Section 1: Areas for reflection

1. Progress with actions planned in last year’s report and any recommendations from last year’s Senate Quality Assurance Committee sub group meeting

This Report will comment on progress from the previous School QA report (Aug 2017) and also from comments at College and Senatus QA Committees relating to Moray House School of Education.

The action points from the previous QA Report were as follows;

1. Support was requested from College to address concerns raised in programme reports on marketing, admissions processes, and recruitment. This was achieved, as College supported and funded the appointment of a specialist School-embedded marketing Officer (Aiko Greig). This has already resulted in very positive meetings with School Senior Management Team and other staff. Programme Directors are reporting improvements in marketing and applications, particularly for PGT programmes. It is too early to gauge whether this will lead to an increase in student numbers, but the School is very grateful to College for supporting this essential and important post.

2. The PGT Research Methods Course Coordinator was to meet with the Director of Postgraduate Studies and the Director of QAE to review the course structures and content and examine if it is possible to make them more applicable to students from a wide range of programmes. This meeting occurred and there has been significant restructuring of the PGT research methods for the next academic session. One of the Research Methods Courses (RM3) has now been closed and the content has been incorporated into revised 60-credit (previously 50 credit) dissertation courses. This should make this content more relevant for students on different programmes and has been welcomed by PGT programme directors.

3. The School senior management team was to discuss non-standard entry with CAHSS Admissions to examine if there were particular strategies or actions that could be put in place to allow for non-standard entry to some of the School's professional programmes. Unfortunately, this meeting did not occur. It was planned to address this in Semester 2, but the School SMT were extremely busy dealing with the UCU Industrial action (see below). This item will be cascaded into next year, as several Programme Directors mentioned it again this year. There has already been some progress on this
matter in the BA Community Education programme as the School and UG Admissions have agreed that Year 1 of this programme will now be at Level 7, which should help non-standard learners become better accustomed to the demands of university study.

4. The School Director of QA was to have carried out an analysis of degree classifications and to have met all UG Programme Directors to discuss contributing factors to the variations observed. A report was to be produced for the School QAE Committee in AY 2017-2018. This was partly achieved. Student systems were very helpful with the provision of programme-specific classification data. This was used in informal discussions with Programme Directors, and it was discussed at length at the School QAE Committee in October 2017. There was considerable inter-programme variation, with 1st class degree percentages being from 5% (BEd Physical Education) to 30% (BSc Applied Sport Science). It was the final year of the two programmes with the biggest cohorts (BEd Physical Education and BEd Primary Education) - these have now moved to the MA Physical Education and the MA Primary Education ‘with’ degrees and careful scrutiny will be needed to examine whether the change in programmes has affected classification distribution. There has been considerable improvement in the percentage of first class degrees in several programmes over the last 5 years (e.g. Applied Sport Science increasing from 15% to 30% and Sport and Recreation Management increasing from 14% to 25%) and this has been the result of several initiatives such as innovative feedback/feedback forward, a wide range of modes of assessment and encouragement to staff to use the higher mark bands (A1 and A2) in social science assessments.

As in 2016-2017 the Deputy Head of School (Dr S. Coleman) had to act as the School Director of QAE for the academic session 2017-2018 in addition to his normal duties. However, it is pleasurable to note that a DQAE (Deborah Holt) has been recruited from 1st August 2018, and she has been shadowing the role since her appointment in May 2018. This should enable some of the planned QAE initiatives (which had to be postponed due to lack of staff time) to be carried out in the next three years.

• 2. What has worked well throughout the year?

1. There was considerable concern last year over the Personal Tutor system, with low scores in the NSS and PTES for these areas as well as some student and staff dissatisfaction. Both Senior Personal Tutors retired at the end of Academic Year 2016-17 and new appointees (Dr K. Wright and Dr B. Murphy) were in place for the 2017-18 session. They have been very proactive in raising standards of personal tutoring by initiatives such as improved briefings and handbooks for new and established PTs, ‘escalation point’ flowcharts (to help PTs track and implement appropriate measures for UG students with engagement issues), SPT ‘drop-in sessions for staff and/or students, and collecting instances of good practice. These initiatives have been very well-received by staff and students and the PT score on the NSS has improved by 17% (from 59 to 76%, well above the UoE average of 63%) although there was a slight drop in the PTES (81% to 76%, still above the UoE average of 72%). Continued implementation of these actions will help maintain the improvement of the PT system in the School.

2. External Examiner’s reports were generally very positive about structure and content of courses and programmes, and also marking and moderation of assessments. Some External Examiners commended programmes on the range and
types of assessments, but several did mention that more innovative assessments (such as blogs and peer assessment) could be introduced.

3. The effects of the UCU industrial action were severe, with most programmes being affected by lost hours of teaching or supervision and in some cases, delays in marking. The School Senior Management Team (including Dr Coleman in his DHoS and DQAE roles) met every week during the action to identify affected courses, review student complaints and plan mitigating strategies. Within programmes, changes in assessment dates or modes were also made to allow for delayed or missed lecture/seminar content. Finally, Boards of Examiners used the University guidance to ensure student final grades were not affected by the industrial action. External Examiners reported that all procedures to mitigate the effects were carried out fairly and that students obtained the correct grades and awards. At undergraduate level this has been confirmed by only two (unsuccessful) academic appeals, despite the expectation from Academic Services that there would be a significant increase this session (final postgraduate BoEs are not until October). At the time of writing, it appears that the planning and implementation of mitigating strategies meant that students' attainment was minimally affected, and all involved staff should be congratulated for this. However, the low scores and large decreases in NSS and PTS scores may be the main casualty of the industrial action.

- 3. Any new/innovative developments throughout the year worth sharing more widely?

1. In order to increase applications for PGT programmes, several programme teams have introduced innovative marketing activities such as video profiles of current students, online chat rooms, and live chat with a Chinese-speaking translator specifically for the Chinese market. Other programmes use staff CLPL time to work with schools directly to try to increase entrant numbers (MSc Inclusive Education, MSc TESOL, MSc Physical Activity for Health)

2. One programme is trialling the use of a three-minute podcast as an alternative form of assessment. (MSc Outdoor Environmental and Sustainability programmes)

3. Another programme runs class meetings that are an hour long and that aim to develop students' mastery as well as enabling them to participate fully in the University life. One of these sessions introduced notions of interculturality, inclusion and social justice and was very well received. These sessions are highly successful and will be further developed in the following academic session. (MSc Language Teaching)

4. On another programme the PD holds a welcome back lecture at the beginning of each semester in which she shares feedback and issues raised by students the previous semester and outlines the action or response to the feedback. (MA Primary Education 'with' programmes).

5. On one programme students carried out dissertation projects with national stakeholder organisations in the public sector (e.g., Scottish Police Authority, and the NHS). This develops and maintains strong partnership working and generates applied performance enhancement interventions which positively impact on service delivery. (MSc Performance Psychology)
4. Any areas identified requiring attention/further development?

1. Analysis of the National Student Survey (NSS) scores revealed a significant decrease in overall satisfaction for Moray House School of Education from 85% to 72%. Whilst the NSS satisfaction score for the whole university also decreased, the Moray House decrease was over twice as large. Several programmes performed very well (MA Physical Education at 93% and BA Childhood Practice at 92%) but most programmes scored poorly. Deeper examination of programme results indicated that there were different issues for the various programmes; whilst all programmes scored low on management and organization, Applied Sport Science scored low in teaching and feedback, Sport and Recreation management had deficits in teaching and student voice and the MA Primary ‘with’ degrees had problems with assessment and feedback.

The overall satisfaction scores for the three MA Primary "with" programmes were very low (54%, 50%, 43%) and this mainly seemed attributable to low scores in management and organization. This was the first graduating cohort in these programmes and almost all the free text comments mentioned feeling like “guinea pigs” and criticized the programme organization. It should be noted that Moray House (supported by College and University) took a decision to close the programmes from 2017 as part of portfolio realignment and so they are now sunsetting. It is recognised that the timing of this decision towards the end of their time on the programme may have contributed towards the students’ feelings.

2. PTES scores also showed a decrease in overall satisfaction from 88% to 82%, although this is still above the University's score of 79%. Similar to the Moray House NSS scores, the biggest decrease was in organization and management, followed by skills development. It should be noted that there was a very reduced response rate (31%) which was well below the NSS response rate (59%), possibly suggesting lack of PG survey engagement.

Summarizing the above survey results, it would appear that although the School SMT and teaching staff did everything they could to ameliorate the effects of the industrial action, student satisfaction was definitely affected (although only a few free-text NSS comments explicitly mentioned the action). This is indicated by particularly low scores on organization and management and on timely feedback - two areas affected by the action. However, this should not lead to complacency - there may be significant underlying factors that have decreased the student satisfaction with the School’s programmes. This is particularly true of the two large new UG programmes (MA Physical Education and MA Primary 'with'), although, interestingly, when comparing their BEd predecessors, the former has increased satisfaction (75% to 93%) whereas the latter has decreased (86% to 49% weighted average). Given the programmes share 140 credits of Educational Studies courses, it is important to ascertain whence the differences in satisfaction arise.

Section 2: Actions planned and requested

1. Actions planned by the School based on the analysis in section 1.

1. The existing NSS action group led by the Director of Undergraduate Studies will carry out a deeper analysis of the NSS results. Programme Directors and teams will be asked to write a response to the NSS suggesting methods of recovering and/or improving student satisfaction for 2018-2019. A similar action group will be established for the PTES (and 2017 PRES) by the Graduate School.
2. The DQA will work with MA Primary PD and other relevant colleagues to plan for sensitive sunsetting of the Primary suite of programmes that ensures high standards of teaching and support and that seeks to make sure students do not 'feel abandoned'. This will include exploring the causes for the previously mentioned difference in satisfaction between the MA Primary and MA PE programmes which share courses.

3. A full analysis of degree classifications in 2017-18 will be carried out. The Director of Quality will meet with programme directors to discuss variation (as planned for last year). This will also be discussed (and further actions planned) at School QA Committee meetings.

4. The School SMT discussions on non-standard entry with CAHSS Admissions planned for last year will go ahead in Semester 1 of 2018/19. These will explore potential strategies or actions that can be put in place to allow for non-standard entry to some of the School's professional programmes.

5. The School should seek to continue to monitor the new MSc Transformative Learning and Teaching professional programme, particularly evaluating its novel and innovative assessments to see if these could be used by other programmes.

- 2. Actions requested of the College based on the analysis in section 1

1. Last year College was to assess 'best practice' for those Schools or Subject areas that perform consistently well on the NSS/PTES/PRES to identify which strategies and actions may enhance the student experience. The continuation of 'Sharing Best Practice' seminars along with resources such as 'Teaching Matters' is very important in this regard.

Therefore, the School would like to request funding from College to enable managers (such as Directors of UG, PG and QAE, Programme Directors) to visit institutions that have similar structure and programmes but that consistently perform well on NSS/PTES/PRES. Despite many staff operating as External Examiners at other institutions, nowadays this often only involves reading student work and attending exam boards, rather than meeting students and staff for discussion on learning and teaching matters. Learning from other institutions would be a valuable experience for staff and could also be shared at School and College Learning and Teaching forums.

2. College was asked to review the fee structure particularly for PGT programmes as many UK competitor institutions have significantly lower PGT fees (particularly for Home/EU students). Whilst in some cases University of Edinburgh programmes have 'value added' features that are not available elsewhere, this is not true of all subject areas.

This was briefly informally raised by School SMT with the Head of College and College Registrar, who were not in favour of differential fees. It is therefore requested that be raised formally at College Planning and Resources Committee to see if other Schools have similar views. Moray House also has PGT programmes that are run largely for practising teachers and the recruitment for these are done by local authority partners. It should be possible to lower the fee for these programmes as no costs are incurred at School or University level on marketing, recruitment or selection.
3. Actions requested of the University based on the analysis in section 1

1. Last year the School QAE report noted that there were concerns about the state and availability of teaching rooms. This is still an issue, with many Programme Directors reporting that rooms were not large enough, not suitable (especially for students with vision or hearing impairment) or in a very poor state of repair (repeated water leaks on the top floor of Charteris Land and St Leonards Land). There is also the problem that the School does not have an up-to-date lecture theatre for more than 100 students, so large cohorts (e.g. MSc Research Methods or ITE Educational Studies courses) must be taught in Paterson’s Land G1 which, despite having improved seating and projection facilities in the last few years, is effectively a large (untiered) school hall complete with raised stage. Students paying overseas fees sometimes comment that these are not the facilities they expected to experience in a world-leading university such as Edinburgh. Additionally, the new timetabling system has also caused further problems in obtaining suitable rooms at busy periods. These problems may have contributed to the poor scores in the Management and Organisation category in this year’s NSS and PTES.

Therefore the School requests that the University considers in its Estates Strategy the necessity to provide teaching accommodation appropriate to a world-leading institution.