would be possible during the year ahead; it would be important to provide College Quality Assurance Committee (CQAC) guidance for its development.

3. Exploration of annual programme review in its implementation stage

Over the past few years CQAC has developed a framework for annual programme review across the College, which has been supportive of different approaches, according to the need of different programmes. It was suggested that CQAC continues to monitor the implementation of annual programme review, and to share ideas across the Schools.

4. Initiatives to share the results of QAE monitoring

In recent years CQAC has worked quite extensively with CUGLAT, in running a number of joint sessions on various themes; it was proposed to continue such work (beginning with a November session on assessment within the context of the three-week turnaround regulation). Last year the College incorporated discussion of TPR and PPR recommendations in CQAC, which would continue.

It was noted that these priorities had been developed with reference to Senatus Quality Assurance Committee priorities, the College Learning and Teaching Strategy 2013–2016, and consultation with College Deans. The priorities had been discussed at the meeting of CQAC on 16 September 2015.

With regard to item 2, development of an online system for course and programme monitoring at College level, the Convenor emphasised that it would be essential to ensure alignment of the system with student data developments at University level.

With regard to item 3, exploration of annual programme review in its implementation stage, the Convenor noted that the review of the Quality

Framework would include consideration of a systematic mechanism for annual programme review across the University. The current varying mechanisms being developed by Colleges would be looked at in this light. It was noted that a University template for annual programme review could include prompts to identify practice suitable for sharing. Appropriate practice could also be developed as an IAD case study.

College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine

QAC 15/16 2 C

The Committee noted that the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) had adopted a new structure with effect from 1 August 2015. The Edinburgh Medical School was created, along new Deaneries of Clinical Sciences and Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences. Consequently, the opportunity was taken to review and revise the College's committee structure relating to learning and teaching, and the terms of reference of these Committees.

As a result, it was proposed that the current QA Executive, which met only once each year, be replaced by a College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. This would meet face-to-face up to five times a year, with provision also being made for electronic meetings. The membership of the Committee has been revised, making provision for student representation.

In the light of these current developments, the College Quality Assurance priority 2015-16 would be to develop the CMVM QA framework to fit with the new School structure and to maximise the opportunities for dissemination of good practice.

Action: Sheila Lodge to update the Committee on CMVM structures at the meeting to be held on Thursday 10 December 2015.

College of Science and Engineering

QAC 15/16 2 D

The College of Science and Engineering Quality Assurance Priorities 2015/16 were noted as follows:

- 1. Co-ordinators of adjustment**
Review of role within Schools with the aim of raising CoA profile within Schools, particularly within Postgraduate Research.
- 2. Equality and Diversity**
Maximise Academic Affairs representation within the CSCE Equality and Diversity Committee as a means to raise student concerns.
- 3. Use of BI Suite data display to assist and enhance External Examiner reporting feedback analysis.**
Improvements regarding all areas of feedback is a key target in the College Learning and Teaching Strategy 2014-16.
- 4. Working with EUSA to improve student engagement within College Committees.**
This aligns with the enhancement of the student experience and ensuring students play an active role in developing College practices.

5. EvaSys

The College would like to use the system more constructively, however, to be able to do this effectively the College would like its implementation and use to be supported centrally. This will ensure sufficient resourcing and consistency of analysis.

The College's priorities were commended. It was noted that the coordinators of adjustments priority was very similar to a recommendation from the Periodic Review of the Student Disability Service, and that the Service was keen to work alongside other initiatives with the same aim. The Convener and the Director of the Student Disability Service would meet with coordinators of adjustments shortly to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy.

The EUSA representatives noted their interest in the College's plans to improve student engagement within College committees. A new model of engaging student School conveners was being introduced.

Action: College Representatives: Appendix to College annual QAE reports to the meeting of 20 April 2016 to give update on progress in relation to College Quality Assurance Priorities 2015-16. Action: College Representatives & Convener: Learning from initiatives around coordinators of adjustments would also be shared at that point.

5.2 Use of Student Data to help enhance learning & teaching, the student experience and operational effectiveness

QAC 15/16 2 E

The Director of Student Systems updated the Committee on the initial consultations in regard to the use of student data to help enhance learning & teaching, the student experience and operational effectiveness.

It was noted that a working group had been established (with representation from Student Systems, BIMl Programme, ISG, CHSS, GaSP), workshops held with staff across the University, and a series of meetings held with Heads of School, Directors of Professional Services, and colleagues at other institutions across the sector (University of Warwick, University of Sheffield and Oxford Brookes University).

The Committee noted a number of emerging areas which had been identified by Schools where enhanced use of student data could support:

- Understanding applications/admissions over a period of time and plan for the next year;
- Understanding the student cohort, their characteristics, trends, progressions and outcomes;
- Understanding the student experience via survey data, linked to student record and other sources, some local level internal and external benchmarking;
- Standard reports for annual course and programme reviews and TPRs to minimise the time spent looking for data;
- Understanding students on an individual level and what happens in-year;
- Are we teaching effectively? Assessment volumes, feedback and mark turnaround, internal and external comparison, contact hours.

The Committee noted a number of consistent themes that emerged from conversations with colleagues at other institutions across the sector:

- Accessibility, visualisation, simplicity and recognition enormously helpful in supporting change of approach in academic areas;
- Clear link to strategy and key indicators along with consistency of data and consistency of use, focussed at the level of need;
- Staff skills, technical capabilities and senior management support enormously important.

Members suggested that student data could be used as a predictive tool to enhance the admissions process; to evaluating teaching performance within and across Schools; and using entry grades to analyse the relative performance of students and Schools. The overall aim should be to reduce the time spent manipulating data and thus increase the time for reflection and action.

The Director of Student Systems noted that the next step would be to develop a small number of prototypes and mock-up dashboards based on existing architecture and systems and start to understand the emerging data model requirements.

Action: Committee Secretary to circulate presentation slides to members.

5.3 Student Survey Unit Priorities

QAC 15/16 2 F

The Director of Student Systems updated the Committee on the key priorities for the Survey Unit over the next 12 to 18 months (including EvaSys). It was noted that the Student Survey Unit moved into Student Systems on 1 August 2015 from the Student Experience Project primarily to help align and enhance the use of student data across the institution. The Student Survey Unit is in the process of finalising its priorities for the next 18 months as follows:

- Support EvaSys roll out to Schools and changes required to make this successful;
- Increase response rates in all surveys, with a particular focus on NSS and EvaSys;
- Extract maximum value and insights from survey (and other student) data;
- Review purpose and outputs of ESES and iSB Surveys;
- Review approach for surveying Distance Education students;
- Implement communication plan and link with other internal activity;
- Review service provision to and engagement with School and College Offices.

The Committee noted that the Surveys Unit would look at good practice in schools, including the Business School and the School of GeoSciences, with a view to extending it across schools. It was intended to reflect on priority areas for surveys, and to refresh the Learning From and Responding to the Student Voice Principles and potentially the approach to course evaluation.

With regard to iSB, PTES and PRES, it was noted that there was scope to use some of the questions for benchmarking without having to use the full survey.

6. For Approval

6.1 Internal Review Reports and Responses:

QAC 15/16 2 G

The Committee received the following Internal Review Responses:

- TPR of Business School 2013/14 - year on response.
- TPR of Informatics 2014/15 - 14 week response.
- PPR of Online Distance Learning Postgraduate Taught Programmes in CMVM - 14 week response.

The Committee noted that, subsequent to the meeting, individual Members would be invited to comment on specific responses. These comments would then be consolidated by the Convener and circulated electronically to the Committee, in order to avoid undue delay to the subsequent dissemination to the relevant subject areas and support service. The comments would then be submitted to the next meeting at which point the Convenor may wish to highlight specific points for discussion.

Action: Committee Secretary to allocate reports to lead readers for comment.

7. For Information

7.1 ELIR Update

The Convener reported that the themes to be explored in Part 2 would include: learning & teaching strategy/vision; consistency across devolved institution; reward and recognition for teaching; PGR student experience; collaborative provision; PT system; student engagement in curriculum/co-curriculum; assessment & feedback.

There would be a range of meetings with staff and students: Senior staff; Heads of School & DoTs; a range of staff including enhancement & employability, teaching staff; UG; PGT (including ODL); PGR students.

Further information requested by the ELIR Panel included: L&T strategies/vision; PT system; collaborative provision; Edinburgh Award; student representation on committees; IAD; student surveys; reward and recognition for teaching.

7.2 Subject Benchmark Statements

The Committee noted that the following revised Subject Benchmark Statements had been circulated to the relevant Directors of Teaching:

[Languages, Cultures and Societies](#)

[Linguistics](#)

[Optometry](#)

The Committee noted that the following drafts for consultation had been circulated to the relevant Directors of Teaching with an invitation to comment:

[Creative Writing](#)

[Social Policy](#)

8. Electronic Business

8.1 Internal Reports and Responses - electronic approval requested by Committee by Monday 26 October QAC 15/16 2 H

The Convenor reported that no objections or further comments had been received during electronic approval period (19-26 October 2015). Therefore, the responses were **approved** and would now be disseminated to the relevant areas.

9. Date of Next Meeting

9.1 Thursday 10 December 2015 at 2pm in the Hodgson Room, Weir Building, the King's Buildings

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

Summary of Actions
Meeting of 29 October 2015

Item/Paper Reference	Action	Timeframe/process for action to be implemented
3.1 Matters Arising - Principles for Student Staff Liaison Committees	College reps to gather feedback from Schools regarding their experiences, during the first semester, of the changes to the student representation process.	Meeting of SQAC on Thursday 4 February 2016.
5.1 College Quality Assurance Priorities 2015-16	Sheila Lodge to update on CMVM structures.	Meeting of SQAC on Thursday 10 December 2015.
	Appendix to College annual QAE reports to give update on progress in relation to College Quality Assurance Priorities 2015-16.	Meeting of SQAC on Wednesday 20 April 2016.
5.2 Use of Student Data to help enhance learning & teaching, the student experience and operational effectiveness	Presentation slides to be circulated by Barry Neilson.	Immediate.
6.1 Internal Review Reports and Responses	Committee Secretary to allocate reports to lead readers for comment.	Immediate.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

Annual Report on Complaint Handling 2014-15

Executive Summary

In line with the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the University's Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP), this paper reports on the handling of complaints to the University for the academic year 2014-15.

Action requested

For information.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

There are no immediate resource implications, though work over the coming months to identify better ways of recording and reporting data may necessitate some expenditure on development of a suitable software system.

2. Risk assessment

There are no risks in the report per se, which is for information only. Risk management is a key element in the successful handling of all complaints, especially those which carry the potential for reputational damage to the University and/or claims for compensation.

3. Equality and Diversity

SPSO carried out an EIA before publishing the model CHP. This report covers complaints received, some of which relate to matters where equality and diversity is a consideration.

4. Freedom of information

This paper is open; data from it will be published on the University's complaint handling web pages.

Key words

Complaint

Originator of the paper

Jean Grier, Investigations Manager, 30 October 2015.

Annual Report on Complaint Handling 2014-15

Description of paper

1. In line with the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the University's Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP), this paper reports on the handling of complaints to the University for the academic year 2014-15.

Action requested

2. The paper is for information.

Recommendations

3. There are no recommendations at this stage, though further work is being undertaken to streamline recording of complaints; recommendations regarding this are likely in due course.

Background and context

4. The CHP has two stages. Stage 1 Frontline Resolution should be used in the majority of cases, with likely outcomes being an on-the-spot apology, an explanation or other action to resolve the complaint very quickly (within five working days). Stage 2 Complaint Investigation is appropriate where attempts at Frontline Resolution have failed, or where the issue is sufficiently complex, serious or high risk from the outset that Frontline Resolution would not be appropriate. The CHP specifies that the following will be reported internally:

1) 'performance statistics detailing complaint volumes, types and key performance information, for example on time taken and stage at which complaints were resolved'

2) 'the trends and outcomes of complaints and the actions taken in response including examples to demonstrate how complaints have helped improve services'

Discussion

5. For the purposes of complaint reporting, the University has around 50 'areas' – each of the Schools, College Offices, and designated support services. Areas report quarterly on complaints resolved at Frontline. All Stage 2 complaints are managed centrally by the Investigations Manager.

6. During the 12 month period 1 August 2014 – 31 July 2015, areas recorded a preliminary total of 559 complaints (391 from students, 148 from members of the public, 17 from staff and 3 unspecified). This is a significant increase on the previous year, where 392 complaints were recorded in an 11-month period. Some of the increase is accounted for by three issues which attracted multiple complaints, but most of the increase is due to improved recognition and recording of complaints. As seven areas are still to submit their final returns for the AY the final figure is likely to be higher still.

It is believed that the majority of Frontline cases were resolved within the five-day time limit, but data on this is still not being recorded consistently by areas, an issue which is being addressed for the future.

7. In total, 205 'complaints' were raised through the central complaints@ed.ac.uk mailbox, up significantly from the previous 12-month figure of 156. Of these:

- 64 cases were referred to the appropriate areas for Frontline resolution and are thus also counted in the 559 total for the year.
- In 59 cases, the 'complaint' was resolved through an explanation, advice, provision of information, or advice on where to take a problem which was not one for the University.
- 17 complaints were not considered – 12 of these because of 'unacceptable behaviour' on the part of five separate complainants, 3 because they were time-barred and 2 because they were attempts to re-open complaints which had been completed through the University's procedures.
- The SPSO contacted the office regarding 18 cases, many of which were appeal cases rather than complaints. Of the 8 complaints they reviewed, SPSO endorsed the University's handling in all cases.
- A few cases (single figures in each category) were referred for investigation under another procedure – student conduct, staff capability/disciplinary, staff grievance, or academic appeal.
- 14 cases were referred back to complainants for more information (which was not forthcoming) and one complaint was withdrawn before it could be considered.

Multiple complaints arose regarding two issues which achieved wide public notice, (namely the actions of an external security company during a student occupation, and the social media activity of a retired member of staff), and also about one accommodation matter (Holyrood South), but with the exception of these points there were no discernible trends.

8. During the full academic year, a total of 13 cases went to Stage 2 Complaint Investigation, meaning that 98% of complaints were resolved at Frontline. The previous year's figures were 20 cases or 95%, and so 2014-15 represents an improvement on our already-high frontline resolution rate.

9. Investigations should be completed within a maximum of 20 working days, unless an extension is given for good reason. The breakdown of time taken over investigations is as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---|
| • Within 20 working days | 4 |
| • Within 25 working days | 0 |
| • Within a significantly longer period (max 5 months) | 9 |
| • Withdrawn by complainant before completed | 0 |

10. In all the cases which took more than 20 days, the delay was wholly or largely due to the complainant – either due to absence or difficulty contacting the complainant, slowness of response from complainant, or because investigation was put on hold at some point at the request of the complainant.

11. The breakdown of Stage 2 investigation outcomes is as follows:

• Complaint fully upheld	1
• Complaint partially upheld*	1
• Complaint not upheld	11
• Complaint withdrawn	0

*Many complaints cover several issues. Where any of these are upheld, the outcome for the investigation as a whole is recorded as 'partially upheld'.

The complaint which was fully upheld was by students about other students, and was then referred onwards to the Code of Student Conduct. The complaint which was partially upheld was a complex one which had not previously been considered at Frontline. Whilst it is risky to draw conclusions from a single year's data, the fact that none of the Stage 2 investigations upheld complaints which had previously been considered at Frontline might suggest that Frontline resolution is indeed finding appropriate solutions where those exist.

12. Improvements to services may arise even where a complaint is not upheld. Examples of such improvements in the past academic year include better guidance on placement arrangements, clearer guidance to staff on mainstreamed adjustments, and a revised approach to entry qualifications for mature applicants.

Resource implications

13. There are no immediate resource implications, though work over the coming months to identify better ways of recording and reporting data may necessitate some expenditure on development of a suitable software system.

Risk Management

14. There are no risks in the report *per se*, which is for information only. Risk management is a key element in the successful handling of all complaints, especially those which carry the potential for reputational damage to the University and/or claims for compensation.

Equality & Diversity

15. SPSO carried out an EIA before publishing the model CHP. This report covers complaints received, some of which relate to matters where equality and diversity is a consideration.

Next steps/implications

16. The Investigations Manager will be responsible for taking forward points relating to improved data collection for the future.

Consultation

17. Quality Assurance Committee has also received this report, and quarterly statistical reports are submitted to QAC.

Further information

18. Author
Jean Grier
Investigations Manager

30 October 2015

Freedom of Information

19. This paper is open; data from it will be published on the University's complaint handling web pages.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

**Annual Report on Student Appeals
2014/15**

Executive Summary

This paper contains the annual report on academic appeals from Academic Year 14/15. It presents an analysis of the appeals and outlines some areas for action and consideration.

Action requested

The Quality Assurance Committee is invited to note the report and to discuss the analysis presented. In particular QAC is invited to consider the learning points outlined in paragraphs 13 to 17; and to comment on the appeal analysis recommendations in paragraphs 10 and 11.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

There are no communication or implementation actions required

Resource / Risk / Compliance

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**
Potential resource implications are mentioned in paragraph 22 of the report.
- 2. Risk assessment**
Not applicable.
- 3. Equality and Diversity**
Equality and diversity issues are highlighted within the report and in Annex 1.
- 4. Freedom of information**
Closed.

Key words

Appeal

Originator of the paper

Stuart Fitzpatrick, Academic Policy Officer, 2 December 2015

Annual Report on Student Appeals 2014/15

Description

1. This report considers the academic appeals submitted in the 2014/15 academic year (1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015). It presents an analysis of the appeals and outlines some areas for action and consideration.
2. This year has seen a 47.4% increase in academic appeal submissions (total numbers from academic year 2014/15 are 143, total numbers from academic year 2013/14 were 97, total numbers from academic year 2012/13 were 108. For context, the highest number of appeals received up until this year was 123). Generally across the higher education sector appeal statistics are rising.
3. A full analysis of the appeals submitted in 2014/15 is included in Annex 1.

Action requested

4. The Quality Assurance Committee is invited to note the report and to discuss the analysis presented. In particular QAC is invited to consider the learning points outlined in paragraphs 13-17 below; and to comment on the appeal analysis recommendations in paragraphs 10 and 11.

Appeal handling evaluation: Process Improvements

5. Academic Services have continued with measures previously outlined in last year's appeals report in order to reduce turnaround times. This is in addition to the enhanced internal process which was introduced in May of 2012. A number of these measures were outlined in Paper B at QAC in December 2013 and were in effect until August 1st 2015, when the new Student Appeal Regulations replaced the Academic Appeal Regulations. The period covered in this report is the final year of the operation of the Academic Appeal Regulations.

Academic Judgement Challenges

6. Academic appeals which are simply challenges to academic judgement have not been accepted, with students receiving letters clearly explaining the reasons why within 48 hours of Academic Services receiving the appeal. In academic year 2014/15, a total of 4 submitted appeals were rejected in this way.

Early resolution

7. Academic Services have been taking a more proactive approach in intervening in appeals during the early stages of the process. Should an appeal arrive where the reasons are clear cut and there is sufficient evidence to back up the issues contained within the appeal itself, the caseworker will contact the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners and enquire as to whether or not they may wish to voluntarily re-convene in light of the information contained within the appeal. This has led to a reduction in the time it takes to resolve these appeals and communicate the revised decision to the student. 15 appeals in AY 14/15 were ultimately resolved in this way.

Turnaround time

8. Academic Services continues to operate a preliminary screening process whereby it is possible to send an appeal straight to the sub-committee without undergoing the comment collection stage. This process is reserved for those cases which clearly do

not demonstrate legitimate grounds for appeal. 60% of appeals received in Academic Year 14/15 were rejected in this way.

9. The approaches summed up above had the overall effect of reducing the average amount of time that students were waiting to hear the results of their appeals from 90 working days in 2011/12 to 62 working days in 2012/13. In AY 2013/14, the figure remained at 62 working days. In AY 2014/15, the average amount of time that students were waiting to hear about the results of their appeals was 25 working days. This figure includes all cases, and was calculated including 'outlier' cases. This figure has dropped dramatically due entirely to prolonged and concentrated staff effort in Academic Services. Within last year's annual report on student appeals, it was mentioned that 62 days might have exemplified the limit of the improvements to turnaround time that were possible under the appeal process in place at the time. A review of the academic appeals procedures and regulations was undertaken in semester 2 of AY 14/15, and led to the introduction of the new Student Appeal Regulations. These new Regulations have been in force since August 1st 2015, and at the time of writing, the average turnaround time for an appeal is 16 working days.

Appeal analysis

10. This year saw a large increase in complex, multi-faceted appeal cases. There were also a number of cases which took significantly longer than average to deal with. In one case an appeal, which was ultimately upheld, took 100 days to complete, largely due to special circumstances which had an impact on the student's ability to engage with the appeal process. In total, there were 19 cases which took in excess of 70 days to complete. This was due to a number of issues. It is increasingly common for appellants to be adversarial and combative, which can cause disruption to process. Appellants are becoming significantly more anxious, and contact with Academic Services regarding specific cases has increased in line with the increase in appeal numbers. We have also witnessed increases in threats of legal action should an appeal not be upheld, and increasingly parents or third parties making representations on behalf of appellants. This causes further issue, as the University cannot divulge information regarding its students to a third party, regardless of relationship, without the express consent of the student in question. Obtaining this consent has on occasion been a lengthy process.
11. Annex 1 presents some appeal data in terms of some of the protected characteristic groups, e.g. race. The protected characteristics under the equality legislation are: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. However, the University does not gather data on students on all protected characteristic groups, and it would therefore be inappropriate for Academic Services to do so whilst handling appeals. The small number of appeals, and the even smaller number of upheld appeals, makes gathering data for analysis for some groups inappropriate. As QAC requested following last years report, data has been collected in regards to declared disability. However, given the relatively small number of appellants that this includes, in most categories these numbers have been anonymised in line with Data Protection Legislation so that individuals might not become identifiable.

Unresolved appeals

12. There are no remaining unresolved appeals from academic year 2014/15. This is the second time that this report has been presented to the Quality Assurance Committee with no unresolved cases from the academic year in question. The final appeal from academic year 14/15 was closed on the 25th of September 2015, well ahead of any previous academic years, in spite of a 47.4% increase in appeal numbers. It was the case in years passed that appeals were still being dealt with in December from the previous academic year.

Learning Points

13. Chapter B9 of the UK Quality Code encourages institutions to learn from appeal cases irrespective of their outcome. The following themes have been identified from the appeals submitted in AY 14/15.

Dissertation and thesis supervision

14. The perceived quality of supervision received by students submitting dissertations at both UG and PGT level and for PGR students continues to feature in a significant number of appeals. The vast majority of these appeals are rejected as they tend not to meet the stated grounds for appeal. However, it is important for the University to be aware of this expression of student dissatisfaction with the supervisory process. This is the third year that this has been a noticeable trend in appeals submitted.

Special Circumstances

15. Students continue to use the appeal process to draw attention to situations which they claim affected their academic performance but which they did not declare at the appropriate time using Ground A of the Appeals Procedure. Ground A is 'Substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in the examination which for good reason was unavailable to the examiners when their decision was taken'. Reminders are sent in all student emails at regular intervals before the beginning of each examination diet from the Director of Academic Services. The vast majority of these appeals are rejected because the student fails to provide "good reason" as to why they did not draw these circumstances to the attention of the Board of Examiners. A review of the University's Special Circumstances Policy is being carried out in 2015/16. It remains students' responsibility to declare their Special Circumstances. In last years report, it was noted that Academic Services would consider whether the introduction of the Personal Tutoring system resulted in a decrease in appeals surrounding Special Circumstances. In 13/14, 64% of appeals were submitted on Ground A alone. 76% of appeals last year cited Special Circumstances (this includes appeals on ground A alone and appeals that cited both grounds A and B). This year, 57% of appeals were submitted on ground A alone. A total of 70% of appeals this year cited Special Circumstances (including appeals on ground A alone and appeals that cited both grounds A and B). At face value, this presents a decrease in the proportion of appeals submitted regarding Special Circumstances, however this is offset by the 47.7% increase in overall appeal numbers. In actual numbers, 74 appeals last year cited Special Circumstances, compared to 100 appeals this year, a 35% increase in real terms.

Perceived improper conduct or procedural irregularity

16. Increasingly, appellants are challenging the competency of decisions taken by their respective Schools and Colleges by submitting claims of irregular procedure or improper conduct using ground B of the appeal regulations. This is in regards to the

handling of Special Circumstances, the awarding of marks, the marking and moderation procedures, the appropriateness of penalties, decisions taken in regards to progression, and the conduct of Boards of Examiners or Progression Board meetings. Appeals of this nature are lengthy and problematic, as practice does vary across the institution. In practical terms, these appeals can be across all three levels of study (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research) and against a number of administrative levels (school, college or central University). Increasingly, appellants are willing to entirely exhaust all avenues in attempting to overturn an adverse decision, firstly in challenging their School, then their College, and finally the central University, which leads to the increased adversarial nature of appeals being submitted. There also exists a large degree of misunderstanding of the University's internal administrative structures, and misconceptions held by students in this regard can lead to frustration on their part. 39 of the appeals submitted this year cited ground B alone. Combining this with the number of appeals which cited both grounds A and B gives a total of 58 appeals, 40% of the overall caseload.

Concessions

17. This year for the first time saw a number of appeals received against decisions taken by College level Committees to deny Concession requests made on a students behalf at senior honours level. These appeals stemmed from Taught Assessment Regulation 60 (as it was for AY 14/15), specifically the text – ‘ [...] *If the Board considers that this would be to the student's detriment or it has insufficient evidence to make an award, the Board will recommend that the relevant College committee request a concession from the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee [...]*’. In deciding that it was legitimate to consider these appeals, advice was sought from both Conveners and Vice Conveners of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Appeal Committees, and the Convener of CSPC. The decision was taken that these Concession decisions affected degree award and progression, and as such were open to appeal.

Upheld appeals

18. The number of appeals which were upheld in 2014/5 decreased to 5%, compared with 15% in the previous year. However, this figure was closer to that in 2012/13, where upheld appeals were 8%. In terms of numbers, AY 2013/14 saw 14 appeals upheld, compared to 8 appeals in AY 2014/15, a drop of 5.

Increase in appeal submissions for academic year 2015/16

19. At the time of writing, 59 academic appeals have been submitted for academic year 2015/16. At the same stage last year, this number was 44. This again is likely to have an effect on the overall number of appeal submissions for academic year 15/16. The reason for this increase in volume remains unclear, however trends mentioned in paragraphs 13-17 above continue to appear. Appeal submissions are increasingly adversarial, combative and volatile.

Resource implications

20. Significant academic and administrative staffing resources are involved in the handling of appeals. The increase in the volume of appeals therefore leads to resource implications.

Equality and diversity

21. Equality and diversity issues are highlighted in the report above and in Annex 1.

ANNEX 1

1. Introduction

This annex provides an analysis of the academic appeals submitted in AY 2014/15.

2. Numbers

A total of 143 appeals were submitted in AY 2014/15, an increase of 47.4% on the previous year. The figures for the past seven years are illustrated in Figure 1.

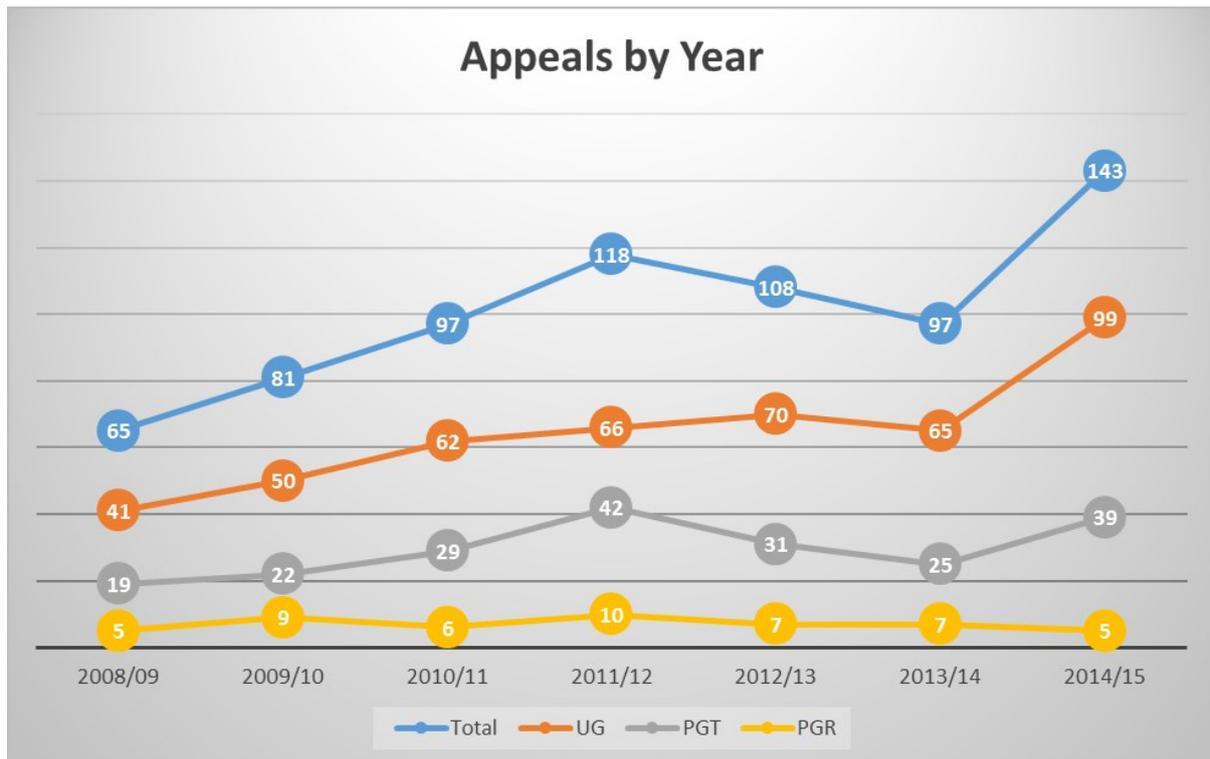


Figure 1: Number of appeals lodged by level of study

3. Grounds

Academic appeals can be submitted on three specific grounds:

Ground A: Substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in the examination which for good reason was not available to the examiners when their decision was taken.

Ground B: Alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of an examination. For this purpose 'conduct of an examination' includes the conduct of a meeting of the Board of Examiners.

One further ground of appeal is open to postgraduate research students only:

Ground C: Evidence of prejudice or lack of due diligence in the examination on the part of any of the examiners.

There is little variation in the grounds cited year on year. The vast majority of appeals involve special circumstances that were not brought to the Board of Examiners attention before they made their decision (Ground A) or dispute the marking or degree classification

processes (Ground B). Allegations of bias submitted by PGR students (Ground C) remain rare. The proportion of appeals submitted under the grounds listed above are detailed in Figure 2.

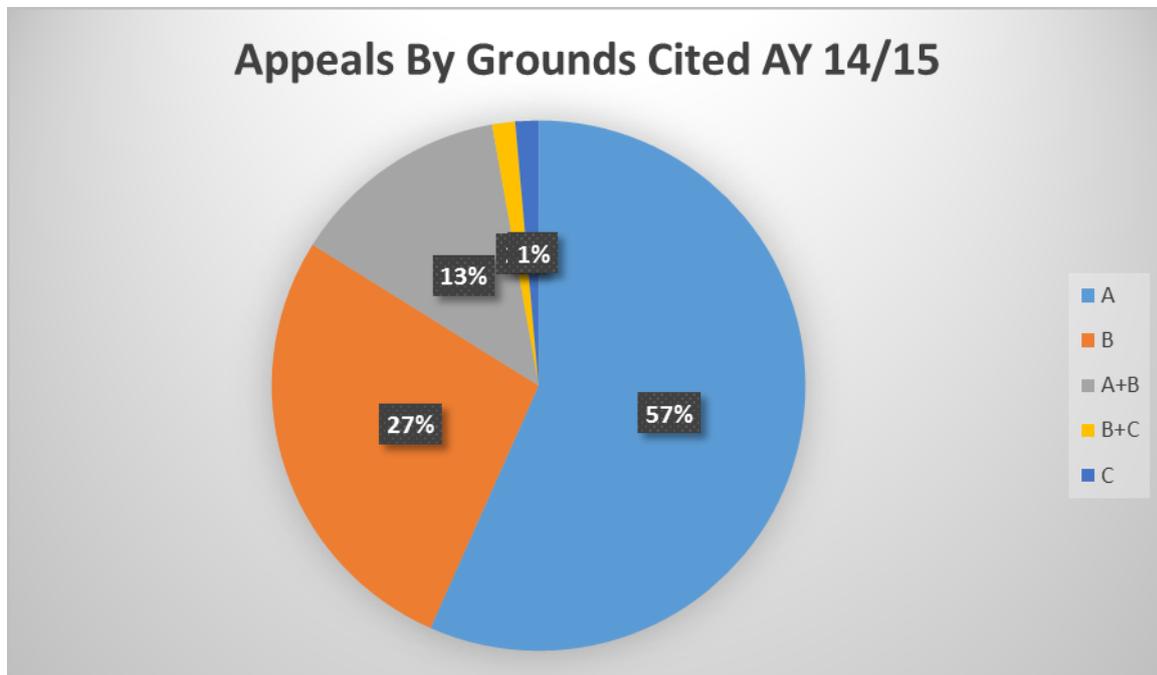


Figure 2: Grounds cited in appeals

Ground A – 81 appeals
Ground B – 39 appeals
Grounds A+B – 19 appeals
Grounds B+C – 2 appeals
Ground C – 2 appeals

4. Outcomes

Academic appeals are considered by a sub-committee of the Appeal Committee, unless during the preliminary screening stage in Academic Services they have been identified as simply challenges to academic judgement. There are three possible outcomes:

- No grounds for appeal established – appeal is closed;
- Grounds for appeal are established – appeal is referred for Convener's Action. Convener's Action then refers appeal back to Board of Examiners for reconsideration or refers the case to the Appeal Committee for a full hearing;
- Grounds for Appeal are established – appeal is referred to the Appeal Committee for a full panel hearing.

A student can also withdraw their appeal at any point in the process.

Recent years had shown a steady decline in the number of appeals being upheld. However, the figure for AY 2013/14 had been 15%. AY 14/15 saw a figure of 5% which marks a return to the level nearer that seen in AY 2012/13. This is illustrated in Figure 3.

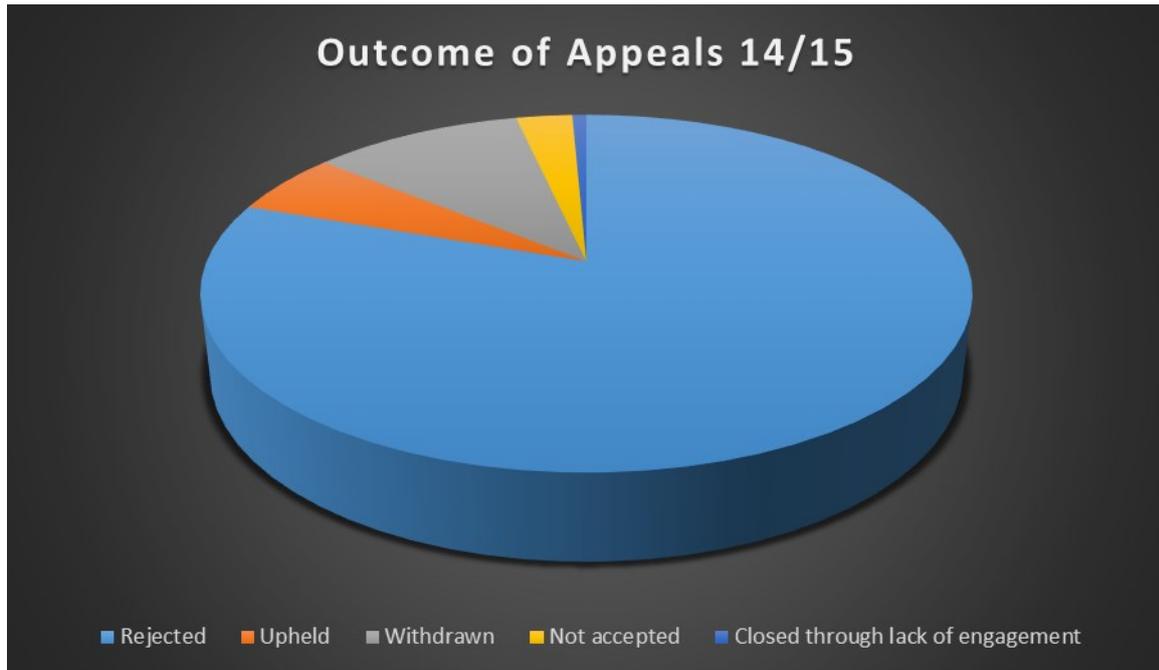
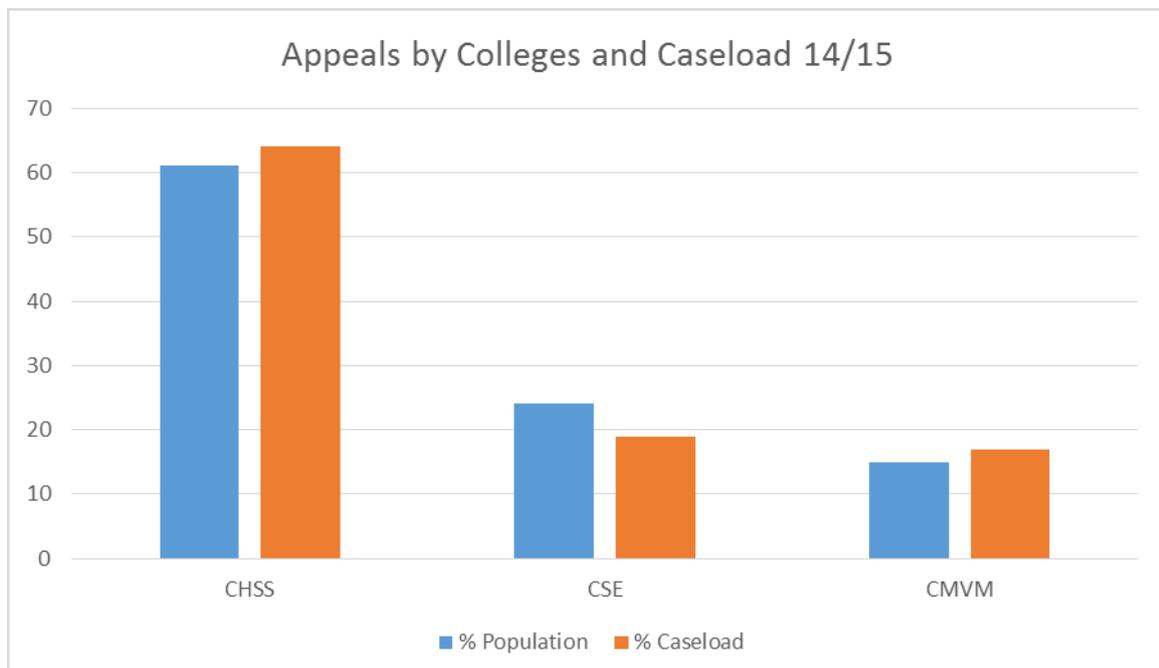


Figure 3: outcome of appeals AY 2014/15

Total appeals – 143
Rejected appeals – 115 (80%)
Upheld appeals – 8 (5%)
Withdrawn appeals – 15 (11%)
Not accepted – 4 (3%)
Closed through lack of engagement – 1 (1%)

Appeals by College

The breakdown of the number of appeals received by from each College is illustrated in Figure 4 below



CHSS – 60% of the student population, 64% of appeals
 CSE – 24% of the student population, 19% of appeals
 CMVM – 15% of the student population, 17% of appeals

Figure 4: Appeals by College AY 14/15

The pattern demonstrated above is broadly reflective of the spread of the student population across the University.

College of Humanities and Social Science

In AY 2014/15, CHSS accounted for 60% of the total student population and 64% of academic appeals. Figure 5 shows the figures for each School within CHSS.

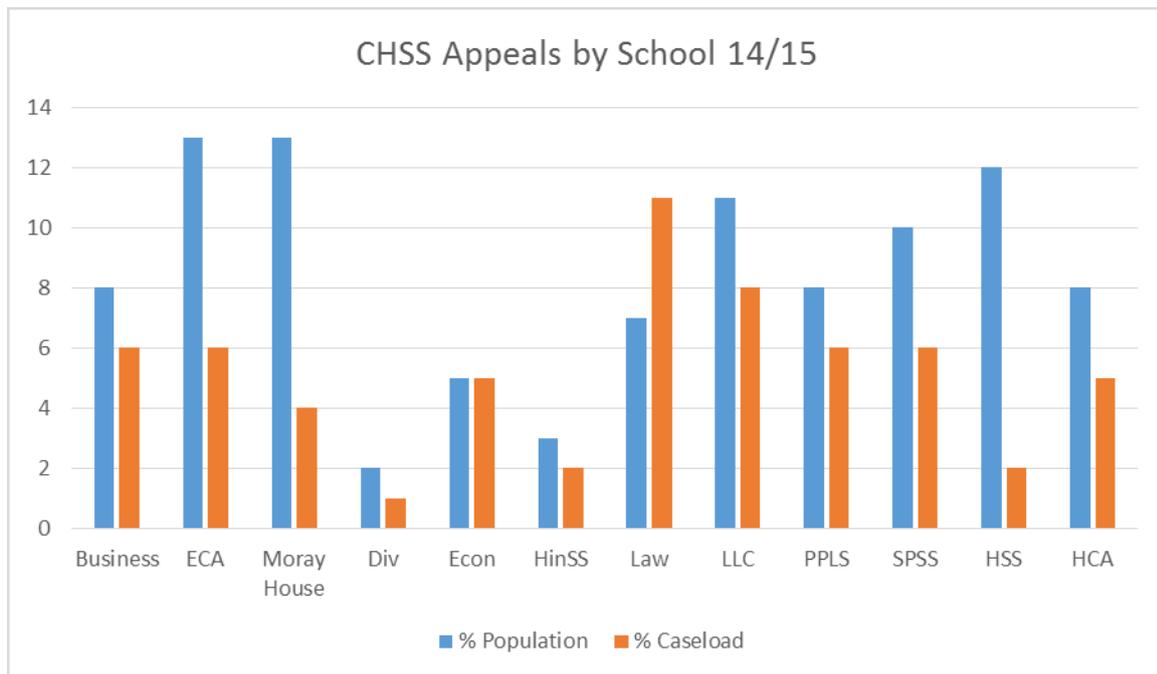


Figure 5: Student population compared with caseload within CHSS

The data in Table 1 shows the number of cases in each School and the final outcome.

	Bus	ECA	M.Ho	Div	Econ	HinSS	Law	LLC	PPLS	SPSS	HCA
Withdrawn	0	1	0	<5	2	<5	3	3	1	0	0
Rejected	9	8	5	<5	4	<5	11	8	7	8	7
Upheld	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	0
Total	9	9	6	<5	7	<5	16	12	8	8	7

Table 1: Appeal outcomes in CHSS

CHSS Points of Interest

- The number of appeals generated by students in the School of Law is higher than might be expected.

College of Science and Engineering

In AY 2014/15 CSE accounted for 24% of the total student population and 19% of academic appeals. Figure 6 shows the figures within each School in CSCE.

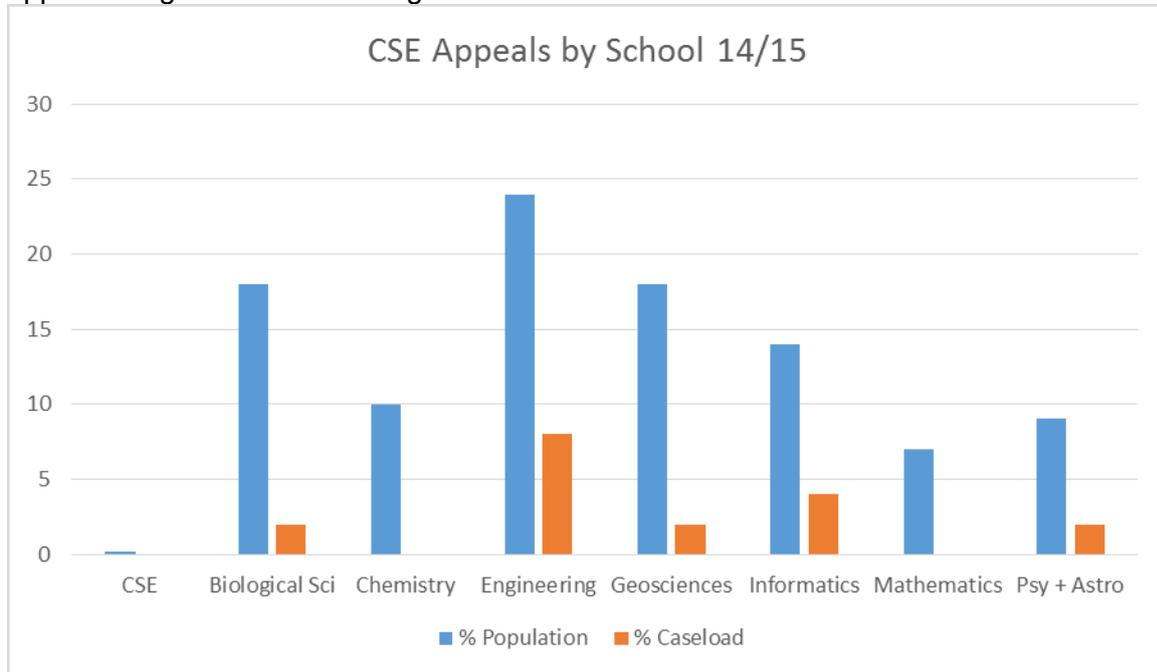


Figure 6: Student population compared with case load within CSCE

The data in Table 2 shows the number of cases in each School and the final outcome.

	Biolog Sci	Chem	Eng	GeoSci	Informatics	Phys&Astro	Math
Withdrawn	<5	0	1	<5	0	<5	0
Rejected	<5	0	11	<5	6	<5	0
Upheld	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	<5	0	12	<5	6	<5	0

Table 2: Appeal outcomes in SCE

CSCE Points of Interest

- The number of appeals generated by students in the School of Engineering is slightly higher than might be expected;
- The School of Mathematics and the School of Chemistry did not generate a single appeal.

In 2013/14 CMVM accounted for 15% of the total student population and 17% of academic appeals. Figure 7 shows the same comparison for each School within CMVM.

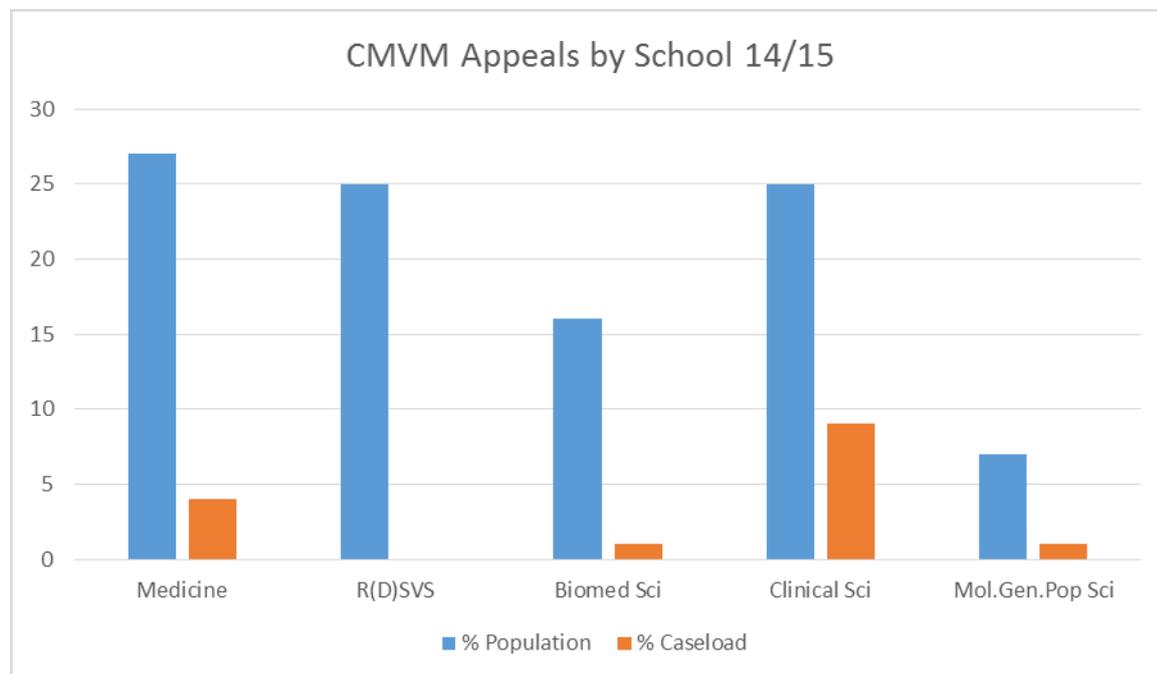


Figure 7: Student population compared with case load within CMVM

The data in Table 3 shows the number of cases in each School and the final outcome.

	Medicine	R(D)SVS	Biomed	Clin. Sci	MGPHS
Withdrawn	2	0	<5	1	0
Rejected	3	0	<5	12	2
Upheld	1	0	0	0	0
Total	6	0	<5	13	2

Table 3: Appeal outcomes in CMVM

CMVM Points of Interest

- The number of appeals generated by students in the School of Clinical Sciences is higher than might be expected.
- The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Medicine did not generate a single appeal.

6. Equality and Diversity Monitoring

The University is committed to monitoring the individual circumstance of appellants for equality and diversity purposes. No information of this nature (apart from gender, which would be obvious) is included in the information provided to Appeal Committee members considering individual cases. This information may be provided by the appellant where it is relevant to the matter under appeal.

i. Gender

During AY 2014/15, 52% of the appellants were male and 48% female. The data in Figure 8 shows the percentage split in male/female appellants and how this compares with the University population.

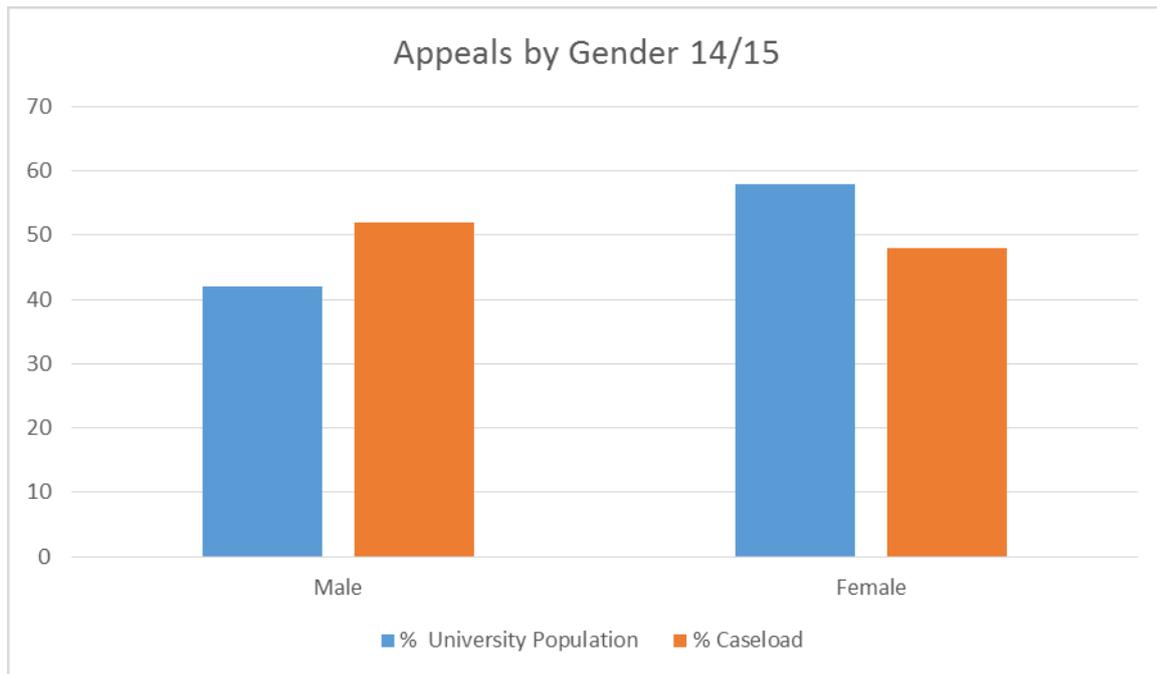


Figure 8: Appeals received AY 14/15 by Gender

	Appeals %	University population %
Male	52	42
Female	48	58

Table 4: Male/female appellants

ii. Disability

In AY 2014/15, approximately 12% of appellants had a declared disability, a drop from 20% the previous year. This compares with a University figure of approximately 10% of the total student population having declared a disability. Academic Services has met with the Disability Service to discuss this issue and the figure continues to be monitored. As requested last year by the Quality Assurance Committee, this information is provided below

Table 5 provides a breakdown of declared disabilities. Where numbers are less than 5, these have been anonymised to prevent the possibility of individuals being identifiable.

Declared Disability	Number
Autistic Disorder	< 5
Learning Difficulty	7
Mental Health	< 5
Other disability	< 5
Unseen disability	< 5
Wheelchair/Mobility	< 5
Multiple disabilities	< 5

Table 5 – Declared Disabilities

iv. Ethnicity

The data in Figure 9 shows the declared ethnic backgrounds of all appellants in AY 2014/15

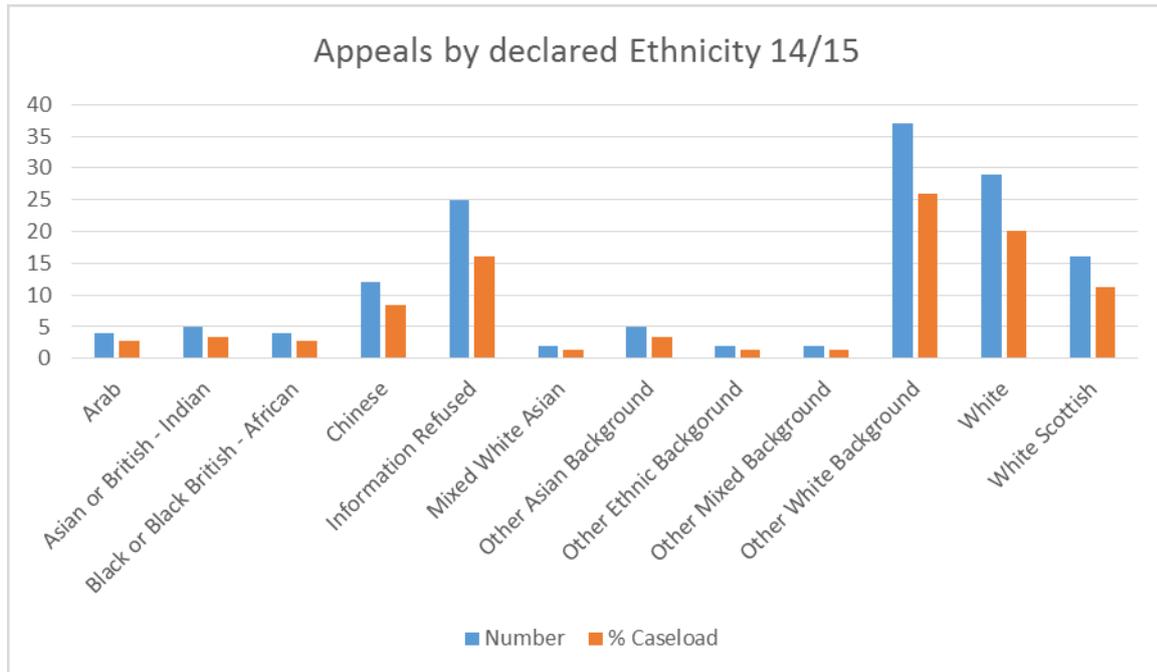


Figure 9: Ethnicity of all appellants

The data in Table 6 shows the declared ethnic background for all appellants in AY 2014/15.

Ethnicity	No. of Appellants
Arab	4
Asian or Asian British - Indian	5
Black or Black British - African	4
Chinese	12
Information refused	25
Mixed - White and Asian	2
Other Asian background	5
Other Ethnic Background	2
Other Mixed Background	2
Other White Background	37
White	29
White - Scottish	16

Table 6: Ethnicity information for appellants

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

Annual Report on Student Discipline 2014/15

Executive Summary

This report provides information on the number of breaches of the Code of Student Conduct over the course of the academic year 2014/15.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Excellence in education.

Action requested

For discussion.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The overall conduct statistics in appendix 1 will be published on the University website at:

http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Discipline/Student_Discipline_Stats.pdf

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

N/A

2. Risk assessment

N/A

3. Equality and Diversity

This report contains aggregate data (rather than individual student data) provided by Colleges and support services, therefore it has not been possible to consider overall equality and diversity implications.

4. Freedom of information

Closed – disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act

Key words

discipline, conduct, breaches, offences

Originator of the paper

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Services, 30 November 2015.

Annual Report on Student Discipline 2014/15

Introduction

1. This report provides information on the number of breaches of the Code of Student Conduct over the course of the academic year 2014/15, as well as details of the nature of the offences committed. Some historical data relating to previous academic years is included for comparison.

General disciplinary offences

2. Appendix 1 provides details of the number of breaches of the Code of Student Conduct (and previous Code of Student Discipline) over the past six years, grouped according to category of the offence committed, as determined by the Code. The total number of disciplinary cases continues to involve a very small proportion of the student population. In 2014/15 the figure accounted for around 1% of the overall student population.

Offences dealt with by Accommodation Services

3. Around 54% of breaches were for offences (mostly category 6 and category 12) that were dealt with by Accommodation Services in 2014/15. The vast majority of these offences were incidents that involved smoking, burning candles or incense in University accommodation, and tampering with smoke alarms or fire extinguishers in breach of the University's Health and Safety Policy in relation to fire safety. In 2013/14, these offences accounted for around 43% of offences.
4. The penalties imposed as a result of these breaches of discipline involved formal warnings and fines. The maximum fine was £250 but this was only very rarely applied. The standard fine was £75, with an extra £25 if the offence involved tampering with a fire extinguisher, to pay for the replacement.

Offences relating to academic misconduct

5. Around 40% of breaches were for offences related to academic misconduct (contained within category 9). 'Academic misconduct' is taken to refer to misconduct that occurs in relation to a formal academic exercise, including plagiarism, collusion, falsification, cheating, deceit or impersonation¹. Again, the total number of academic misconduct cases continues to involve a very small proportion of the student population. In 2014/15 this figure was around 0.5%.
6. The penalties imposed as a result of these breaches of discipline involved reprimands, formal warnings and mark penalties.

¹ <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/GlossaryofTerms2015-16.pdf>

7. Appendix 2 (figure 1) provides a percentage breakdown of the cases involving academic misconduct offences in 2014/15. Offences included plagiarism, collusion and cheating. The vast majority of these incidents involved plagiarism. There were no students disciplined for falsification, deceit or impersonation in 2014/15.
8. Appendix 3 provides details of academic misconduct offences broken down by College for the past six years. It also shows the totals for plagiarism only.

Serious offences

9. In 2014/15, two students were referred to the Student Discipline Committee. One student had the results of assessment rescinded, for academic misconduct offences, and another student was excluded from the University. In addition, a substantial number of cases have involved the provision of University level advice and guidance. In comparison, in 2013/14, two students were referred to the Student Discipline Committee. One student in 2013/14 received a reprimand and the other student was excluded from the University.

The University of Edinburgh: Student Discipline Statistics

APPENDIX 1

Number of breaches of the Code of Student Conduct* by students

Breach	9/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
1. Disrupting, or interfering with any academic, administrative, sporting, social or other University activities	0	0	0	0	1	2
2. Obstructing, or interfering with, the functions, duties or activities of any Person	0	0	0	0	0	1
3. Violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening or offensive behaviour or language (whether expressed orally, in writing or electronically) including harassment of any Person whilst engaged in any University work, study or activity	4	0	0	4	3	5
4. Conduct which unjustifiably infringes freedom of thought or expression whilst on University premises or engaged in University work, study or activity	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Fraud, deceit, falsification of documents, deception or dishonesty in relation to the University or its staff or in connection with holding any office in the University or in relation to being a student of the University	0	1	1	0	1	2
6. Behaving in a way likely to cause injury to any Person or impair safety	158	103	130	88	115	204
7. Discriminating against any Person on grounds of age, disability, race, ethnic or national origin, religion or beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, marriage or civil partnership, colour or socio-economic background	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. Failing to comply with any University rule, regulation or policy	0	0	0	0	0	4
9. Assessment offences, including making use of unfair means in any University assessment or assisting a student to make use of such unfair means	139	97	131	183	211	187 ²
10. Misconduct in research	0	0	0	0	0	1
11. Damaging, defacing, stealing or misappropriating University property or the property of any Person	2	0	0	1	1	2
12. Misusing or making unauthorised use of University premises or items of property, including IT facilities or safety equipment	81	61	48	60	51	50
13. Deliberately doing, or failing to do, anything which thereby causes the University to be in breach of a statutory obligation	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Behaving in a way which brings the University into disrepute (without prejudice to the right to fair and justified comment and criticism)	0	0	0	0	0	6
15. Making false, frivolous, malicious or vexatious complaints	0	0	0	0	0	1
16. Failing, upon request, to disclose name and other relevant details to an officer or employee of the University in circumstances when it is reasonable to require that such information be given	0	0	0	0	0	0
17. Failing to comply with a previously-imposed penalty under this Code	0	0	0	0	0	0
18. Any misconduct prior to a student's enrolment at the University of Edinburgh, which was not previously known to the University, which raises questions about the fitness of the student to remain a member of the University community; poses a threat to any Person or the discipline and good order of the University; or raises questions about the student's fitness to be admitted to and to practise any particular profession to which the student's course leads directly	0	0	0	0	0	0

² This figure includes 185 "academic misconduct" offences and two other assessment offences.

	TOTAL	384	262	313	336	383	465³
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* NB: Breaches are categorised according to the list set out in Section 12 of the University's Code of Student Conduct which can be found at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline>

APPENDIX 2

Students disciplined for academic misconduct offences in 2014/15

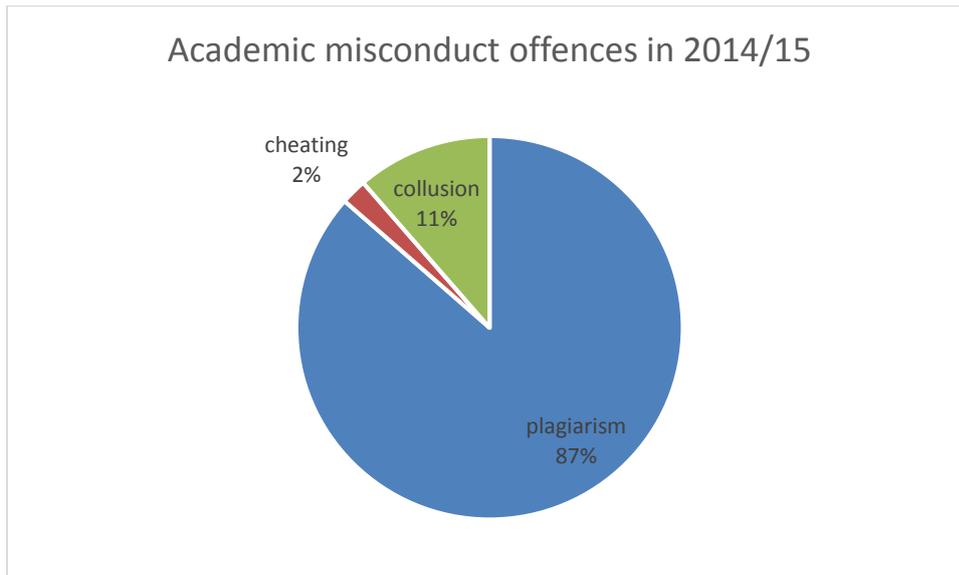


Figure 1

APPENDIX 3

Number of students disciplined for academic misconduct grouped by College

	College			Grand Total
	HSS	MVM	SCE	
2009/10	63	14	62	139
2010/11	48	19	30	97
2011/12	74	26	31	131
2012/13	123	29	31	183
2013/14	153	38	20	211
2014/15	90	58	37	185

Number of students disciplined for plagiarism grouped by College

	College			Grand Total
	HSS	MVM	SCE	
2009/10	58	14	49	121
2010/11	43	19	28	90

³ There are 2014/15 cases still under investigation, therefore this figure for 2014/15 may be subject to change.

QAC: 10.12.2015
H/02/28/02

CLOSED: QAC 15/16 3E

2011/12	66	22	27	115
2012/13	111	29	27	167
2013/14	148	36	16	200
2014/15	78	56	26	160

Ailsa Taylor, Academic Services, 30 November 2015

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

External Examiner Reports and Responses:

Thematic Analysis 2014/15

Executive Summary

This report provides a thematic analysis of External Examiner reports for taught programmes and the responses made to the reports. It is the first report of its kind and is only possible due to the introduction of the External Examiner Reporting System and analytical tools. Analysis was conducted based on data available on the 26 November 2015.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Information in the report can be used to support "outstanding student experience".

Action requested

For discussion in order to identify any University-level actions to take. The Committee is asked to feedback on the report layout. Suggestions for future reports are welcomed.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Outlined in the report are a number of Institutional level actions that have already taken place.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

N/A

2. Risk assessment

N/A

3. Equality and Diversity

N/A. This report contains themes identified from External Examiner Reports. The report is not proposing any particular action in relation to the themes identified.

Should the Committee decide to take any particular actions, the Committee will need to think about any equality and diversity implications this may raise.

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

External Examiners, Reports, Data, Themes, Sub-Themes

Originator of the paper

Anne Marie O'Mullane

Academic Services

3 December 2015

External Examiner Reports and Responses: Thematic Analysis 2014/15

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a thematic analysis of External Examiner reports for taught programmes and the responses made to the reports. It is the first report of its kind and is only possible due to the introduction of the External Examiner Reporting System and analytical tools. Analysis was conducted based on data available on the 26 November 2015.
- 1.2 Quantitative and qualitative analysis is provided in the report. Qualitative analysis is based on the themes and sub-themes contained in the External Examiner report. The Appendix outlines how the questions in the report are grouped into themes and sub-themes.
- 1.3 Action requested: Senatus Quality Assurance Committee is invited to discuss the report and identify any University-level actions to take as result. As this is the first report of its kind, feedback from the Committee on the structure and content of the report and any suggestions for future reports would be welcomed.

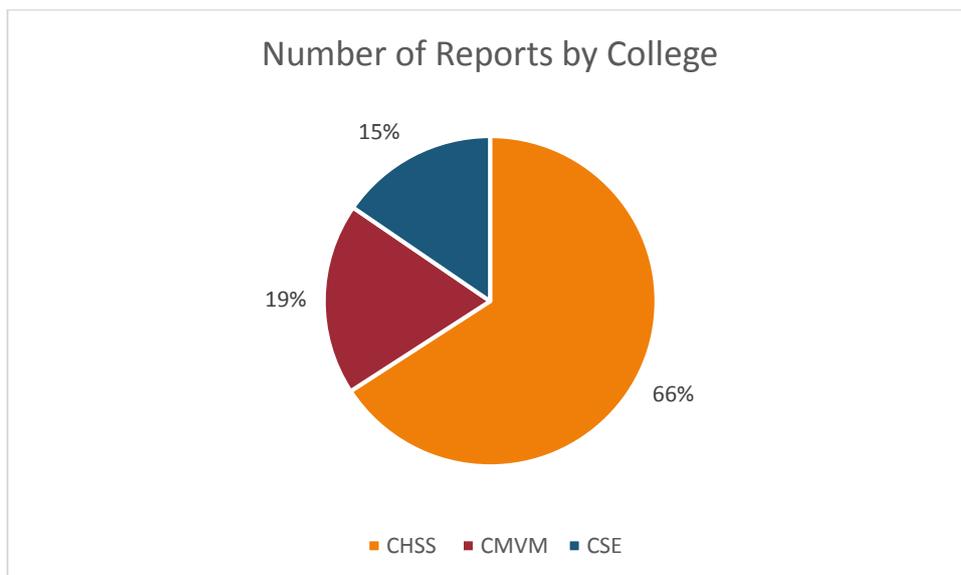
2. Overview of the number of External Examiner Report 2014/15

- 2.1 Outlined in the figure and table below are the number of reports by College.

Table 1: Number of reports by College

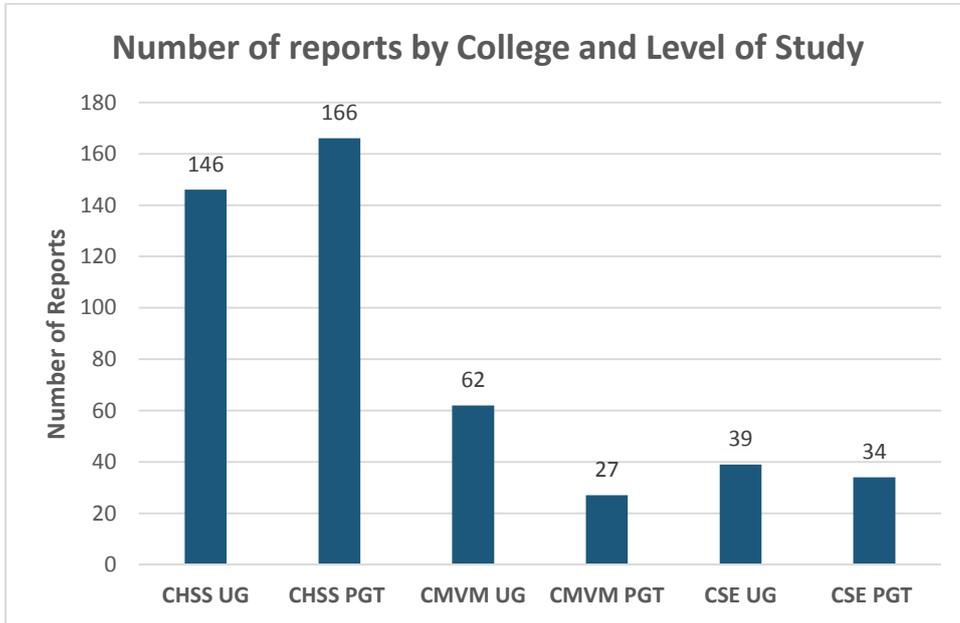
College of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS)	312
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)	89
College of Science and Engineering (CSE)	73
Total number of reports	474

Figure 1: Number of Reports by College



- 2.2 Outlined in the figure are the number of Reports by College and level of study.

Figure 2: Number of Reports by College and level of study



2.3 Outlined in the figures are the number of reports in each College by School:

Figure 3: Number of Reports in CHSS by School

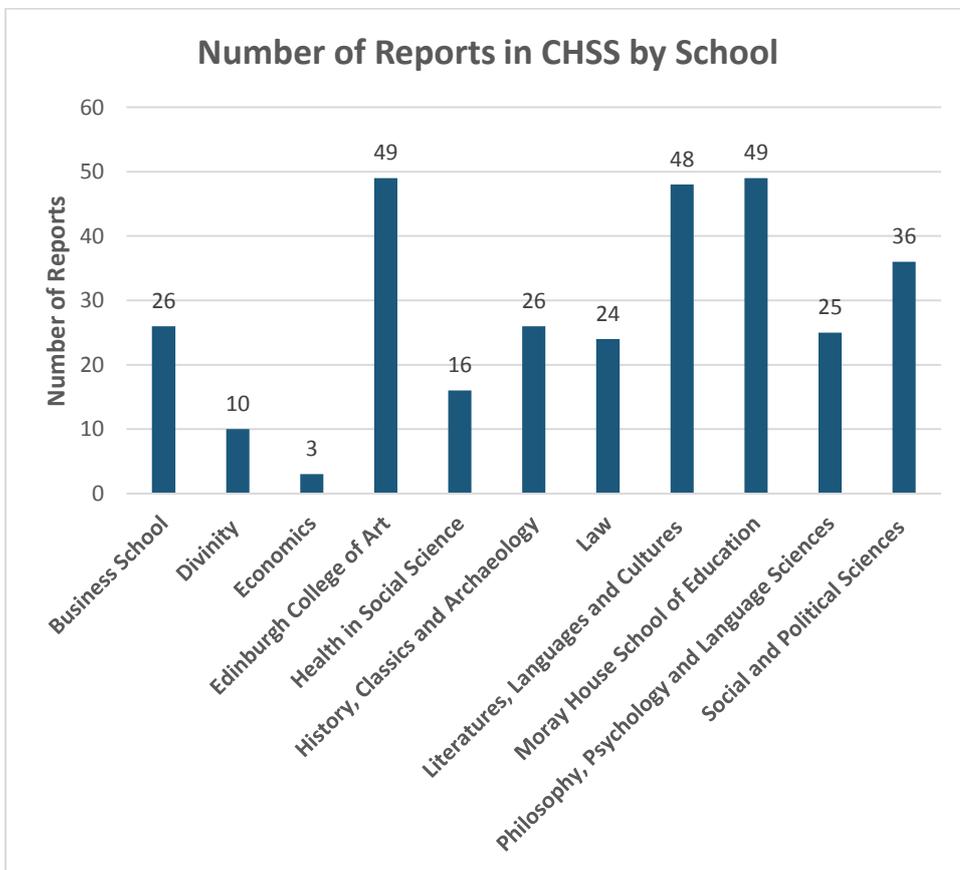


Figure 4: Number of Reports in CSE by School

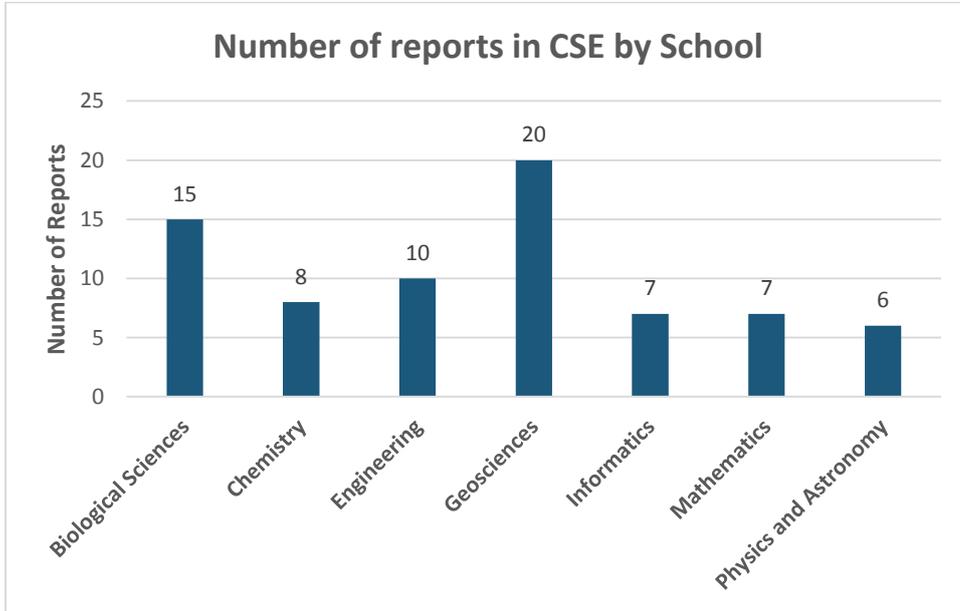
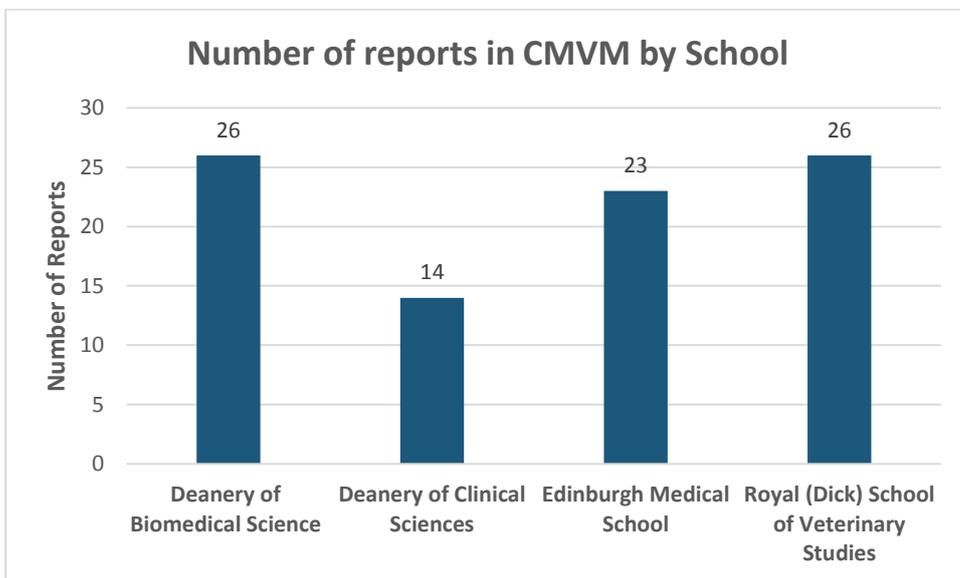


Figure 5: Number of Reports in CMVM by School



3. Overview of the Status of Reports 2014/15

3.1 The following table outline the status of External Examiner reports.

Table 2: Status of External Examiner Reports

Report Submitted	354
Report to be Submitted	90
Submitted Offline	16
Allocation (reports not utilised)	14
Response Submitted	202

3.2 The following tables outline the status of External Examiner reports by level of study.

Table 3: Status of External Examiner Reports (UG)

Report Submitted	218
Report to be Submitted	13
Submitted Offline	15
Allocation (reports not utilised)	1
Response Submitted	143

Table 4: Status of External Examiner Reports (PGT)

Report Submitted	136
Report to be Submitted	77
Submitted Offline	1
Allocation (reports not utilised)	13
Response Submitted	59

3.3 The figures show that the number of outstanding reports (status “Report to be Submitted”) is quite high. 16% of the External Examiner reports are still to be returned with the majority of outstanding reports being PGT. The response rate for PGT is 64% since the deadline for PGT Reports is the 30 November 2015 and the analysis of data was based on data from the 26 November 2015. A campaign for chasing late responses will be undertaken by Colleges (in some areas Schools, where responsibility has been delegated). An automatically generated email was circulated to External Examiners who have a report outstanding on the 30 November 2015. The response rate for UG (including reports returned via External Examiner Reporting System – EERS and offline) is 94%. Colleges will outline in their College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Report reasons for non-return of External Examiner Reports.

3.4 Reports at the allocation stage relate to reports that have not been allocated to an Academic Response Coordinator and therefore have not been circulated to the External Examiner. This can happen for a variety of reasons, for example, due to the External Examiner no longer being utilised.

4. Methodology of Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

4.1 The quantitative analysis undertaken gives information on the following:

- Number of comments by type across the University
- Proportion of issues by theme. An analysis of the proportion of suggestions and commendations by theme has proved not possible due to a recently

identified glitch with the Business Information Suite Infospace returning blank fields of data for particular sub-themes. This has been reported to Student Systems and a fix will be pursued

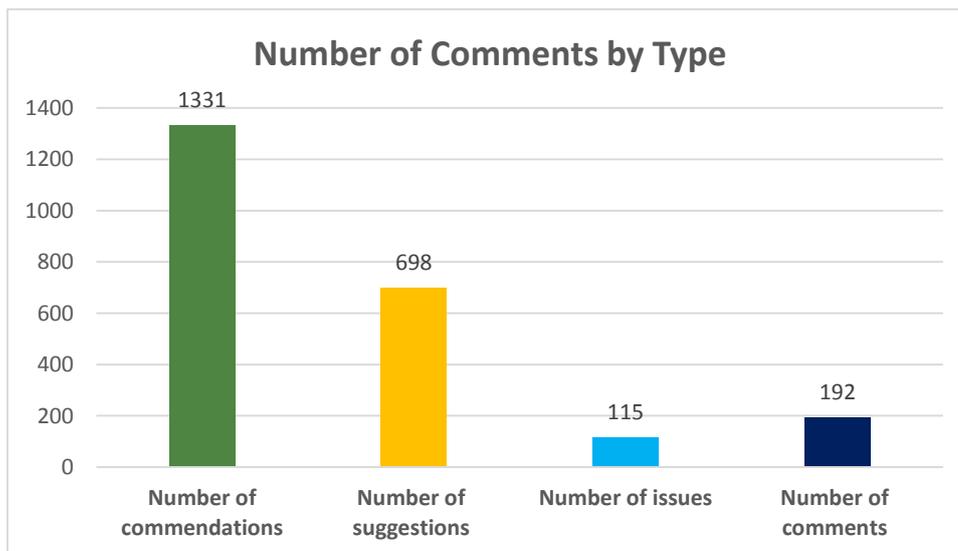
- Top-ten sub-themes broken down into the categories: issue, suggestion and commendation is provided.

4.2 The qualitative analysis focussed on the top-ten themes for each of the categories: issue, suggestion and commendation. The aim of this analysis was to identify key trends from issues and suggestions and to highlight good practice from the commendations. Trends were identified by grouping together similar comments made by External Examiners. Therefore, the volume of similar comments made by External Examiner determined the emerging theme. Issues, suggestions and commendations were generally evenly spread across UG and PGT External Examiner Reports. Responses were also analysed where they were available.

5. Quantitative Analysis

5.1 The figure below sets out a breakdown of the different types of comments that External Examiners made in External Examiner reports.

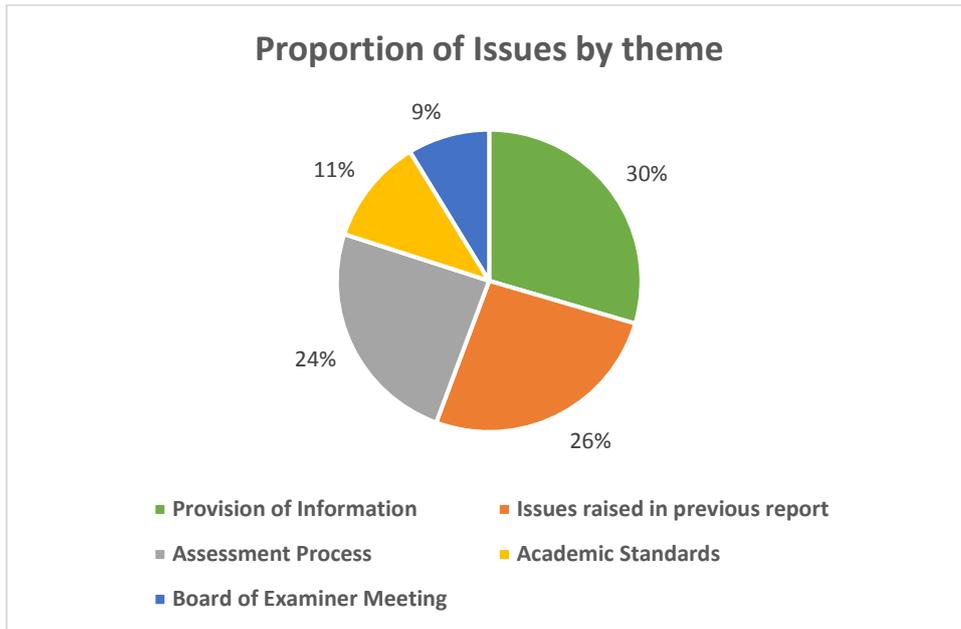
Figure 6: Number of comments by type across the University



5.2 There are a low number of issues across the University and a high number of commendations. External Examiners are also taking the opportunity to provide suggestions. Comments are provided for questions answered in relation to the Theme “Term of Office” which covers two sub-themes “Induction” and “Term of Office Overview”.

5.3 The figure below sets out the proportion of issues by theme:

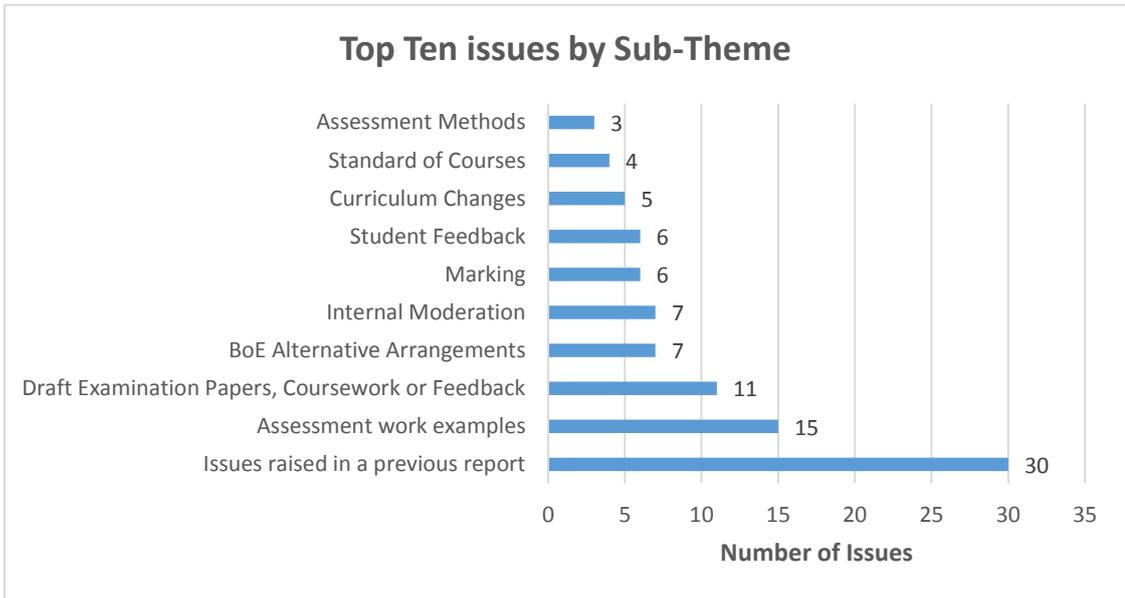
Figure 7: Proportion of issues by theme across the University



The largest proportion of issues are linked to the themes: "Provision of Information", "Issues raised in previous report" and "Assessment process".

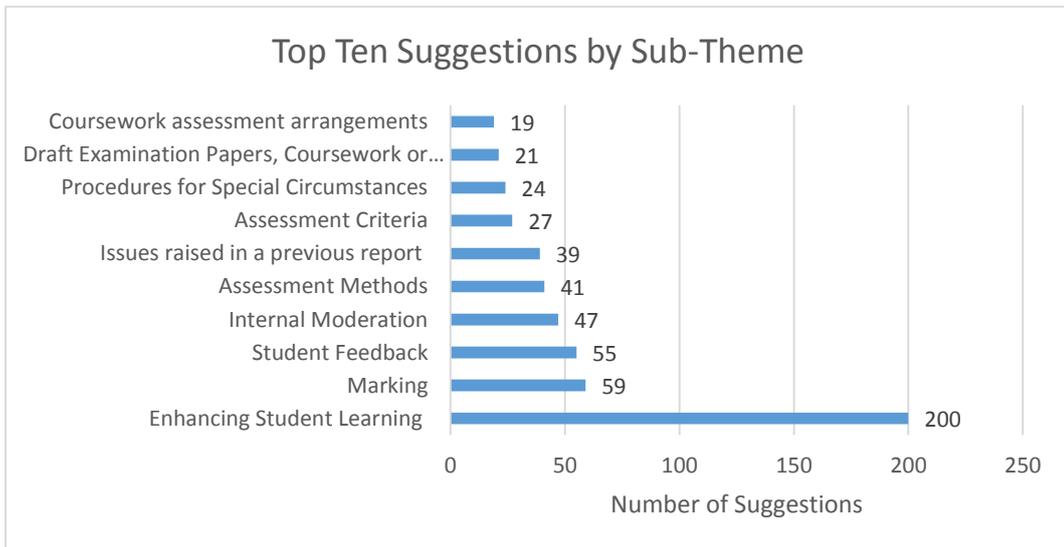
5.4 The top ten issues by sub-theme were as follows:

Figure 8: Top ten issues by sub-theme



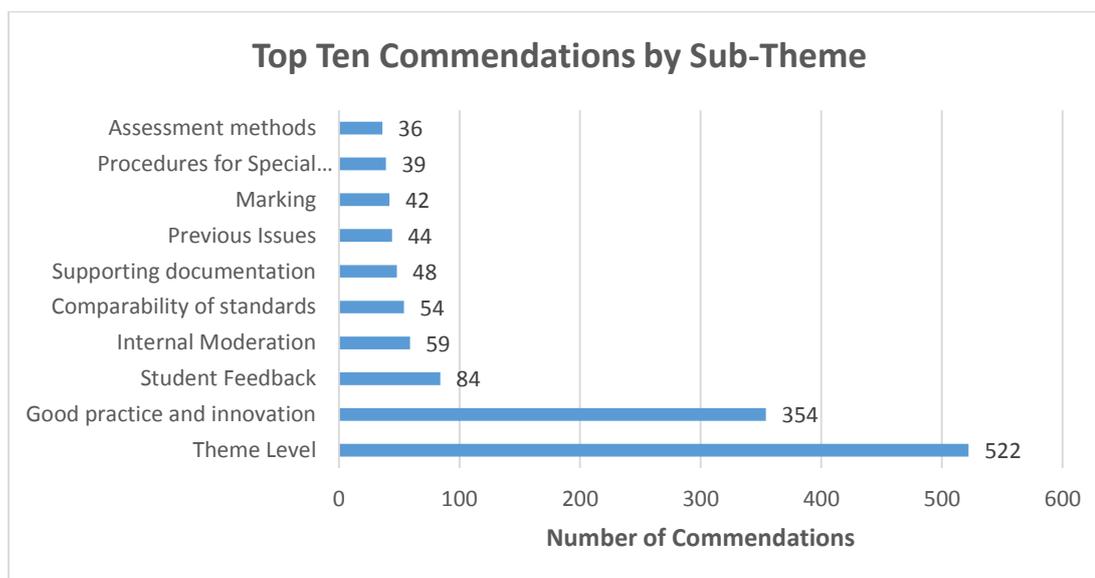
5.5 The numbers of suggestions by sub-theme are as follows:

Figure 9: Top ten suggestions by sub-theme



5.6 The number of commendations by sub-theme are as follows:

Figure 10: Top ten commendations by sub-theme



The sub-theme, “Theme Level” refers to commendations given by External Examiners at the end of each theme section. It is possible to identify the section to which the theme-level relates.

- 5.7 103 comments were recorded for the sub-theme “Induction” and 89 comments were recorded for the sub-theme “Term of Office Overview”.

6. Analysis of issues raised

- 6.1 Following an analysis of the top ten issues by theme a number of key trends were identified from the sub-themes: “Issues raised in a previous report”. This was based on the volume of comments made by External Examinees.
- 6.2 In relation to the theme “Issues Raised in Previous Report” one sub-theme “Previous Issues” yielded a number of themes of University wide significance.
- Some External Examiners felt that issues raised in previous reports had not been addressed or that the issues had not been formally responded to and therefore they could not comment whether action had been taken.
- 6.3 For the theme: “Provision of Information” it was possible to find trends in relation to two sub-themes:
- Sub-theme: “Assessed Work Examples”

The timeliness of sending assessed work to the External Examiner was an issue in several cases. In some circumstances, the External Examiner had not received any material for review. An analysis of the available responses indicated that changes to the schedule will be made to ensure there is sufficient time for the External Examiner to consider the assessed work and to feedback comments. Other responses indicated that the work of the students was made available to the External Examiner prior to the Board of Examiner meeting during their visit.

- Sub-Theme: “Draft examination papers, coursework or feedback”

Some External Examiners raised issues with the timeliness of receiving draft examination papers and coursework. An analysis of the available responses indicated that processes will be changed to ensure that External Examiners receive this material in good time.

- 6.4 In relation to the theme “Board of Examiner Meetings” one sub-theme “Alternative Assessment Arrangement” yielded one trend:
- Some External Examiners indicated that they were unable to attend the Board of Examiner Meeting and would have welcomed the opportunity to participate in the Board of Examiner meeting by Skype. There were minimal responses to the comments made by External Examiners. The majority of comments made were by PGT External Examiners and therefore this low response is to be expected.
- 6.5 In relation to the theme “Assessment Process” one sub-theme “Internal Moderation” yielded one trend:
- Some External Examiners were unclear of the internal moderation process for the courses for which they examined. Available responses made clear how the internal moderation processes operated and some responses clarified how double marking was utilised. Where double-marking is raised as an issue or suggestion, Academic Response Coordinators, may wish to remind External Examiner that Regulation 28 of the University’s Taught Assessment Regulations 2015/16 states that any single item of assessment which is equivalent to 40 credits or more must be double marked.

7. Analysis of suggestions

- 7.1 There were a lot of suggestions for the sub-theme “Enhancing Student Learning”. Many suggestions were discipline specific. However, an analysis of the suggestions yielded a number of themes:
- Again, there were suggestions to encourage a wide range of assessment methods. It was felt that this would assist with providing quality feedback to students. External Examiners provided suggestions such as group work, peer review, poster presentations, oral presentations.
 - Increase the variety of teaching methods that actively involve the learner. External Examiners provided suggestions such as workshops, audience response technology, and group-discussion.
 - Encouraged to review the quality and quantity of the feedback provided to students.
 - Some External Examiners suggested celebrating the completion of dissertations.

Available responses to the suggestions, were positive and areas indicated they would explore opportunities to take the suggestions forward.

- 7.2 There was an overlap between the comments made for the sub-themes “Marking” and “Internal Moderation”. A number of trends could be identified from the suggestions:
- External Examiners would like a clear audit trail on how a moderated mark is reached and how the moderation process took place.
 - External Examiners would like explanations to be provided on how a final mark is decided when the first and second marker differ on what mark should be awarded.
 - External Examiners encouraged the use of the full range of marks.

Available responses indicated that they would remind staff of the need to provide more detailed information regarding moderation and how a decision is reached where a first and second marker disagree on the mark to be awarded.

- 7.3 There were similar trends for the sub-theme “Student Feedback” as were identified for the sub-theme “Enhancing Student Learning”. External Examiners encouraged areas to review the quality and quantity of the feedback provided to students. External Examiners noted that there was a need for consistency in the quality of feedback between courses.
- 7.4 For the sub-theme “Assessment Methods”, one trend was identified:
- External Examiners encouraged the development of a wider range of assessment methods. Some External Examiners provided suggestions on how this could be achieved for the particular discipline. Available responses indicated that areas will continue to encourage broadening assessment methods.
- 7.5 In relation to the sub-theme “Issues raised in previous reports”, External Examiners in their first year of appointment noted that they could not answer N/A to this question. This matter will be raised at the next External Examiner Project Board meeting.
- 7.6 The following trends were identified from the suggestions made by External Examiners for the sub-theme “Assessment criteria/marketing schemes/degree classifications”
- The language in the feedback comments should correspond with that included in the assessment criteria. Responses have indicated that they will try to ensure greater consistency in the future.
 - The full range of marks should be utilised including both at the bottom and top end of the marking schemes. Some External Examiners noticed bunching around classification boundaries. Some External Examiners have recommended that staff training around the use of marking criteria would help to ensure consistency of approach. Responses have indicated that areas have taken this feedback on board and some responses outlined plans on how to take the matter forward.

- The grade descriptors used by the University should be reviewed and developed further. Responses have indicated that this is a matter for the University to take forward.

7.7 For the sub-theme “Draft examination papers, coursework or feedback”, External Examiners again raised the matter of timeliness of receiving draft papers and coursework. Available responses indicated that this matter would be reviewed.

8. Analysis of Commendations

8.1 An analysis of the top-ten commendations by sub-theme has found that the majority of commendations are area specific. This meant it was not possible to identify distinct trends of good practice. The commendations may prove useful for areas wishing to seek to improve their practice in a particular area. They can be accessed through the relevant Business Information (BI) Suite “Thematic Analysis” Infospace and BI Reports. This section of the report includes a sample of comments from across the Colleges in relation to the sub-theme “Theme Level” and “Good practice and innovation” as they had the highest volume of commendations.

8.2 External Examiners have the opportunity to highlight commendations of good practice at the end of each Theme, this is identified in the analysis as sub-theme “Theme List”. An analysis of the sub-theme “Theme Level” comments have shown that the highest volume of commendations related to the Themes “Academic Standards” and “Assessment Process”. The following sections will outline a sample of comments from these sub-themes.

8.3 Examples of commendations at UG level across the three Colleges for the sub-theme “Theme Level: Academic Standards” are as follows:

- “Overall, the courses provide a very good mix of practical and theoretical knowledge. Excellent quality of students' work (coursework and exams) can be seen”.
- “Staff clearly expect high standards from their students, and - overall - high standards of teaching, learning and assessment are being maintained in Edinburgh”.

8.4 Examples of commendations at UG level across the three Colleges for the sub-theme “Theme Level: Academic Standards” are as follows:

- “I have seen another very interesting selection of work and the programme content continues to offer an excellent range of topics taught to a very high standard. The dissertation is the culmination of learning for the students and is an opportunity for them to show what they have learnt over the whole of the programme - this synthesis of learning does come through in all the work, and especially in the strong dissertations. Students continued to achieve the outcomes required for the programme and the academic standards are exemplary”.
- “I thought this was a very well-thought out course with high academic standards. Some of the research projects were excellent. The idea of a poster presentation with marking is great as it is an opportunity for the student

to highlight the 'key findings' from their research. The core lectures provide a fantastic introduction to laboratory research”.

- “I was aware of the high reputation of this course before starting as External Examiner, but nevertheless I was pleasantly surprised at the high standard expected of the students - and which most achieve. The exams are not easy and it is a credit to the staff involved in teaching and to the students themselves, that most students achieve this level”.
- “The Academic Standards are excellent in comparison with other institutions I am aware of”.

8.5 In relation to the “Theme Level: Assessment Process” the following statements are examples of External Examiner commendations:

- “As per the last two years, the marking is of a very good standard. Overall, it conforms to the guidelines as given in the taught handbook. The marks are generally appropriate and the system of internal review is robust. The feedback on the scripts is constructive and accurately describes any failings, as well as potential measures to improve work. It is also clear and sufficiently detailed.”
- “I have been impressed by the assessment elements of the course from the outset including the two projects and the research plan for the second project presented in the style of a grant application”.
- “The school uses a good mix of assessment methods, with traditional examinations, on-line tests, laboratory assignments and computing exercises. Papers are set to a high standards and marking is fair and rigorous. All staff write a summary of feedback on examinations after marking and in some cases this feedback is shared with students to aid their understanding of topics and examination technique. This is good practice”.

8.6 An analysis of the Theme List commendations indicate that there is a substantial minority of commendations that would be best described as suggestions. Academic Response Coordinators must ensure that these are responded to effectively. Analysis cannot track responses made to these suggestions as commendations were not designed to have individual responses made to them. The Project Team will need to think of mechanisms to encourage External Examiners to use the Theme Level commendations effectively and use appropriate intervention when required.

8.7 For the sub-theme “Good practice and innovation” examples of commendations across the three Colleges are as follows:

- “Feedback comments were appropriate and supportive, offering a clear outline of areas students needed to address or excelled in. The inclusion of assessments examples which students were encouraged to mark was viewed as an excellent example of practice. The module content and assessment process encouraged students to make links between policy, theory and their on-going professional practice. I particularly liked the inclusion of a different

mode of assessment...”

- “I have commented favourably in previous years on various aspects of good practice in this degree programme. Here I would only like to highlight a new part of the course. Prior to undertaking the research component in the final year students are now required to produce a document outlining the important milestones in research in the area of their project. Delving into the literature to prepare the Milestones document makes the students aware of the history and development over time of an area of research. This is a very worthwhile activity. It also makes them think about their research project before turning up in the laboratory to start the project.”
- "The first year teaching is very interactive and this enables students to develop good conceptual understanding, and gives rapid feedback to staff, which can influence the way they teach a topic with immediate effect”.

9. Comments identified by Academic Response Coordinators as Institutional matters

- 9.1 Academic Response Coordinators have tools to identify whether an issue, suggestion or commendation is a School, College or Institutional matter. This was not used to any great extent. It therefore proved difficult to identify trends. The Project Team will consider ways to encourage Academic Response Coordinators to use this function.

10. Action taken at Institutional Level

- 10.1 The following actions have been taken at Institutional Level as a result of the analysis at Institution Level:
- When conducting the qualitative analysis of data for this report, two data breaches were identified and the procedure for highlighting a data protection breach within EERS was followed. Academic Services will contact the relevant schools and ask them to contact the External Examiners and advise the External Examiners of the need not to refer to students by name in the report or include information that would make them readily identifiable.
 - As a Task Group is underway in relation to Special Circumstances, comments made by External Examiners in relation to Special Circumstances have been passed to the Task Group administrator for information as the feedback may prove useful for the review.
 - While conducting the quantitative analysis, a comment made by an External Examiner indicated that Dropbox was being used as part of the assessment process. An email has been sent to the relevant College Key Contact asking them to follow up on how the Dropbox was being used in this instance. Regulation 30 of the Taught Assessment Regulations requires that assessed work, marks and grades be handled, transported, recorded and stored securely.

- An issue with questions that are left unanswered pulling blank fields into the Business Information Infospaces has been escalated to Student Systems. This issues has impacted on the accuracy of numbers of commendations and suggestions and the data had to be fixed in order for it to be accurate.

Anne Marie O'Mullane
Academic Services
02/12/2015

Appendix: External Examiner Report: Overview of Themes and Sub-Themes

In theme sections 1-5, questions are to be answered by selecting **Yes** or **No**. **N/A** may be selected for optional questions.

When selecting **Yes**, External Examiners may provide a commendation or suggestion in the box provided; however, this is not compulsory.

When selecting **No**, External Examiners must provide a reason in the box provided.

At the end of each theme section, External Examiners are invited to provide an overall commendation.

Theme sections 6-8: External Examiners are invited to provide comments, commendations or suggestions, in as much detail as possible.

Report

As outlined below, the report is divided into seven themes. Each section of the report contains a number of questions that have been created in order to cover a number of sub-themes

Although the course and programme report forms are very similar, any differences between the two reports are highlighted below.

Theme 1: Provision of Information	
Subtheme	Questions
Supporting documentation	Did you receive adequate and timely information about the programme(s) and/or courses, including supporting documentation?
Draft examination papers, coursework or feedback	Did you receive adequate and timely information about draft examination papers, coursework or feedback?
Assessed work examples	Did you receive adequate and timely information about assessed work examples, including borderline candidates and those awarded distinction?
Board of Examiner arrangements	Did you receive adequate and timely information about arrangements for meetings of Boards of Examiners?
Curriculum changes	Did you receive adequate and timely information about the introduction of new courses or other changes to the curriculum?
Theme 2: The Assessment Process	
Subtheme	Questions
Level of assessment	Was the level of assessment appropriate to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level of the programme(s) or courses?
Assessment methods	Were the assessment methods appropriate to the programme(s) or courses?
Internal moderation	Were the internal moderation procedures satisfactory?
Marking	Was the marking, including the process of arriving at the final marks, fair and consistent?
Student feedback	Was feedback provided to students helpful and appropriate?
Programme-level provision	Were the processes for assessment and determination of the award(s) fair and sound across the provision? (<i>Programme Report Only</i>)
Coursework assessment methods	Were satisfactory arrangements in place to enable you to fulfil your role in relation to the coursework element of the assessments?

Practical assessment arrangements	Were satisfactory arrangements in place for the conduct of practical assessments, including your participation, where appropriate?
Theme 3: Board of Examiners Meetings	
Subtheme	Questions
Operations of the Board of Examiners	Was the operation of the Board of Examiners carried out in accordance with the University's regulations and procedures?
Sub-theme: procedure of special circumstances/ borderline/ misconduct	Were procedures governing special circumstances, academic misconduct and borderline performance considered fairly and equitably, applying University regulations?
Board of Examiners decisions	Were you satisfied with the decisions of the Board of Examiners?
Board of Examiners alternative arrangements	If you were unable to attend the Board of Examiners meeting in person but participated by other means, were you satisfied that the arrangements allowed you to contribute fully?
Theme 4: Academic Standards	
Subtheme	Questions
Standard of course	Are the courses and its component parts consistent with the degree aims and objectives, relevant and up-to-date, and aligned with the relevant subject benchmark statement? <i>(Course Report Only)</i>
Standard of programme	Are the programme(s) and its/their component parts consistent with the degree aims and objectives, relevant and up-to-date, and aligned with the relevant subject benchmark statement? <i>(Programme Report Only)</i>
Consistent and appropriate standards	Are the standards set for the award(s) consistent and appropriate? <i>(Programme Report Only)</i>
Professional bodies	Are you satisfied the requirements of relevant professional bodies are being met?
Compatibility of standards	Were the assessment criteria, marking schemes and arrangements for degree classifications appropriately applied?
Consistent and appropriate standards	Are standards comparable to those of other institutions of which you have experience?
Theme 5: Issues raised in previous reports	
Subtheme	Questions
N/A	Have issues raised in previous external examiner reports been addressed, or are being addressed to your satisfaction?
Theme 6: Programme Development and Enhancement	
Subtheme	Questions
Good practice and innovation	Please describe or list good practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment that you have observed as External Examiner that would be valuable to draw to the attention of the wider University.
Enhancing student learning experience	Within the stated programme aims and outcomes, what recommendations, if any, would you make to enhance the student learning experience on the programme?
Theme 7: Term of Office	
Subtheme	Questions
Induction	If this is your first year in this appointment, do you consider you received an effective induction?

Term of office overview	If this is your last year of appointment, please provide an overview of your term of office, including recommendations, where relevant.
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The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

Cross-cutting themes from annual Complaints, Appeals, Discipline, and External Examiners Reports

Executive Summary

The paper provides an analysis of cross-cutting themes from annual complaints, appeals, discipline, and external examiners reports.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Themes addressed in the reviews and in the paper align with the University's Strategic Plan goal of Excellence in Education and the Strategic Plan strategic theme of Outstanding Student Experience and Equality and Widening Participation.

Action requested

For discussion. The Committee is asked to advise whether a thematic report of this nature should be continued.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

There are no communication or implementation actions required.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**
No.
- 2. Risk assessment**
No.
- 3. Equality and Diversity**
Yes.
- 4. Freedom of information**
Yes.

Key words

Complaints, Appeals, Discipline, Student Conduct, External Examiners

Originator of the paper

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy Officer
3 December 2015

Cross-cutting themes from annual Complaints, Appeals, Discipline, and External Examiners Reports

This is the first report which attempts to identify cross-cutting themes from the annual reports on complaints, appeals, discipline and themes from External Examiner reports. Some broad categories have been identified, but because of the very small number of upheld cases and the individual nature of the circumstances involved it is difficult to identify areas for further action.

The main cross-cutting theme of University wide significance to emerge from this year's reports is the continuing increase in the volume of student complaints and appeals, and an overall increase in the number of breaches of the Code of Student Conduct.

Complaints

Significant increase on the previous year (559 and counting compared to 392) mainly due to improved recognition and recording of complaints.

The SPSO contacted the office regarding 18 cases, many of which were appeal cases rather than complaints. Of the 8 complaints they reviewed, SPSO endorsed the University's handling in all cases.

Academic Appeals

Significant increase on the previous year (47.4% up – 143 in 2014/15 compared to 97 in 2013/14. Generally across the higher education sector appeal statistics are rising.

The number of appeals upheld in 2014/5 decreased to 5%, compared with 15% in the previous year (in terms of numbers, 2013/14 saw 14 appeals upheld, compared to 8 appeals in 2014/15, a drop of 5).

The main themes arising from academic appeals were dissertation and thesis supervision, special circumstances perceived improper conduct of board of examiners/irregular procedure, and concessions. Since only 8 appeals were upheld in 2014/15 it is very difficult to extract trends across these 3 areas.

Student Discipline

Around 40% of breaches were for offences related to academic misconduct (however, the total number of academic misconduct cases continues to involve a very small proportion of the student population - around 0.5% during 2014/15).

Breaches of the Code of Student Conduct increased to 465 in 2014/15, up from 383 the previous year. Within that, the number of students disciplined for academic misconduct fell compared to the previous year, with the number disciplined for plagiarism also falling.

External Examiners

The largest proportion of issues raised by External Examiners are linked to the themes:

- Provision of Information – timeliness of sending assessed work examples, draft examination papers, coursework or feedback.
- Issues raised in previous report - issues not addressed or no formal response.
- Assessment process – encouraging a wider range of assessment methods which may also assist with providing quality feedback to students.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

**University Quality Framework Review
CHSS Response**

Executive Summary

The paper describes the outcome of discussions within the College of Humanities and Social Science about possible revisions to the University Quality Framework.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the strategic goal "Excellence in Education", and the strategic theme "Outstanding Student Experience."

Action requested

For discussion.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The paper will feed into the University Quality Framework Review.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
Nil.
2. **Risk assessment**
Nil.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
Yes. The paper does not have any major equality impacts.
4. **Freedom of information**
Open.

Key words

Originator of the paper

*Robert Mason, Associate Dean (Quality Assurance), CHSS
30 November 2015*

University Quality Framework Review CHSS Response

Discussions of the University Quality Framework review within CHSS have involved the deans responsible for learning and teaching and members of the College Quality Assurance Committee; quality directors have explored these issues within their own school.

CHSS opinion is, in general, broadly supportive of the existing University Quality Framework, and CHSS colleagues have welcomed efforts to streamline QA processes and to maximize their impact – notably with regard to Teaching Programme Review and Postgraduate Programme Review. Current work on data, and on the dashboard concept for user-friendly presentation of data, carries great promise to achieve further simplification of QA processes in ways that maximize their value in enhancing learning and teaching. While prospective users welcome involvement in the development of the dashboard so far, there is a corresponding emphasis on the need for this involvement to continue as the project progresses.

According to CHSS discussions, there are nevertheless several areas in which further modification is worthy of consideration:

1. The role of annual programme-level monitoring within the Quality Framework deserves reflection as part of the review.
 2. Further reflection on the School Director of Quality role would be welcome, especially to consider whether it would be desirable to have an institutional view of the appropriate relationship between the School Director of Quality and school management structures.
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps and areas for further development in processes at school, college and institutional level. In particular, identify where there is potential duplication, where there is the potential for streamlining processes, and where there is the opportunity to drive impact.

Programme-level monitoring

- The focus of the QA process should move towards the programme level.
- Such a shift in emphasis should have implications for our approach to both course monitoring and periodic review.

The CHSS view is that annual programme-level monitoring is a missing element of the current framework. One strand of work within the CHSS Learning and Teaching Strategy 2013–2016 has involved the development of guidelines, together with a template, for light-touch monitoring, and it is the expectation that all CHSS schools now monitor UG programmes. (Many schools also conduct such monitoring at the PGT level, and more generally there is an aspiration that is widespread across the schools and within the college to ensure that UG and PG processes are as uniform as possible.) This work is underpinned by the belief not only that the Quality Code encourages institutions to develop such a

programme-level view within QA (and that the new role of programme external examiner supports this perspective), but also that such a view potentially carries more value in informing enhancement than either course monitoring or school reporting.

It is the CHSS recommendation that the University considers the formal incorporation of programme-level monitoring within the University Quality Framework. Care needs to be taken that the introduction of a different level of monitoring does not increase the burden of QA processes, and instead permits a reconceptualization of monitoring and review at other levels. The development of annual programme monitoring would ideally permit the streamlining of the annual School QAE Report and of TPR and PPR analytical reports.

Within the University Quality Framework currently, the annual School QAE Report is probably at the heart of the quality process. Changes to the report template have maximized the value of the process, and it is widely recognized within CHSS that School QAE Reports are important pieces of work that very successfully reflect on teaching and learning, and that generate insightful, evidence-based recommendations for enhancement. And yet their readership even within their own school tends to be weak, and it is the CHSS view that these reports do not add value in the way that they should. A key challenge for CHSS is that, for multi-discipline schools, school-level reporting is not strongly aligned with decision-making about learning/teaching issues (though there is, of course, strong alignment with the level at which resource-related decisions are made).

The CHSS vision, then, is that the development of programme-level monitoring should permit the reconceptualization of school-level reporting, streamlining the latter in order (a) to concentrate on the analysis of data with school-level implications only (relying on programme monitoring to analyse other elements of data), and (b) to constitute a school-level action plan for cross-programme enhancements. As a result, the current School QAE Reports would be replaced by a collection of programme reports, supplemented by a school-level analytical overview and action plan.

Reflection on the format of College QAE Reports would be valuable, too, to look for ways to achieve streamlining while maximising their value – to ensure that the impact of reports is proportionate to the work invested in them. In CHSS, care has been taken to ensure that recommendations are developed in close consultation with the deans responsible for learning and teaching, in order to achieve relevance and value. Yet in CHSS the report probably remains somewhat peripheral to the central enterprise of the college, not dissimilarly from the situation in many of the schools. It probably remains appropriate to analyse certain issues and trends at the college level, rather than at the school or programme level, but perhaps within the framework of a streamlined and simplified College QAE Report; thinking through the role and purpose of these reports could form a useful strand of the University Quality Framework review.

Modifications to the framework for TPRs and PPRs (such as the streamlining of recommendations, as well as the recent revisions of the standard remit) have had important implications in further enhancing the value of what is widely viewed in CHSS as the most impactful strand of QA processes. TPR and PPR recommendations achieve attention within

schools that QAE Report recommendations usually do not, and TPR and PPR preparations often prompt searching engagement with learning/teaching issues, including at the programme level that CHSS wishes to promote. The challenge remains that if TPRs and PPRs are impactful, they are also burdensome, according to most CHSS perspectives. While it is recognized that periodic review is inescapably, and rightly, a significant undertaking, a key question that CHSS would like to raise involves the possibility of exploring opportunities to streamline TPRs and PPRs further, especially with regard to the preparation of analytical reports. In particular, it is suggested that, in line with the CHSS interest in programme-level monitoring, consideration is given to placing the results of annual monitoring at the heart of the report produced for TPR and PPR teams. According to such a format, the analytical report would reflect on longer-term data, and it would raise strategic issues for exploration, but at its core would be the relevant series of annual reports.

Course monitoring

- Course monitoring is usually seen as a valuable strand of the QA process.
- It is important that we should maintain a light-touch approach to course monitoring, one that stresses first reflection and then the translation of reflection into recommended actions.

Discussion has taken place within CHSS about the value of course monitoring, a debate partly informed by the interest in moving the focus of QA processes to the programme level. Those directly involved in QA usually see course monitoring as the essential Quality cornerstone that fosters reflection among colleagues and that surfaces issues for attention and good practice to share. Nevertheless, there are also concerns that such reflection is not always the result of the course monitoring process. There is interest, too, in exploring the programme level as the starting point for monitoring, rather than the course level; this interest involves the view that courses are more valuably considered from the perspective of the programme (or programmes) to which they contribute.

The College has a template for course monitoring that captures the relevant data and that asks course organisers to identify briefly (a) key issues; (b) recommended actions; (c) practice to share. The format seeks to discourage lengthy reports while promoting enhancement-focused reflection and action. It is the CHSS hope that work on data will streamline course monitoring by avoiding the manual creation of course statistics that is currently necessary. In doing so, reflection on which pieces of data are most valuable would be welcome. Usually for CHSS courses (particularly at the Honours level), what is more revealing than the proportion of students achieving particular grades are averages and ranges of marks – especially when placed in comparative perspective. It is the CHSS suggestion, then, that the current focus on grade profiles is replaced by a focus on averages, together with the standard deviation, which can be compared across similar courses within the School and beyond (and over time).

Overall, then, the overall CHSS view is that the current approach to course monitoring works well, and that current University and College guidelines do not create significant reporting burdens on course organisers. The encouragement of brevity in course monitoring is likely to

have positive implications for its value and impact, as well as minimizing administrative burdens on colleagues.

The move towards a programme focus in monitoring might encourage a two-level approach to course monitoring. While course monitoring routinely should remain a light-touch process, individual programmes and schools may wish to scrutinize particular courses more closely – for example (a) new courses; (b) courses that are central to redevelopment taking place at the programme level; and (c) courses that data indicate as deserving further attention.

The QA timetable

- For the QA process to achieve as much value as possible, monitoring and reporting should take place at a time that facilitates speedy implementation of enhancements.
- Processes of course and programme modification should become more agile in order to be successfully, and speedily, responsive to QA findings.

Explorations in CHSS of programme monitoring have included discussions of the relationship between monitoring and enhancement-focused actions that result from monitoring. There are two challenges. First, it takes time to bring together the pieces of information that necessarily inform monitoring (external examiner reports in particular). Second, the processes associated with modifying courses and programmes are not always maximally agile. Within CHSS, CUGLAT has been taking forward work on simplifying procedures of course proposal and course modification, which should alleviate the second challenge. It nevertheless remains difficult to change a course in response to issues identified by the QA process, in time for the next academic session. Similar challenges are true of school- and college-level reporting; by the time reports are complete in semester 2, it is not always easy to implement actions for the following academic year.

If we understand QA as part of an ongoing process of reflection on learning/teaching issues, and then of taking actions as a result of this reflection, then the timetable of monitoring and reporting (which are the once-yearly snapshots of ongoing reflection) is not so problematic. Yet CHSS opinion is that there should be an effort to find ways to increase institutional capacity to be agile in changing courses and programmes, in response to issues emerging from the QA process.

- Identify where schools and colleges would benefit from further support at institutional level.

- The review of the University Quality Framework should include an assessment of the institutional setting of Quality Assurance – especially its relationships with management structures and with those responsible for leadership in learning and teaching.

A concern among many school directors of quality involves the institutional setting of Quality Assurance within schools. While the decentralised structure of the university usefully permits local variation to accommodate local needs, and while significant variety among schools (in

size, in the QA context of external accreditation, and so on) increases the desirability of such local variation, the significance of this concern suggests that university-level exploration of these issues could valuably support school-level work on Quality. The development of a role description for school directors of quality has been valuable, and its value suggests that further work in this area would be beneficial.

The concern has roots that are twofold. First, there is unevenness in the relationship across the schools in terms of the relationship between the quality director and the management group. In a small number of schools, the quality director is a member of the management group; in some schools, the quality director attends meetings of the management group from time to time, in order to discuss QA issues; in some schools, quality director do not have institutionalised, regularised access to this management level. Second, there is a parallel unevenness in the relationship between the quality director and learning/teaching directors.

As a result, some quality directors perceive QA as too marginal to the central learning/teaching enterprise within their school, believing that institutional connections are too weak to ensure that QA recommendations are embedded in actions and initiatives. One perspective on this challenge is to ask whether QA should no longer be conceptualised as a separate responsibility from the learning/teaching remit, and to wonder whether learning and teaching committees should formally take over QA roles. According to this conceptualisation, a deputy learning/teaching director would look after QA processes within the school, and perhaps a similar merger would take place between college committees. (Within CHSS, CQAC and CUGLAT have increasingly undertaken common projects and run common events, though the bulk of each committee's business remains quite distinctive.) Another perspective, by contrast, sees the institutional separateness of QA as a challenge but also as carrying value, in permitting a certain independence of approach and analysis, which strengthens a school's ability to identify issues for action.

- For schools: how do schools perceive their current role in the quality framework and those of the college and institution, and what should they be?

Schools are at the heart of the delivery of learning and teaching within the university; it's important that the quality framework remains strongly focused on this role in ensuring high standards in teaching, but also in fostering enhancement. Recent developments – in amending the quality report templates and in streamlining TPR and PPR remits, for example – have helped in this regard, while further initiatives of value-driven simplification would be welcome.

- For colleges: how do colleges perceive their current role in the quality framework, and those of schools and the institution, and what should they be?

The goal of CHSS within the quality framework is to support and to facilitate the work of schools – in identifying issues that require action across the college, in acting as a platform for the sharing of innovations and good ideas, and in looking for ways to minimise the

burdens but maximise the value of QA for schools. Across a diverse and complex set of schools, none of these goals is straightforward to pursue; the institution is seen as a key ally in taking forward this work (such as, recently, with external examiner reporting, and currently with the exploration of data issues).

Robert Mason, Associate Dean (Quality Assurance), CHSS

30 November 2015

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

**University Quality Framework Review
CMVM Response**

Executive Summary

The paper describes the outcome of discussions within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine about possible revisions to the University Quality Framework.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper aligns with the strategic goal "Excellence in Education", and the strategic theme "Outstanding Student Experience."

Action requested

For discussion.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The paper will feed into the University Quality Framework Review.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**
Nil.
- 2. Risk assessment**
Nil.
- 3. Equality and Diversity**
Yes. The paper does not have any major equality impacts.
- 4. Freedom of information**
Open.

Key words

Originator of the paper

Prof. Jeremy Bradshaw, Director of QA, CMVM,

1st December 2015.

University Quality Framework Review CMVM Response

At its meeting on 30th November 2015, the CMVM College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee discussed the University Quality Framework Review paper from SQAC.

The committee considered the current arrangements for reporting at course, programme, “school” and college levels and decided that, apart from some minor reallocations within the newly-restructured College, the current arrangements were satisfactory.

While much of the critical oversight of courses and programmes is carried out at “school”, and the annual reporting cycle provides ample opportunity for college oversight of the arrangements, it was agreed that the college-level synthesis of school reports provides a useful snapshot of college provision, and identifies and formally records good practice and areas for improvement and any necessary ensuing actions. For this reason, the College recommends retention of the school and college reports in any revised quality framework.

Since the majority of undergraduate programmes, and a few postgraduate programmes, of the College are externally accredited, the College would like to see closer co-operation between internal and external review processes. While it recognises that the accrediting agencies have different priorities to the University TRP process (an example given was the General Dental Council who prioritise the patient experience, while the University would prioritise the student experience), there is sufficient overlap to allow sharing of some of the review processes. For example, it would significantly reduce the work-load on academic and administrative staff if the reports prepared for external review could be re-used, with additional commentary where necessary, for internal reviews. The Committee noted that this has been allowed in the current TPR the RDSVS, and recommends that this should be formally written into the review method. The Committee further noted that this re-use of material would be most effective when an internal review closely follows the corresponding external review. Ideally, the internal review would follow soon (but not immediately) after the external review.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

**University Quality Framework Review
Workshop on theme of 'simplification'**

University Quality Framework Elements

- 1. Programme and course design, development, approval, changes, closure and management**
- 2. Annual monitoring and quality assurance**
 - course evaluation
 - programme monitoring: schools decide on how to do, with agreement from college committee. To include feedback from students on their courses, through a variety of means including surveys, course evaluation by staff, external examiners reports, PSRB reports, student performance data
 - school annual reporting to college
 - college annual reporting to university
 - QA, monitoring and reporting of PGR
 - student support service annual reporting to university
 - university annual reporting to SFC
 - periodic review of programmes of study through internal subject review and of student support services through student support service thematic review.
- 3. Student engagement**
 - Student representation + wider engagement
 - Student surveys: national, University, course and any other surveys conducted by schools but not required as part of current framework.
- 4. External examiners reports**
- 5. School, College and University quality committees; reporting relationships between these and with other school, college and university committees**
- 6. School, College and University roles – what value is added at each stage**
- 7. External reference points**
 - UK Quality Code
 - PSRB reports
 - ELIR
 - Scottish Enhancement Themes

University Quality Framework Consultation Questions

For all levels of provision, i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research:

1. Identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps and areas for further development in processes at school, college and institutional level. In particular, identify where there is potential duplication, where there is the potential for streamlining processes, and where there is the opportunity to drive impact.
2. Identify where schools and colleges would benefit from further support at institutional level.
3. For schools: how do schools perceive their current role in the quality framework and those of the college and institution, and what should they be?
4. For colleges: how do colleges perceive their current role in the quality framework, and those of schools and the institution, and what should they be?

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

ELIR Outcome

Executive Summary

The paper is the early draft outcome report of the University's 2015 ELIR. It sets out the overarching judgement and draft areas of positive practice and areas for development. The purpose of the draft outcome report is to give the institution an indication of the key themes from the ELIR at an early point. The finalised outcome report and a detailed technical report will be sent to the University in March 2016. The precise wording of the early draft report may be adjusted in the final version.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The themes in the report align with the University's strategic goal of Excellence in Education, and strategic theme of Outstanding Student Experience.

Action requested

For discussion.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Actions in response to the final report will be led by Assistant Principal Tina Harrison. One year after publication of the final report the University is required to report to the Quality Assurance Agency on actions taken.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

N/A at this stage.

2. Risk assessment

Failure to respond appropriately to the final report would constitute an institutional risk.

3. Equality and Diversity

N/A at this stage

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

ELIR, outcome report, ELIR outcome

Originator of the paper

Quality Assurance Agency, November 2015

Enhancement-led Institutional Review of the University of Edinburgh

Early draft Outcome Report

November 2015

About this report

This is an early draft of the Outcome Report of the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the University of Edinburgh.

This Outcome Report, when finalised, will be accompanied by a Technical Report detailing the ELIR team's findings under each of the set headings in the ELIR 3 method. The content of this early draft report may be adjusted as the ELIR team reflects on its findings to produce the Technical Report.

Drafts of both the Outcome and Technical Reports will be shared with the University, and the University will have the opportunity to comment on any matters of factual accuracy. The purpose of providing the early draft Outcome Report is to give an indication of the key themes arising from the ELIR one week after the visit has concluded.

Overarching judgement about the University of Edinburgh

The University of Edinburgh has **effective** arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. These arrangements are likely to continue to be effective in the future.

This is a positive judgement, which means the University has robust arrangements for securing academic standards and for enhancing the quality of the student experience.

Areas of positive practice

1 The ELIR has identified a number of areas of positive practice and these are summarised below.

2 **Strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching** - the University's current strategy to prioritise learning and teaching has been embedded across the institution and communicated effectively to staff. Continuing commitment to the strategy is demonstrated by the recent re-shaping of the senior management team to target strategic priority areas including assessment and feedback, academic support and researcher development. A clear focus on learning and teaching is further demonstrated by the University's development of a flexible CPD framework for learning and teaching, mapped

against the UK Professional Standards Framework. Linked to its aim of recognising learning and teaching achievement in performance management and promotion processes at all levels, the University has developed an agreed set of 'Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education'. These Exemplars provide an agreed reference point for recognising good practice and, as such, form a particularly effective development.

3 **On-line/distance learner student experience** - the University has a progressive and effective approach to online distance postgraduate taught programme development and delivery. There has been significant growth in student numbers in this area with students commenting positively on their experience, which they considered to be at least equivalent to that of on-campus students. The University's approach has been informed by the Distance Education Initiative, which provided resources to over 30 academic projects across 17 of the University's 22 schools, to develop programmes and support services.

4 **Internationalisation of the student learning experience** - the University has a strong commitment to internationalisation of the student experience, and has developed effective approaches to study abroad, on-line distance learning, and collaboration with international partners. Students described themselves as members of an international community, where opportunities to have an international experience were available both on campus and through a variety of flexible study abroad opportunities including the Principal's Go Abroad Fund, aimed at encouraging students to undertake short term international experiences.

5 **Peer-assisted learning** - the University has an extensive and growing number of Peer Assisted Learning Schemes for students that provide both a valued source of support for mentees and an effective opportunity for mentors to develop transferable skills.

6 **The Edinburgh Award** – the Edinburgh Award provides a flexible framework for all University of Edinburgh students to record, and be recognised for, achievements in a range of co- and extracurricular activities. Prompted in part by the development of the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), the award, which has grown significantly to reach students in all schools, helps to highlight and promote graduate attributes. Staff and students commented positively on the value of the award, which is supported by a range of academic and professional services staff.

7 **Institute for Academic Development** – the Institute for Academic Development continues to provide varied, flexible and tailored support to staff and students that underpins and supports strategic priorities and contributes to a culture of continuous enhancement of the student learning experience.

8 **The External Examiner Project** – although in the early stages of implementation at the time of the current ELIR, the External Examiner Project, which involves external examiners reporting online, is facilitating a more consistent and informed reflection on external examiner reports and responses to them at University, college and school level. The system has been designed by the University to ensure easy identification and reporting on issues arising at local and institutional level and to help share good practice by allowing staff at all levels easy access to external examiner comments.

9 **Quality monitoring and review for academic and support services** - the University continues to have comprehensive and detailed arrangements for the annual monitoring and periodic review of courses and programmes. It is evident that both academic and support staff are committed to the effective implementation of these arrangements. Annual monitoring and periodic review of student services helps to ensure that individual services make a full contribution to enhancement of the student learning experience, and

ensure that key themes, such as student mental health, are addressed in a cross-university context.

10 **Approach to the use of data to enhance the student learning experience** – the University is making good progress towards introducing an integrated approach to the use of data in decision making and performance monitoring in order to identify and implement enhancements to the student learning experience. Key examples include the student-initiated PATH Project, which is an effective tool for assisting students and Personal Tutors in planning programmes of study within an increasingly complex pattern of course choices; the developing Dashboard Project, which aims to enhance the provision of key student, programme and benchmarking data to support monitoring and review processes; and the roll-out of automated annual course monitoring to streamline the process in schools and maximise opportunities to effectively use outcomes derived from the data.

11 **Approach to self-evaluation and reflection** – the University makes effective use of a variety of self-evaluation methods and involves a range of internal and external stakeholders to reflect on institutional policy and practice in order to enhance the student learning experience. For example, using the University Internal Audit team to review academic areas such as personal tutoring, assessment feedback and academic collaboration, has provided additional independent insight for senior management into the effectiveness of these areas.

Areas for development

12 The University is asked to consider the areas summarised below.

13 **Postgraduate research student experience** - analyse the needs and experience of postgraduate research students at school, college and university level to ensure that they are effectively supported in the context of the University's plans to increase the research student numbers. The University should review the effectiveness and regularity of supervisor training and ensure that the University's Code of Practice is communicated effectively to all staff and research students and implemented consistently. The University should also make certain that postgraduate research students who teach are appropriately trained and supported for the role (including in the provision of assessment and feedback) and are made aware of the career development resources available through the Institute for Academic Development.

14 **Personal tutoring system** - build on the positive progress made in the implementation of the personal tutor system by ensuring that all personal tutors meet agreed expectations and that the experience of all students meets the minimum threshold identified by the University. There would be value in providing additional clarification of the aims of the personal tutor system for students, and signposting alternative avenues of student support, in order to align expectations of students and staff undertaking the personal tutor role.

15 **Student representation at school level** – building on the existing constructive relationship with Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), ensure there is more effective coordination of student representation at college and school level. The University should review processes for appointing students to college and school committees and provide more effective training and preparation for the roles, ensuring that staff also understand them and are able to support students to contribute effectively. There would be further benefit in the University considering the best ways of providing feedback to the wider student body about the action that is taken in response to matters raised through school and college level committees.

16 **Assessment and feedback** – implement feedback policy and practice in a clear and consistent manner across the University to ensure that all students receive timely, relevant and high quality feedback at key points during their programmes. Particular attention should be paid to the provision of formative feedback opportunities that help students progress. There would be benefit in working in partnership with students at school level to understand specific issues and to tailor feedback provision more closely to the needs of particular student groups. There would be value in the University reflecting on the positive experiences of assessment and feedback reported by online/distance learning students.

17 **Staff engagement in learning and teaching activity** - progress plans to develop an approach to staff workload allocation that recognises contribution to priority areas such as personal tutoring and assessment and feedback, and contribution to other enhancement projects. This is likely to promote greater transparency, consistency and understanding of the allocation model amongst staff, as well as ensuring that academic staff are able to support the University's strategic priorities for learning and teaching more effectively.

What happens next?

18 QAA Scotland will continue to engage with the University through the annual discussion visits which, amongst other matters, consider the ways in which the institution is responding to the ELIR outcomes. One year after publication of the Outcome and Technical reports, the University will be asked to provide a follow-up report, and to engage in a follow-up event with other institutions.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

**Guidance for Schools regarding communication between Student
Representatives and Students:
Feedback from Schools on implementation of guidance - Interim Report**

Executive Summary

The paper provides an interim report on the implementation of guidance for Schools regarding communication between Student Representatives and Students.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper is relevant to the University's strategic goal of Excellence in Education and strategic theme of Outstanding Student Experience.

Action requested

For discussion.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Any points for clarification with Schools and EUSA will be communicated and implemented prior to Semester 2.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

There are no immediate resource implications. Any updates to training materials will involve staff resource in EUSA.

2. Risk assessment

n/a

3. Equality and Diversity

The paper itself is not subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. An Equality Impact Assessment of the guidance was carried out.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is open.

Key words

Student representation, EUSA, email communication

Originator of the paper

Gillian Mackintosh
Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
3 December 2015

Guidance for Schools regarding communication between Student Representatives and Students

Feedback from Schools on implementation of guidance - Interim Report

Following the introduction of the new guidance in September, it was agreed that the committee would receive a further update at the end of the academic year. However we thought it would be useful to gather feedback from Schools at this point in the semester to provide an opportunity to gauge to what extent Schools feel the guidance is adding value, to highlight any practical issues and identify points for clarification ahead of semester 2.

Schools were asked the following questions:

- **how has the School approached the guidance:**

From the feedback received, 12 Schools responded, combination of UG & PG arrangements, it would appear that those Schools were already facilitating ways for student representatives to contact their classmates by providing m-lists, using discussion boards on the VLE, providing email mailing lists or setting up the ability on Learn for class representatives to email their class mates.

One of the deliverables of the task group was to allow communication between the representatives and the students autonomously from the institution. In one School, it was agreed with the School Council that class representatives would not be provided with a list of student contact details. The course administrator distributes any messages on their behalf by email or through Course Learn pages.

Another School has published the class representative's details on the school intranet and offering them the opt-out. The class representatives are not given the email address of the students in their class, the course secretary sends any messages via the Learn email facility.

One School wasn't aware of the guidance but they use m-lists anyway so will now share with the student representatives.

- **has the guidance created any practical issues:**

Despite training and detailed instructions on using mailing lists, one School noted a data protection issue. Following this, mailing lists are now moderated by support staff to ensure only relevant messages are being sent.

One School noted the issue of retention, in that the student representative will have the email addresses of those in their tutorial group for an unlimited time, however the School will ask them to delete from their records.

- **if sharing email addresses, have any students asked to opt-out?**

Only one student opted out

- **is the guidance adding value:**

The majority of Schools commented that they had no feel for whether the guidance has added value as the arrangement was standard practice. One School felt that it formalised

the process and ensures that representatives have access to the same methods of communication.

Some good practice includes uploading information on the School webpage and on Learn about sharing email addresses and opting out; providing students with advice on how to filter messages, using appropriate subject headings.

One School noted that they had received feedback via SSLCs that representatives have seen no difference in the amount of feedback that they had been able to gather as a result of the guidance. These representatives noted they would appreciate further training on how and when to use email correspondence.

Some Schools commented that they understand students are using alternative methods such as Facebook, Student rep blogs to communicate rather than the mailing lists.

The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies response: The guidance and discussion following on from the Distance Student Rep task group directly influenced a HEA project application to develop a hub space for all PGT students and staff to communicate. The aim was to provide the methods of support that students had indicated would be helpful throughout their time of study and beyond. The hub space is still in the pilot stage and the School is currently working with student and staff champions to raise awareness of the options available.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

**Internal Review Responses:
Feedback to Schools from Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

Executive Summary

The paper proposes the Committee's response to schools on their year-on/14 week responses to the recommendations in their Teaching and Postgraduate Programme reviews.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Themes addressed in the reviews and in the paper align with the University's Strategic Plan goal of Excellence in Education and the Strategic Plan strategic theme of Outstanding Student Experience and Equality and Widening Participation.

Action requested

For Approval.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Following approval by the Committee, comments will be transmitted to the schools and student support service for use in taking forward further actions.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

The paper does not request additional resource.

2. Risk assessment

Failure to maintain and enhance the quality of students' education and student experience would constitute an institutional risk.

3. Equality and Diversity

Equality Impact Assessment is not required. Internal review processes are subject to Equality Impact Assessment.

4. Freedom of information

Open.

Key words

TPR, PPR, Internal review

Originator of the paper

Dr Linda Bruce, Academic Policy Manager

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy Officer

3 December 2015

Internal Review Responses: Feedback to Schools from Senate Quality Assurance Committee

TPR of UG Business and Accounting – year on response

QAC thanks Business and Accounting for its response. The School is commended for having already actioned most of the recommendations from the TPR. The School is asked to provide an update in its School annual quality assurance and enhancement report to College of the integration of the Student Experience Strategy into the School's strategic plan. The School is also encouraged to provide updates in its School annual quality assurance and enhancement report on the review of the course organiser role and moves to clarify to the undergraduate student body the support provided by Personal Tutors and the Student Support Team respectively. The latter may inform wider action by the University to address this issue. The College is asked to highlight the School's updates on these specific areas in its annual report to QAC.

TPR of Informatics 2014/15 - 14 week response

QAC thanks Informatics for its response. Informatics is commended on the thoughtful and interesting engagement with the issues raised by the TPR team. There are clearly areas of work that will usefully inform initiatives elsewhere in the university such as the development of a workload allocation model to capture the significance of teaching and teaching-related roles, the work being done to devise and implement a model for the inclusion of teaching performance in annual review, and the development of the role of 'joint degree liaison'. Given the potential wider benefit of the School's work in these areas, the School is asked to provide an update in its School annual quality assurance and enhancement report to the College, with the College highlighting these specific areas in its annual report to QAC. The School is commended on the involvement of student representatives in its work on the timing of assessment, and is urged to ensure that the wider student body is engaged with the issue. Informatics is also commended on the holistic approach to its curriculum review which includes plans designed to help address the issue of timing of assessment. The School is also commended for its forward-looking efforts around software provision for students.

The School is encouraged to continue to progress recommendations, particularly those relating to Recommendations 9–12 which set a short timescale for completion. The School's consideration of the issue of widening staff engagement in teaching and allied academic activities is thoughtful [Recommendation 2] however the School is encouraged to progress the thrust of the recommendation, which was aimed at greater exposure of undergraduate and taught postgraduate students to research staff, and for staff, earlier access to potential research students, and to provide an update in the year-on report. The move to provide further learning opportunities for strong students within first-year courses is interesting and the School is encouraged to provide an update on how this works in practical terms (i.e. across a course with the same intended learning outcomes for all students) in the year on report. The School is encouraged to investigate the CPD framework offered by the Edinburgh Teaching Award in relation to the mentoring and training of postgraduate tutors.

PPR of Online Distance Learning Postgraduate Taught Programmes in CMVM – 14 week response

QAC thanks CMVM for its response.

CMVM is commended on the reintroduction of the PGT Directors and Administrators Fora and on the consultation being undertaken on student representation structures for OLDL programmes. CMVM is further commended on developments to the workload model in support of OLDL programme teams and for commencing a review of OLDL staff development, support and resourcing and on which the College is encouraged to provide a progress update in the year-on report. The Committee commends the work to implement regular channels of communication between the College IT team and programme teams which should also help to anticipate potential IT problems arising from the use of certain platforms (particularly in relation to Adobe Connect). CMVM is encouraged to provide an update in the year-on report regarding work (including timelines) of the College Learning and Teaching IT Committee to find effective means to engage with PGT OLDL programme teams. The development of a scheme to formally monitor return of feedback is commended as is the review of support for year 3 students which the College is encouraged to provide a progress update on in the year-on report (including the evidence/research used to ascertain the exact nature of the problem with year 3 students). The Committee welcomed the review of the use of external tutors and noted that robust processes were required to ensure that non-core faculty are appropriately qualified.

It is noted that the timescales for completion are given as 'ongoing' for the majority of recommendations. While appreciating that some actions by their nature will be ongoing, the College is encouraged to set deadlines for completion and to progress action as speedily as possible for further reporting in the year-on report. With regard to recommendation 14, identification of basic skills training requirements, the Committee notes the College's suggestion that basic courses in academic skills should be provided centrally and uptake monitored by programmes. However, the University's diverse student population may dictate that these basic skills courses are best provided at College level in order to accommodate the specific requirements of each area. The College is urged to progress the issue through discussion with the Institute for Academic Development in the first instance, and to report further in the year-on report. With regard to recommendation 4, Information Services to engage with programme teams to explore their needs, recommendation 12, review by programme teams of training and support for dissertation supervisors, recommendation 19, identification by the Student Induction Team of the needs of OLDL students, the Committee requests further updates in the year-on report. In the case of recommendation 12, this should clearly outline the training and support put in place.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

**Update on CMVM Committee structure
for learning and teaching matters**

Executive Summary

CMVM's committee structure for learning and teaching matters has been revised to reflect the College's new structure, which came into effect on 1st August 2015.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

We believe this revised structure will allow us to give better consideration to learning and teaching matters, so contributing to our strategic goal of excellence in education.

Action requested

This paper is provided to SQAC for information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The new structure was approved at the end of October and is now being rolled out within the College. It has been discussed at all relevant committees and meetings.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

There are very minor additional resource requirements in terms of servicing this new structure, but they can be met from within College administration.

2. Risk assessment

There is no additional risk in the implementation of this improved structure.

3. Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment is not thought to be required, as there are no implications for equality and diversity.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is open.

Key words

CMVM, committee structure, learning & teaching

Originator of the paper

Dr Sheila Lodge
Head of Academic Administration, CMVM
3 December 2015

Update on CMVM Committee structure for learning and teaching matters

Following the College restructuring in the summer of 2015 and the issuing of new University guidance about the role of School Boards of Study, it was agreed that the committees which deal with learning and teaching matters in MVM should be revised.

The main changes are:

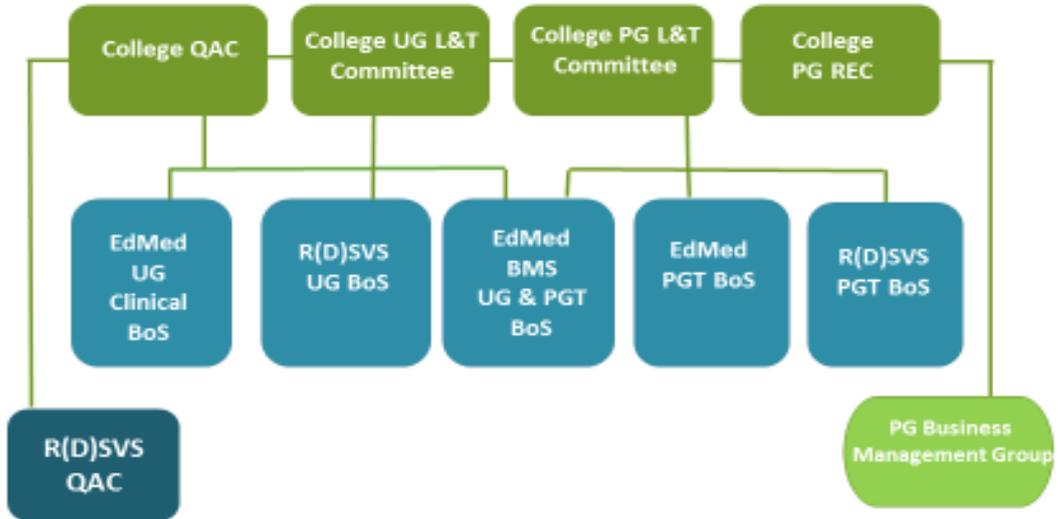
1. The previous MBChB Programme Committee is replaced with an **Edinburgh Medical School UG Clinical Board of Studies**, and its remit is widened to include consideration of OHS and Forensics programmes from the Deaneries of Clinical Sciences and Molecular, Genetic & Population Health Sciences respectively. (Since these Deaneries have no other UG provision, it would not be helpful to set up a full BoS for each.)
2. A new **Edinburgh Medical School PGT Board of Studies** is established, to deal with PGT matters from the Deaneries of Clinical Sciences and Molecular, Genetic & Population Health Sciences.
3. College Undergraduate Studies Executive is replaced with a **College UG Learning & Teaching Committee**.
4. The previous Quality Assurance Executive is replaced by a **College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee**.
5. The **PGT Learning & Teaching Committee** remit is enhanced.

It should be noted that the existing Biomedical Sciences (renamed Edinburgh Medical School Deanery of Biomedical Sciences) and R(D)SVS Boards of Study remain as they are.

This structure has been designed to clarify decision-making in learning and teaching, bring us into line with University requirements and avoid the creation of any new tier of committees.

The diagram below shows how communication will flow between these bodies. Revised ToR for each committee have been produced.

CMVM Revised Committee Structure for Learning & Teaching Matters



The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

10 December 2015

Internal Review Reports and Responses

Executive Summary

Internal Review Reports and Responses:

- PPR of Maths - year on response
- PPR/TPR of Law - year on response
- TPR of History - year on response

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper is relevant to the University's Strategic Goal of 'excellence in education' and the Strategic Theme of 'Outstanding student experience'.

Action requested

Committee Members will be allocated responses after the meeting and invited to comment. These comments will then be consolidated by the Convener and then circulated electronically to the Committee, in order to avoid undue delay to the subsequent dissemination to the relevant subject areas and support service. The comments will then be submitted to the next meeting at which point the Convenor may wish to highlight specific points for discussion.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

No.

2. Risk assessment

No.

3. Equality and Diversity

Yes.

4. Freedom of information

Yes.

Key words

TPR, PPR, Internal review

Originator of the paper

Gillian Mackintosh

Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

The University of Edinburgh
Internal Review

Year on response report on recommendation actions

PPR of: School of Mathematics

Date of Review: 6th & 7th November 2014

The subject area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. Please report on progress towards meeting each recommendation. Any urgent recommendation should be highlighted along with a deadline for response. If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
<p>1. <u>Admissions</u> “The panel recommends that the School reviews all aspects of their application process, including the role of research groups in the process. (1.7)” [This could include unconscious bias, equality and diversity, recruitment strategy and responsiveness of the process, which are separate recommendations].</p>	<p>June – August 2015</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting next academic year 2015-16, PhD admissions will be organised by themes. Each theme will be given a number of studentships that can be offered earlier in the year. The Graduate School will still keep an overall final admissions meeting to deal with the remaining studentships. • This new Admissions structure will provide a more responsive model. We intend that each theme will identify a person responsible for Admissions who will meet with the School Admissions Officer several times a year to make early offers that will allow us to compete for the best applicants. <p>More than 20 members of staff did take the unconscious bias training last year, including everyone with relevant School duties.</p> <p>The Equality and Diversity Committee in our School have successfully lobbied the Edinburgh Mathematical Society to work with the London Mathematical Society to bring their Unconscious Bias Training north. This is resulting in an open Training meeting at ICMS before Christmas this year. The School aims at everyone will have taken this training by this point. Absence of training will not allow a member of staff to participate in the Admissions process.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Admissions procedures running. • The Unconscious Bias Training at ICMS took place on October 14th. 	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i> Semester 1, 2015-16</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>Completed</p>

<p>2. <u>Funding and Scholarships</u> “The panel believe the School’s plans to establish overarching research themes to connect existing research groups will offer a strong basis for future funding applications and recommends that the School prioritises the further embedding of this strategic approach in relation to their PhD provision at all levels. (1.1)”</p>	<p>June 2015</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themes have been established • Admissions will be organised by themes, as mentioned in the Admissions item. <p>Following the successful model in our MIGSAA CDT, we intend to develop our PhD training by themes.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>Each theme has a person in charge of admissions and training. These are members of SPGC. Preliminary discussions concerning the Graduate School goals in training took place. Since the overall strategy of the School of Mathematics is to create the Maxwell Institute Graduate School together with HW, a new committee was called to achieve this aim. The remit of this committee includes discussions on training.</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing: admissions in place Semester 1 2015-16; training: continuous developments in each theme year-on-year</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
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<p>3. <u>PhD Model</u> “The panel recommends that the School is clear about the length of its PhD programmes, taking care to distinguish the period funding is provided for and the maximum time from start to submission (beyond which a formal extension would be required). (1.2)”</p>	<p>May 2015</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>The Graduate School has revised the content of all offer letters to remove the source for any confusion between the period of funding provided and the maximum time to submit. This point will be furthered stressed in the formal induction at the start of the academic year, the PGR handbook, a change in the supervisor report forms and the receipt of reminder letters at the start of the 4th year of study (both students and supervisors).</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>New PGR Handbook postponed till the start of the next academic year to appropriately describe all the new changes. Relevant Graduate School websites will also reflect the latter.</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>Completed except for PGR handbook: by August 2015</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>before start academic year 2016/17</p>
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<p>4. <u>SMSTC (Scottish Mathematical Sciences Training Centre)</u> that the School considers its future investment in SMSTC as part of a strategy not only to sustain SMSTC provision, but to develop its scope and effectiveness, enhance its relevance to the School's training needs, and to take advantage of the opportunities for collaborative working made possible by its institutional and technical infrastructures. (1.2)"</p>	<p>April 2015 - present</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>The School intends to develop the training provided in its PhD degrees, both academic and transferable skills. Academic training will balance broadening and deepening. The School will continue to use and develop the main SMSTC courses for broadening purposes, but intends to provide advanced SMSTC courses delivered through the different themes. This together with the introduction of the notion of mini-projects (a generic term to refer to reading groups or other research activities including some assessed component) will improve the deepening training. The School intends to include a transferable skills training component in our degrees. This will be organised alongside the milestones of the degrees. It is planned to develop the writing and presentation skills of our students, giving some mathematics perspective when necessary, plus some thematic training organised into outreach, impact and teaching components.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School is offering new advanced courses through SMSTC and MIGSAA. • The School has arranged tutorials, together with HW, for SMSTC courses. • See the comments in the "Career Development" section. 	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>First new transferable skills available in 2015/16. Ongoing progress in academic training</p> <p>1 Year Response Update first 2 completed, the last one ongoing</p>
<p>5. <u>Postgraduate Tutors</u> Suggest School concentrates on management of and communication with PG tutors.</p>	<p>January 2015 - present</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School has recently adopted a regime of informal feedback in Workshops (our name for tutorials) which is seen by the relevant tutor and the course organiser. As well as the feedback just mentioned, tutors have access to class ratings of tutorials and in their early tutoring they will be observed twice and get feedback on that. Annual monitoring procedures lead by the DoT and his team are in place. The School is intending from 2015-16 that training will be provided for PG tutors so that by the end of their third year they will receive the Edinburgh Teaching Award Level 1 which is accredited with the HEA and qualifies the holder as Associate Fellow. <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From September 2015 the School Administrator has been meeting individually with new PhD students to talk through specific aspects of tutoring (how work is allocated, the associated contractual arrangements, how tutoring needs to be recorded and paid for). These meetings have been supplemented by specific emails to provide appropriate links and background information. Feedback on these meetings has been positive 	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>Completed</p> <p>1 Year Response Update Completed</p>

<p>6. <u>Progression Monitoring</u> “The panel recommends the introduction of greater formal monitoring of progression. (2.2)”, possibly including in this some consideration of independent involvement in the annual monitoring process ie beyond the student’s supervisor.</p>	<p>April 2015 - present</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i> Building on the recently established notion of themes, we intend to ask the member of staff in each theme responsible for admissions and training to attend the first year progression meeting and to provide feedback in the annual student reports written in subsequent years. The School will encourage further theme members to attend since this can help to increase the interaction between current research groups. This may also free the Graduate School from doing this, though we may still discuss whether its presence is still required for the first year progression.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update Theme representatives in charge of training will attend 1st year progression meetings and provide feedback to students and supervisors.</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i> Semester 1 2015-16</p> <p>1 Year Response Update Completed</p>
<p>7. <u>PhD Adviser Role</u> “The panel found that not all students were aware of this and recommends the School consider how to get the best value from this role. (1.4)”</p>	<p>June 2015 - present</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i> The School values the PhD Adviser role highly. The School hopes the formal induction described in 1(b) helps new PhD students to meet the PhD Adviser and to learn about his/her remit. The Head of the Graduate School is to discuss with the PhD Adviser ways to increase the engagement of students with this role, keeping the volunteering nature of the current yearly organised individual meetings between students and the PhD Adviser.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update N/A</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i> Semester 1 2015-16</p> <p>1 Year Response Update Completed</p>

<p>8. <u>Career Development</u> “The panel recommends that the School adopts a proactive strategy to raising understanding of the importance of transferable skills training and of sector-wide initiatives such as the VITAE researcher development framework. (1.5)”</p>	<p>April 2015 - present</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>The School will follow two main actions :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In coordination with IAD, we will develop a set of afternoon workshops embedded in our training programmes to develop the writing and presentation skills of our students. These activities will be arranged and correlated with the main milestones of the different years of study in our programmes. 2. In collaboration with Career Services, the Graduate School will organise a set of activities : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. A yearly event where students that graduated in our School will explain our current students how they got their current jobs, which skills are required. These speakers will cover a wide range of professions. II. Career services will offer a 1.5 hour session for second year PhD students to reflect on the skills gained so far, discuss where their PhDs may take them, etc. III. Career services will offer a session to our third year PhD students to help them reflect on the progression of their career plans and it may include writing a CV or interview exercises. <p>The Graduate School will encourage the speakers in the yearly event to register in the UoE Alumni Network so that more math related professionals are available. Our goal is to increase the awareness in our PhD students on these issues and to provide ways of constructively helping them to find their way. We will encourage our graduated students to register in the Network.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workshop activities to be provided in collaboration with IAD will be a critical component of our career development activities. Because of the exciting decision to move towards a Maxwell Institute Graduate School we have slightly delayed taking forward the workshops so that we can seek a Maxwell view of training needs. Not only will this provide a broader (ie cross institutional) view of needs but it should also give opportunities for us to work the relevant parts of Heriot-Watt, as well as the UoE IAD, to help to realise our enhanced workshop and training provision. 	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>Ongoing conversations with IAD to finalise during Summer 2015</p> <p>Completed. The development of Alumni network will require several academic years.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
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<p>9. <u>Graduate School Secretary Role</u></p>	<p>May 2015</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>The Graduate School Secretary is herself conscious of this issue and to this end ensures that appropriate policy and procedure notes have been created and are easily available and that hard and soft copy filing systems are similarly accessible, and also of a high quality. Now that the larger team is in open plan accommodation there is support for Graduate School activities when the Graduate School Secretary is unavailable, although this is necessarily relatively limited. The School Administrator works closely with the Graduate School Administrator on scholarship and funding issues (this quite often leads into other related areas/activities) and this critical area is therefore more secure in terms of succession planning.</p> <p>With the new MIGSAA CDT, its associated administrator provides another member of staff who has familiarity with School/College/University systems and processes.</p> <p>More broadly the College PGR Administrator Forum provides a network of support and knowledge which could be used as necessary.</p> <p>As regards the impact of the CDT on the workload (and the complexity of the workload) of the Graduate School Administrator this is being kept under review.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update N/A</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i> Completed</p> <p>1 Year Response Update N/A</p>
<p>10. <u>Support for Supervisors</u></p>	<p>January 2015 - present</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>The School co-organised with IAD a supervisor briefing event last January. It is our intention to have such briefing yearly improving on its outline with the feedback received from previous years. Our final goal would be to have a yearly School Forum discussion where colleagues can share best practice, get an update on regulations, etc.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>Next supervisor briefing session in the School of Mathematics will take place on 10th December 2015.</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i> Completed and ongoing yearly</p> <p>1 Year Response Update Completed</p>

<p>11. <u>PGR Study Space</u></p>	<p>January 2015 - present</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UoE response via the Space Enhancement Management Group. "The recent SEMG-sponsored Teaching Space Management Pilot Scheme identified ways in which underused and poorly maintained general teaching space could be converted as new areas to support the student experience. With a successful programme during 2013/14 and 2014/15, and the recognition of further opportunities in this area, the ongoing responsibility for delivering this space-related benefit will fall within the strategic remit of the recently formed Teaching Accommodation Group. With a remit to ensure the University delivers the right amount of teaching space, of the right type, and of the best quality, there is an opportunity to support the student experience in both the quality of teaching space provided and conversion projects to turn surplus space into student learning and collaborative spaces. Working closely with both Schools and student body representatives will play an essential part in ensuring the successful delivery of teaching, learning, collaborative and study spaces to the student community." School's response. Students using the new space are satisfied. One of the extra new rooms will be offered to the new PhD students starting this fall. Given the importance to build a unique cohort including the MIGSAA students, there will be a new room for MIGSAA starting this fall. They are already involved in consultation. Any potential future developments on this direction will be announced to them with as much anticipation as circumstances allow. <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both rooms for new PhD students and MIGSAA students are functional. The School Administrator attended part of the 29 September meeting of REC to provide feedback on this Pilot Exercise. Prior to attending REC, feedback was collected from the PhD students in the two new rooms. Although some issues were raised as regards the placement of furniture the students were generally happy with the rooms, and pleased to be in them. During the summer College appointed external architects to undertake an options appraisal of JCMB. This is intended to identify building change projects which can be carried out over the short to medium term in order to enhance the experience of all building users. PhD student input to this process has been sought and a workshop involving the architects and PhD students took place on 28 October 2015. The discussions from this workshop will feed through into the final report and recommendations. 	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i> Completed and ongoing</p> <p>1 Year Response Update Completed & Ongoing</p>
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12. <u>External Examiner Reports</u>	February 2015	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>It was clarified with College that the School had always received parts I & II of the external examiner reports, and that it is standard procedure to receive part III only if there is a specific problem or comment raised by the external regarding the entire process. The School is satisfied with the current state of affairs.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>Completed</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>N/A</p>
13. <u>PGR QA Model (School level)</u>	January 2015 - present	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>The School agrees that equal priority should be given to both taught and research Quality Assurance (QA) models. The panel may have made this recommendation because the current School's Director of QA had only recently been appointed to oversee the PGR QA role at the time of the review. Previously the School had separated QA roles based on taught or research degrees until the University introduced the formal Director of QA position. The School believes this lack of experience on PGR QA matters may have given the impression the School valued our taught provision QA model more than the postgraduate research one, which is not the case.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>Completed</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>N/A</p>
14. Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review		<p><i>From 14 Week response</i></p> <p>The final report was sent to all PGR students, academic, and administrative staff after confirmation from the Internal Review Team that the report could be circulated ahead of publication on the University website.</p> <p>The main report commendations and recommendations were discussed at a School Forum (including PhD representatives). Preliminary strategy actions were already discussed in this meeting. Specific response actions were discussed at the School Postgraduate studies Committee (SPGC) in February 2015 (including PhD representatives). Following further discussions at the Strategy and Policy Academic Committee (SPAC) on Admissions and Training, I updated the PhD student representatives and consulted on their opinion by the end of April prior to the writing of this response. Both School responses will be sent to all PGR students, academic, and administrative staff. Further discussions with PhD students and academic members of staff will take place in coming months.</p> <p>1 Year Response Update</p> <p>As recommendations have been implemented, relevant updates have been sent to students and staff.</p>	

Internal Review

Year on response report on recommendation actions

TPR/PPR of: Law

Date of Review: 11/12/13 November 2014

The subject area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. Please report on progress towards meeting each recommendation. Any urgent recommendation should be highlighted along with a deadline for response. If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
<p>1. The review team recommends that the School begins to develop a more strategic approach to how staff time is managed</p>	<p>This will essentially continue to be a strategic objective for the School management team.</p>	<p>As reported in the 14 week feedback this is being taken forward through discussions across the School. The Head of School has started a programme of regular discussion meetings with Heads of Subject Areas and Grade 10 colleagues where managing workloads and organisational structure have been recurrent themes. At present there is no sense of a desire for major organisational change but as the discussions progress it has been possible to identify ways in which decision making and administrative loads can be streamlined and more focussed on key strategic issues. The School is also changing the remit of the Learning and Teaching Committee to ensure this takes on a more strategic oversight of teaching and assessment planning and provides an arena to review, discuss and recommend teaching practices with a key focus in the current year being class sizes and double streaming.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>2. The review team recommends that a review is undertaken by the School with a view to some standardisation, alignment with SCQF descriptors, CHSS grade descriptors, CHSS common marking schemes and an overall strategic approach to feedback for students.</p>	<p>Learning and Teaching Committee remit has been revised and strategies will be developed and presented to School during semester two 2015-16</p>	<p>The roll out of Learn has allowed us to fully explore some of the benefits and challenges in our previous approaches to presenting course information and to delivery of feedback. It is clear that there is substantial room for improvement and that this will involve a cultural change to encourage full engagement with PCIM and with programme reviews. The Learning and Teaching Committee will work with UGSC and PGTC to take this forward and there will be a dedicated Learning Technology Steering Group from January 2016 whose initial focus will be on the development of feedback templates in Learn. Work is being undertaken in conjunction with subject areas to improve course information at both Undergraduate and Postgraduate level.</p>	<p>Feedback templates April 2016, engagement with PCIM seeking improvements by August 2016.</p>

<p>3. The review team recommends that the sustainability of the exponential growth within online distance learning provision is taken under review by the School, especially in terms of staff workload.</p>	<p>Completed and new assessment approach approved for semester two</p>	<p>Two further developments can be reported since the 14-week response.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are trialling online MCQ-based summative assessments on two distance learning courses this year. One course has a series of five quizzes; the other has a single test mid-way through the course. Both are worth 20% of students' overall mark. The new assessments are designed to complement the overall assessment structure for the courses, and to provide sound feedback to students on their knowledge and understanding of session learning outcomes. Although development time is required upfront, the aim is that the assessments will significantly reduce course organiser's summative marking load during semester teaching time, since the marking and preparation of results is automated. Board of Studies approval has been given for similar assessments to be implemented on any other distance learning course, where beneficial. 2. As of semester 2, we are completely altering our approach to the assessment of online discussion. Instead of assessing students' participation across the entire module, which can involve the marking of tens of thousands of words per student, we will require students to submit a portfolio of selected posts (up to a maximum word count) along with a reflective piece explaining how the posts demonstrate the student's performance against the assessment criteria for participation. The resulting streamlining of workload will ensure a more manageable working experience for support tutors. At the same time, the change has been carefully designed to enable students to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their learning and knowledge across the module, and to encourage them to contribute actively and thoughtfully throughout. 	<p>Completed</p>
<p>4. The review team recommends that the School ensures that the feedback 'loop' is closed, and that students are provided with feedback from staff/student committees timeously.</p>	<p>New format SSLC rolled out October 2015</p>	<p>The Head of School and student representatives have developed a new approach to SSLC. Students are being encouraged to set the agendas for each meeting by holding a pre meeting to agree the agenda two weeks prior to SSLC thereby allowing wide consultation with the student body. The Head of School is also encouraging students to suggest agenda items for School meetings and it is hoped that students will begin to present on the outcomes of SSLC</p>	<p>Completed</p>

		discussions to School. This new approach will be reviewed at the end of 2015-16.	
5. The panel recommends that the School continues to assess the differing needs of Home/EU and overseas students with regards to learning and teaching pedagogies.	Measures in place for start of 2015-16 and ongoing review at end of each semester will be built into standard practice for routine audit	The School acknowledges that this is an area which requires careful thought and consideration at all levels, as the demands of teaching are very different. The Learning and Teaching Committee will be coordinating a consultation via UGSC and PGTC to discuss ways in which further support can be provided and teaching styles adapted, noting that teaching must be inclusive to all students. We are also developing more systematic guidance to students on how to engage fully with teaching (e.g. guidance on making the most of seminars). The School will continue to build on the induction extra programme which is specifically aimed at addressing the differing needs of international students.	Completed
6. The review team recommends that IT resources for PGR students be given some consideration by the School as a theme of reduced resources emerged from the PhD cohort.	Completed	As reported at 14 week response this matter has now been discussed and closed with the PGRC and we will be consulting them extensively on the design for the final phase of the refurbishment which includes the PhD offices.	Completed
7. The review team recommends that the School continues to closely monitor declining Postgraduate Diploma numbers and to take into account concerns around widening participation in this area.	Ongoing each year.	As predicted in the 14 week response numbers have indeed increased and there are currently 134 full time students on programme and three part time students which is 27 more than last session.	Completed
8. The review team recommends that the School further considers the digitisation of the student learning experience, especially in relation to e-submission of work as standard across the School, and the electronic provision of feedback to students.	Completed	Learn 9 was successfully rolled out in September 2015-16 and we are using the Turnitin function in Learn 9 for the electronic submission of assessments and delivery of feedback across both on campus and ODL courses. This has thrown up a number of issues such as the need to standardise and agree the way in which Turnitin reports are used and also a discussion about whether or not to give students access to originality reports. At the current time we are trialling the release of originality reports at the point of submission to students on ODL courses.	Completed
9. The review team recommends that the School considers introducing elements of FLAC, or similar learning experiences, into undergraduate provision.	Ongoing and new course being delivered in 2015-16	Freedom of Expression Honours course rolled out in partnership with several legal professionals and to date all going well.	Completed.

<p>10. The review team recommends the ongoing development of induction for PG tutors so that it becomes standard across the School.</p>	<p>New recruitment rolled out in July 2015, new training and induction delivered September 2015 and further enhancements planned for 2016-17.</p>	<p>The review of tutor training and development was taken to the School management team in October 2015 and recommendations included further improvements in training for teaching, greater involvement of Course Organisers in Tutor development, guidance and management and greater clarity in the role description for the Tutor Mentor. These enhancements will be delivered during semester two.</p>	<p>June 2016</p>
<p>11. The review team recommends that the new School policy for interviewing all PhD candidates (by Skype where necessary) continues to be supported.</p>	<p>Already in place</p>		<p>Completed</p>
<p>12. The review team recommends that the School review their digital communication strategy.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Changes have already been made to the staff intranet and discussion on the student communications continue with the primary focus now being to ensure effective communication during the refurbishment programme. A poster campaign to supplement the blog was launched on 23rd November and agreements have been reached with ISG to better coordinate and ensure students are better informed about study space options during the building works. Work is also being undertaken within the undergraduate team to implement short-term improvements to online communications via the website. Overall, a more comprehensive project to refine student communications via Learn and student-facing webpages will begin in semester 2.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review</p>	<p>The TPR/PPR reports were shared with all relevant School committees including UGSC and PGTC and also with the Student representatives of those committees and the Staff Student Liaison Committee. Views were actively sought from student office bearers by the Director of Teaching and have been fed into the School responses.</p>		

The University of Edinburgh
Internal Review

Year-on Report

TPR of: History

Date of Review: 6-7th November 2014

The subject area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for Action. Please report on progress towards meeting each recommendation. Any urgent recommendation should be highlighted along with a deadline for response. If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1. Review of Management Structures: splitting of line management from operational oversight of teaching provision; clarity of responsibility between School Director of Teaching and SA Head; appointment of SA QA Officer; devolution of roles	Summer prior to 2015-16 session	The SA has appointed two Directors of Teaching, one for pre-honours teaching, another for honours teaching. These have been in post since 1 August 2015.	Appointment of Teaching Directors by July 2015
2. Enhancement of professorial engagement and leadership.	Ongoing	An administrative working party including the DoPS has been formed which is in the process of reviewing administrative processes and governance structures within the History Subject Area. The DoPS has been drawing up a list of areas in which administrative processes and governance structures need be improved or more clearly defined.	Ongoing
4. Curriculum reform: reduction in number of UG courses; reduction in entry programmes; creation of skills training; compulsory courses; review of credit requirements.	Academic session 2015-16 for introduction in 2016-17	A proposal for a reformed pre-honours curriculum has now been adopted by the Subject Area for implementation at the start of the 2016-17 session. The new curriculum has a reduced number of UG courses at pre-honours and includes skills training courses in both pre-honours years. The new curriculum has also been designed to be compatible with the requirements of the University's pathways project. The new courses are currently being proposed to the SHCA Board of Studies.	Start of 2016-7 session
5. Development of allocation system in consultation with other areas of university.	2016-17	As before, the development of an automated allocations system across 38 degree programmes with varying curricula requirements indicates that any move to a new system would best follow the re-shaping of the curriculum, which may include a simplifying of programme structures.	2016-17

6. Review of Assessment.	From 2015-16	Assessment at pre-honours level has been reviewed as part of the design of new courses for the reformed curriculum. The reform of teaching at Honours level is being discussed. This will include a review of assessment at Honours level.	From 2015-16
7. Review of Personal Tutoring allocations.	2015-16	The matter of allocations of personal tutees continues to be under review, with the aim of achieving an equitable distribution across the Subject Area. It is clear that the main way to reduce the average tutoring load would be to change leave arrangements.	Ongoing
8. Consideration of ways to improve communications with students and staff.	First semester 2015-16	SSLC meetings continue to take place regularly and frequently. Students are also being given the opportunity to meet candidates for a new professorial appointment and discuss teaching-related matters with them. Within the SA itself, more regular staff meetings have enabled more focused sessions to develop. The HoSA is also in regular contact with the School DoPS to discuss possible improvements to administrative processes and communication within the School and SA.	2015-16
9. Review of policy towards extensions.	Sem 2 of 2015-16	The intention is that extensions, currently handled at pre- honours level by individual course organisers and at honours by the SA Head, be overseen by the respective Teaching Directors to ensure consistency of treatment. The transition to this new system is ongoing.	Sem 2, 2015-16
10. Equality and Diversity review	September 2015	The SA is participating fully in an Equality and Diversity review being undertaken across the School as it seeks a Bronze Gender Equality Charter Mark. Opportunities to discuss matters affecting equality and diversity also exist at SA level, with discussion headed by the School's Equality and Diversity Officer.	Application for GEM accreditation due later in 2015
11. Review of postgraduate tutor arrangements to achieve consistency of support and assessment	2015-16	A PG Tutor School Liaison Committee has been formed, which will meet for the first time on 9 December 2015. In the session 2014-15, the School introduced more Formal training courses for its postgraduates as they prepared for taking on tutoring roles. In all pre-honours courses, the assessment practices of tutors are subject to review by the course organiser to ensure consistency of marking across groups. Assessment of other aspects of tutoring will be facilitated by the introduction of a new on-line course questionnaire, which will specify the tutor to whose group the responses relates. The Director of Teaching (pre-honours) will have responsibility for managing the processes surrounding the recruitment, training, and support given to PG tutors for the 2016-17 session	2016-17

12. Incorporation of peer observation of teaching	session 2015-16	The Directors of Teaching are taking forward plans to incorporate peer observation of teaching within the SA.	Incorporation of peer observation of teaching
The review team recommends that the School supports the subject area management restructuring.		A revised pre-honours curriculum has been adopted for 16/17. The Director of Teaching (pre-honours) is co-ordinating the implementation of the new curriculum.	
Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	The initial findings of the TPR were communicated to student reps at the SSLC meeting immediately following. That forum will also provide a means of keeping students apprised of progress on the various points being raised, enabling them also to feed in to the process on matters directly affecting them, such as curriculum reform.		