

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

**Meeting to be held on Thursday 19 April 2017
at 2pm in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House**

A G E N D A

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9 February 2017** QAC 16/17 5A
2. **Matters Arising**
 - a) Convenor's Business
 - b) Senate Committee Planning – electronic consultation
 - c) Student Disability Committee – reporting change
- For Discussion**
3. Undergraduate Degree Classification Analysis To Follow
4. Student Support Services:
 - a) Annual Review 2015-16 QAC 16/17 5B
 - b) Thematic Review 2017-18 QAC 16/17 5C
5. Interim oversight of Initial Teacher Education provision QAC 16/17 5D
- For Information and Formal Business**
6. Enhancement-led Institutional Review - follow-up report QAC 16/17 5E
7. Review of Quality Code Mapping Documents QAC 16/17 5F
8. External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy – minor amendments QAC 16/17 5G
9. Arrangements for consulting with stakeholders on learning, teaching and student experience matters QAC 16/17 5H
10. Internal Review:
 - a) Themes 2015/16 – update QAC 16/17 5I
 - b) Report Responses QAC 16/17 5J
11. **Any Other Business**
12. **Date of Next Meeting:**
Thursday 25 May 2017 at 2pm in the Hodgson Room, Weir Building, the King's Buildings

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9 February 2017
at 2pm in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House**

Present:

Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (Convener)
Professor Jeremy Bradshaw	Director of Quality Assurance, CMVM, Assistant Principal Researcher Development
Brian Connolly	Secretary to Senatus Quality Assurance Committee
Patrick Garratt	Vice President (Academic Affairs), Students' Association
Brian Green	Deputy Associate Principal (Learning & Teaching), University of Strathclyde
Nichola Kett	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Dr Sheila Lodge	CMVM Head of Academic Administration (Co-opted Member)
Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka	Students' Association Academic Engagement Co-ordinator
Dr Robert Mason	Associate Dean (Quality Assurance) College of Humanities and Social Science
Dr Gordon McDougall	Dean (Quality Assurance), College of Science and Engineering
Dr Claire Phillips	School Representative (Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Dr Inger Seiferheld	School Representative (Business School), College of Humanities and Social Science
Dr Jon Turner	Director, Institute for Academic Development

Apologies:

Dr Huw Lewis	Senior Lecturer School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures (Co-opted Member)
Barry Neilson	Director, Student Systems (Co-opted Member)
Dr Claire Phillips	School Representative (Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Tom Ward

Director, Academic Services

1. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8 December 2016

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2. Matters Arising

Convenor's Business

– **Membership**

The Committee welcomed Mr Brian Green, Deputy Associate Principal (Learning & Teaching) University of Strathclyde, as the new external member.

It was noted that CSE had yet to agree a replacement School rep (ideally with PGR expertise).

For Discussion

3. Annual College Quality Reports 2015-2016

The Committee received and noted the annual College Quality Reports for 2015-16. It was noted that, using the new template, the reports had decreased in length from 133 pages last year to 11 pages this year and that the new shorter length of reports had removed the need for a separate readers process.

The following was noted:

3.1 College of Art, Humanities and Social Science

The following themes were noted for Committee forward planning:

Online Assessment and Feedback

The College Dean of Quality noted that overall the rollout of online assessment and feedback had been successful and feedback was being collated in order to improve future user experience. Members noted concern that the loss of the physical hand-in process would remove a number of personal contact points between students and School office support staff which may have served a useful but ostensibly hidden function as an informal welfare monitoring mechanism. It was noted that this initiative was in response to student demand – instead we must look at more meaningful meetings with PTs rather than casual hand-in contact.

Action: College Dean of Quality CAHSS to monitor next round of School reports to ensure that the move to online assessment and feedback does not have a detrimental effect on student interaction with support staff (i.e. due to the loss of physical hand-in/personal contact points with School offices).

Estates and Resourcing

The College reported that Schools in CAHSS had found the availability of high-quality teaching space and social spaces for students (as well as increasing class sizes) challenging particularly in regard to the University's planned growth in student numbers.

Action: Committee Secretary to inform Space Management Group of College concerns.

Personal Tutor system

The College reported that Schools in CAHSS were looking for greater clarity and guidance in regard to support available to PTs/STs and for more opportunities to share practice.

Action: Committee Secretary to inform Assistant Principal Academic Support of College comments.

Data Analysis

The College reported that the UG student dashboards have been well received but that Schools would also like PGT data to be made available on the dashboard as soon as possible.

Action: Committee Secretary to inform the Director of Student Systems of College comments.

3.2 College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

The following themes were noted for Committee forward planning:

Service Excellence

The College reported that the pace of institutional change continued to be challenging, especially for administrative staff, and developments arising from the Service Excellence Programme would need to be phased in carefully.

Action: Committee Secretary to inform the Service Excellence team leader of College concerns.

Timetabling

The College requested that building work (and associated disruption caused by noise pollution, reduced accessibility etc.) be given greater attention when allocating teaching spaces. It was also requested that the Timetabling Unit be asked to ensure that sequential classes are based in as close proximity as possible, and not scheduled in relatively distant locations or entirely different campuses.

Action: Committee Secretary to inform the Head of the Timetabling Unit of College concerns.

External Examiners

The College reported that the External Examiner system seemed to be conflating information provided by Examiners responsible for multiple courses, and the system was not reflecting the way in which data was collected and how responses were made. It was suggested that it

would be helpful if course organisers could input information directly rather than through the response co-ordinator.

Action: Committee Secretary to inform Director of Student Systems of College concerns.

Training

The College reported that scoping work was underway on the use of external tutors on OLDL Masters programmes. It was noted that there appeared to be significant opportunities for improving training to deliver more consistent teaching and assessment.

Special Circumstances

The College reported that the Special Circumstances regulations were currently difficult to apply to online and distance learning (ODL) programmes, especially when students' professional commitments impinge on their ability to meet deadlines.

Action: Committee Secretary to inform the Convenor of CSPC of College concerns.

Action: College Dean of Quality CMVM to ensure that the 2016-17 report includes an update regarding work to develop better communication with NHS staff who are involved in delivery of UG and PGT programmes.

3.3 College of Science and Engineering

The College reported that the delay in the release of the Student Dashboard had hampered College level analysis of performance data.

The following themes were noted for Committee forward planning:

- Support further development of University Systems functionality for the administration and support of Postgraduate Research students.
- Review of the use of University supported media (LEARN, captured, Top Hat etc.) within teaching with a view to identifying examples of best practice.
- Development of analytical methods to optimise the use of data gathering student surveys in particular data from the 'decliner survey' and the 'pre-arrival' survey to support recruitment.

4. Enhancement-led Institutional Review Theme Lead Reports

The Committee received and discussed reports from the theme leads responsible for taking forward the areas for development from the University's Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) held in Semester 1 2015. The Convenor outlined specific comments in relation to each report and it was agreed that the comments would be fed back to each theme lead.

The Committee noted that these reports would provide the basis for the year on report to be submitted to the Quality Assurance Agency for Scotland in March 2017.

Action: Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team (Academic Services) to feedback comments to the theme leads.

Action: Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team (Academic Services) to draft year on report and submit to Committee for approval via email.

5. Thematic Review of Student Support

The Committee received and noted a paper from the Students' Association proposing the theme of the next review of student support across the University.

The Committee welcomed the proposal that the next review address the ways in which student parents and carers are supported on an academic and pastoral level. It was noted that a thematic review focused on underserved students such as student parents and carers would ensure that the University's strategic overview of under-represented student groups would align with the framework and guidelines proposed by NUS Scotland, and the Students' Association. This was particularly important given that support for this group was not currently centralised, but rather delegated to individual schools and support services across the University.

The Convenor noted that the sub-committee on the review of Student Support Services Quality Assurance Framework (SSSQAF) had made a similar recommendation (in its report submitted to the Committee in April 2016) as part of a broader theme encompassing all underserved student groups across the University (i.e. students as parents; students as carers; commuting students; part-time students; WP students).

It was also agreed that, as much as possible, the thematic review should avoid duplication of work in relation to a number of other projects and initiatives underway or planned which would address many similar issues (i.e. work looking at support arrangements for online distance learning students and the PT system, and support for study abroad students).

The Committee **agreed in principle** that underserved students would be the focus of next year's thematic review. A more detailed paper, scoping out the parameters for the review on the basis of evidence relating to the size of some of the groups and the extent of any issues (i.e. from surveys or performance data), would be submitted to the Committee before the end of this session.

6. External Examiners

The Committee received and noted the following papers:

a) Postgraduate Taught Reports: Thematic Analysis 2015/16

The Committee received and noted analysis data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS).

b) Reporting System: Report Totals 2015/16

The Committee received and noted the total number of undergraduate and postgraduate taught reports submitted via the External Examiner Reporting System for academic year 2015/16.

c) Reporting Project: Feedback Survey Results

The Committee received and noted analysis of the post-project feedback survey to evaluate the project outputs, implementation and impact.

d) University Level Items – Update

The Committee received and noted an update on actions.

It was suggested that, in line with the Committee's strategic remit, the reports should contain higher level analysis and practical recommendations in order to be more useful for decision making and action setting in relation to identifying what the Committee could take forward.

Action: Academic Services to pass on comments on the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) to Student Systems for consideration and response.

7. Mid-year update on progress against QAC priorities

The Committee received and noted the mid-year update on progress towards the Committee's priorities agreed at Senate in June 2016.

For Information and Formal Business

8. Deletion of the Central Register of Accreditations by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and the Quality Assurance Reporting Process document

The Committee approved the deletion.

9. Collaborative Provision: Memoranda of Agreement – Closed Paper

The Committee received and noted the update on institutions with which Memoranda of Agreement were signed or renewed in 2016.

10. Internal Review

The Committee received and noted the following papers:

a) University Remit and Reflective Report template for Internal Periodic Review 2017/18

The Committee approved that revised and streamlined versions of the University remit and Analytical report template for Internal Reviews following the recent University Quality Framework review.

b) Reports

The Committee approved the commendations and recommendations. It was noted that the full reports had been published on the committee wiki.

11. Any Other Business

The Committee noted that the 5th Annual Gearing Up Conference would be held on Thursday 9 March 2017 at the University of Edinburgh's John McIntyre Conference Centre at Pollock Halls of Residence.

12. Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday 19 April 2017 at 2pm in Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

19 April 2017

Sub-Committee Report on the Annual Review of Student Support Services

Executive Summary

The paper is the report from the sub-committee on the review of Student Support Service annual Quality Assurance (QA) reports. It contains recommendations for each of the services reviewed and discussion on alignment of the annual review process with the University's developing Service Expectation Review process. The report has been streamlined from 32 pages in last year's paper to 16 pages this year.

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

The paper is relevant to the University's strategic objective of Leadership in Learning.

Action requested

For discussion and approval.

The Quality Assurance Committee is also invited to:

1. Comment on how reviews are conducted to inform discussion with Deputy Secretary Student Experience (section 3.2 and 3.6).
2. Approve areas for consideration for Student Support Service next QA reports (section 5).

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Sub-committee commendations and areas for further consideration were communicated to Student Support Services via the annual reporting process and meetings. Responsibility for implementation of recommendations is identified within the reports and will be monitored in the following year's annual reporting process.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
Resource implications are implicit in existing planning by support services, although the paper recognises that there may be resource implications for Services in engaging underserved student groups (see section 2.1).
2. **Risk assessment**
No risk assessment is included in the paper as it reports on recommendations made to services. Services carry out risk assessment on areas for development.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
Equality impact is considered by services as part of the annual reporting process. The paper also contains a report of discussion on underserved student groups in section 2.1 which may also impact on protected characteristics groups.
4. **Freedom of information**
The paper can be included in **open** business.

Originator of the paper

Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
7 April 2017

Sub-Committee Report on the Annual Review of Student Support Services

1. Introduction

In a change to the process for 2015/16 annual reporting, a readers' meeting was held on 18 January 2017 where themes arising from the service reports were identified for discussion at full sub-committee on 25 January 2017. The themes' discussions are reported in section 2. The full sub-committee also discussed proposals for reviewing the reporting process, which is included in section 3.

The University Health Service (UHS) is not required to produce a formal report, but sent a representative to the meeting on 25 January.

2. Themes Arising from Service Reports

Themes identified at the readers' meeting were discussed at the full sub-committee meeting. During discussion, two recommendations for other parts of the University were identified and have been transmitted to the area of responsibility indicated. Updates will be requested in the next reporting cycle.

Key points that emerged from group discussions:

2.1 Underserved student groups

This refers to those groups of students that either have lower levels of use of services on offer and/or face barriers to access. Some examples of underserved student groups identified in reports include: widening participation, online distance learning, postgraduate research, male and Chinese. Discussion highlighted:

- Access to (demographic) data would be helpful in reflecting on service provision (and meaningful for communications)
Action: Student Systems to make available and advise student support services on how to access
- It is clear that services benefit all students, and enhancements to reach underserved groups could also benefit all students.
- However, there are recognised risks for resources of increased usage by engaging underserved groups.

2.2 Building communities

Community is essential to a sense of belonging to the University, contributing to well-being and an enhanced student experience.

- Vet School is an example of good practice in building community. Discussion recognised the challenge of the scattered estate and identified awareness of poorly served communities (for example King's Buildings, Little France).

- Consistency of welcome (customer service) and building staff community first were highlighted as important factors in helping to build communities.

2.3 Health and well-being

Student mental health is an increasing concern for the University and features in a number of service reports including Counselling, Disability, Accommodation Services and Advice Place. As well as directly supporting students with mental health issues via the Student Counselling Service, there is potentially more we can do across a range of services to create an environment that actively promotes and supports students to achieve positive health and well-being.

- The Mental Health Strategy was identified as the University responding in a joined up way.
- The role of Peer Support systems and joining up services and (effectively) communicating what is available are important factors.
- Building (student) resilience through focusing on flourishing, for example encouraging increased physical activity across the University community for the positive effect on well-being.
- Discussion identified the University's role in developing space with consideration of well-being and moving from a process-oriented to a student-centred approach would support health and well-being.

Action: Comments to be passed to Space Strategy Group for consideration

2.4 Working within scarce resources

In a context of increased demand on services and constrained budgets, we need to consider how to make most effective use of the resources available in ways that do not compromise the student experience.

- Discussion identified digital transformation improvements and noted the tension between these and student expectations of face to face delivery of some services.
- Discussion identified the potential for learning from each other (several services had examples of streamlining and efficiency), external sources and other sectors on making systems more effective.
- A focus on University priorities in service delivery was identified as a key factor, for example planning space and developing estate. It was noted that the Service Expectation Review and Service Excellence Programme may address this.

2.5 Communicating with students

Given the size of the student body and the complexity of the University structure, communicating with students and ensuring students know where to go to access the information they need can be a challenge.

- Discussion identified that lack of co-ordination is leading to mixed messages and tone.
- Understanding the audience, using correct communication channels and developing communications strategies was an important factor, but this could lead to less autonomy.

- It was considered important to identify who does communication and who owns the domain of communication.
- Discussion identified the importance of academic staff ability to see the student communication interface. There is no “system” holistic view of student interactions.
- The potential for a student hub would also be a good opportunity for student communication.

3. Proposals for Future Student Support Service Reviews

3.1 Context

As Student Support Services annual review is part of the wider Quality Assurance Framework, it will be referred to as Student Support Services annual review, rather than Student Support Services Quality Assurance Framework (SSSQAF), in future. Proposals for the process for thematic reviews will be submitted to the May QAC meeting.

The UK Quality Code Chapter B5 states:

“The role of support services (guidance, learning resources, ICT, recruitment, student finance and so on) is of crucial importance in determining the overall quality of the student learning experience. Institutions should satisfy themselves that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to facilitate periodic review of the strategic and operational role of support services in relation to their impact on the student experience. It is a matter for each institution to determine how this should be done. Whatever the approach taken, the evidence should be such as to allow the institution to reflect on the contribution of support services to the ‘quality culture’ within the institution, the ways in which the services engage with students to monitor and improve the quality of services, and the ways in which the services promote high quality learning and continuous quality enhancement.

3.2 Proposed changes to Student Support Services included in reviews

Following recent Student Experience Services restructuring Student Administration is now part of the Directorate of Student Systems and Administration and it is proposed that a single report is provided by the Director of Student Systems and Administration in future.

It is also proposed that the Estates Department are included in future reviews to recognise the impact their services have on the student experience and the services they provide to support students.

Action for QAC

The Quality Assurance Committee is invited to confirm whether a single report should be submitted by Student Systems and Administration and whether the Estates Department should be included in future reviews.

3.3 Comments from sub-committee meeting, 25 January 2017

There was a general desire for reports to work for multiple purposes, allowing for reporting and reflection. Services found reports were also useful for Freedom of Information requests, public facing information and were of good internal value to Services' planning.

The current template was positively received with scope for further tightening and amalgamating questions acknowledged. Clarity on the purpose of the themed discussion meeting was requested for future reviews.

3.4 Proposals for alignment with Service Expectation Review

The sub-committee meeting also discussed the Service Expectation Review (SER) which links to plans for improved efficiency and increased transparency for the Planning Round. The SER project has been requested to write in the relevance of Student Support Service review to the SER process.

The sub-committee considered that it was beneficial for Student Support Service review recommendations to inform decisions and provide evidence for Service Expectation Review with further potential for inclusion in the Resource Allocation Model.

It is intended that a revised Student Support Service reporting template should align with the SER template to reduce the reporting burden on Services. Both should align with the University Strategic Plan. A new reader template and guidance would be developed for reader reports. It is proposed that service reports would continue to be submitted annually but that, following consultation on proposed changes, there should be a three year review schedule for the Student Support Service review **process** and template. (Services would continue to submit reports annually.)

Alignment of the SER and Student Support Service processes would mean potential adjustments to the Student Support Service process.

To allow recommendations endorsed by Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) to feed into Service Expectation Review would mean beginning the Student Support Service review process earlier. Therefore, a Service reporting deadline of September/October with November sign off by QAC is proposed to allow recommendations to be included in the SER process which runs during January/February.

3.5 Consultation with sub-committee members

Sub-committee members were consulted on proposed changes to the reporting process for 2016/17. Responses were received from 13 sub-committee members, including 9 Services, and the majority supported all three proposals. Nil responses were assumed to be in agreement with the proposals. The consultation results are provided in the table below:

Question	Yes	No
Q1 Do you support an earlier reporting deadline and is September/October appropriate?	12	1
Q2 Do you support a three year review schedule for the SSSQAF process and template?	13	0
Q3 Do you support a reporting break for the SSSQAF process this year?	10	3

Sub-committee members were also asked to comment on the proposals:

- Q1 Those who expressed a preference opted for an October reporting deadline – one service did not support this and would prefer a December deadline.
- Q2 Responders commented that certainty over the format and structure means less work for services. There was also support for improved guidance for readers to focus on quality of service delivery in their reports.
- Q3 It was suggest that the next report could include a brief reference to 2016/17 service developments. Three services expressed concerned that a break in the reporting process would be out of step with Service Expectation Reviews beginning in 17/18 and that this would delay services' ability to use reports to influence the planning round. It was also suggested that this may send a negative message on the process and importance of quality assurance and that it would be unhelpful to delay reporting on 2016/17 beyond a 12-18 month gap.

An illustration of what a new reporting timeframe would look like, including responsibilities for the different stages of the process, is attached as Appendix I.

3.6 Future review format approval

The final format for annual reviews in the next cycle will be confirmed following discussion with the Deputy Secretary Student Experience.

Action for QAC

The Quality Assurance Committee is invited to comment on how reviews are conducted to inform this discussion.

4. Promising Practice Commended for Wider Dissemination

A Student Support Services Annual Review restricted access wiki has been set up, where all Service reports will be available for all participating Services and sub-committee members: <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SSSAR/Student+Support+Services+Annual+Review+Home> (EASE log in required)

All service reports showed areas of promising practice and these will be published on the Student Support Services Annual Review wiki. The services below were invited to present on their particular areas of promising practice at the full sub-committee meeting on 25 January:

4.1 The Advice Place and Accommodation Catering and Events - jointly run Accommodation Information Centre

The Committee heard from the Advice Place and Accommodation, Catering and Events on the collaborative pop-up accommodation advice service – Accommodation Information Centre – designed to cater to particular short-term need for accommodation advice at the start of the year. There may be the potential for other such collaborations between services, leading to increased visibility for services at peak times. There was also discussion of the possibility of a student zone or hub, considering opportunities within the existing estate and the potential for Library use in evenings.

4.2 Careers Service – staff development and School Development Plans

The Careers Service provided an overview of its approach to staff development and approach to engaging Schools in career support via School Development Plans. There are potential opportunities for the expansion of School Development Plans to take into account other service areas in a more holistic way (Institute for Academic Development and Information Services are already doing similar work, and Student Recruitment and Admissions work in a similar way with local authorities). The Development Plans also offer opportunities to consider fair allocation of services for impact.

4.3 Chaplaincy – equality and diversity training for students

The sub-committee heard about the Chaplaincy's work to deliver equality and diversity training for Veterinary Medicine students. There are potential opportunities to develop equality and diversity training for other professions and the potential to extend religion and belief literacy training to academic and support staff. Student training in these areas supports global citizenship and graduate attributes.

5. Recommendations

Service responses to the recommendations made in the previous year's report and details of the areas for consideration identified for each Support Service reviewed.

Action for QAC:

The Quality Assurance Committee is invited to approve the recommendations which each service is asked to respond to in its next report.

5.1 Accommodation Catering and Events (ACE)

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

Progress is being made with the two recommendations made in last year's report. Progress in relation to surveys has been affected by the Survey Unit's limited capacity.

Areas for the service to consider:

- Continue to consider accommodation affordability – The accommodation portfolio offers a range of accommodation types to suit a range of incomes and ACE does consider affordability, but there is the potential for consideration of a wider set of affordability factors to keep this continually under review.
- Payment options in catering outlets – Whilst UPAY Chilli will remain a valuable service for those 1500 currently spending on the app, there are additionally many students who have a strong demand for a minimum card spend in ACE facilities. Can we consider the removal of a minimum threshold spend?
- Catering options – There is a significant range of catering facilities across the campuses, many of which also serve as crucial meeting/social spaces. The recent expansion of outlets is also much appreciated. There is scope to consider further options at King's Buildings and we note that this is a priority for ACE for the coming year. What are the plans beyond this? Additionally, there is scope to consider the offering within the outlets, in consultation with students, to consider a range of dietary requirements, a more diverse range of food options, and price points. It will be useful to have an update on this in the next report.
- ACE is asked to continue to reflect on its use of survey data. In particular, to reflect on what ACE considers to be a suitable measure of the student experience (such as, satisfaction with accommodation, feeling supported, a sense of community?) and to report on this in a more focused way in the next report.

5.2 Advice Place

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

All recommendations have been carefully considered and responded to.

Areas for the service to consider:

- To continue to update Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) licensing for loan and money advice activities.
- Consider the relationship between the Advice Place and the Student Information Point(s) operated by Student Administration. Is there scope for (greater) collaboration here and/or greater clarity in the respective roles of each service in the provision of information to students?
- To consider how relationships can be maintained between the Advice Place and key contacts in Colleges and Schools, in particular key networks (SSOs, Personal Tutor), now that many of the Student Experience Project projects have come to an end, and what support is needed from the University to strengthen the relationships.
- It might be beneficial to reflect further on the reasons behind the decline in undergraduate use of the Advice Place; this is, of course, not necessarily problematic, and it might simply reflect, for example, the better provision of

information across the University. But the identification of any learning points could be beneficial for the University.

- It is perhaps not surprising that EU and international students are more likely to make use of the Advice Place, but it would be useful for the University to identify any learning points for a larger understanding of the international student experience, including any steps that could be taken to enhance support for international students.
- The report features strong use of data, but would it be beneficial to provide an overview of at least some trends within longer-term perspective (over five years, say), to emphasise better those changes that carry particular significance? Furthermore, would it be possible to relate changes in student use of the Advice Place to the overall size of the student population (so that levels of student engagement with the Advice Place are considered in relation to the size of the student population, which has been increasing).

5.3 Careers Service

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

All the recommendations have been responded to, although there remain ongoing issues.

- The recommendation to '*Continue development of Fair Use Policy and report on the outcome of this*' seems to have been successful up to a point. Whilst flexibility in appointments is necessary, the 'no-show' rate is disappointing - but it is difficult to see what can be done to reduce it.
- In response to the recommendation to '*Consider, where possible, to increase engagement in Schools with lower use rates*' there has been consideration of areas with lower graduate destinations/NSS/ESES scores. This seems to be an on-going issue, with specific targeting of certain Schools being the priority.
- In response to the recommendation to '*Consider, whether further use of LinkedIn would-be of value*', there seems to have been considerable work in this area since the previous report, extending existing provision and developing new approaches. It will be interesting to see how this is received by the students this year.

Areas for the service to consider:

- To continue to push for development plans in Schools, building on the pilots.
- The service is underused by postgraduate research (PGR) students (1 in 10, compared to 1 in 5 in total). There is a need to encourage PGR students to engage with the service and to make them understand the importance of career planning.
- It is pleasing to see the increasing use of the service across study years, however, undergraduate (UG) students still need to think about their career earlier in their programme. This can be done through working with Schools to train Personal Tutors and Student Support Teams to initiate career planning with students as part of curriculum choice.
- There appears to be no mention of the University's stated 'graduate attributes' in the report. If this concept still has current value, it would be helpful to see some mention of it, perhaps in relation to the work the Service is doing with Schools in their School Development Plans.

- Gathering of greater formal feedback from internal stakeholders, particularly academic stakeholders.

5.4 Chaplaincy

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

- The Chaplaincy has made strong progress in the areas designated as priorities, including: successful use of the new rooms at King's Buildings; diverse work in the area of Religious Literacy in Higher Education; support for Widening Participation; and development of the 'What's the University For?' initiative; appointment of a full-time administrator; new workshop for Equality and Diversity training.
- Responding to the challenge of the university's geographically dispersed nature, the Chaplaincy has advised on new prayer and reflective spaces.
- The Chaplaincy has undertaken creative and successful work in order to understand perceptions of the Chaplaincy and then to think how better to communicate its nature, within the 'Creative Brief' initiative. It will be good to hear more on how this develops in next year's report.
- Responding in a wide-ranging manner to the last QA recommendations, the Chaplaincy has, among other actions, initiated work with student support officers to promote use of the Chaplaincy Centre's space and services.

Areas for the service to consider:

- Whilst the Distance Education Initiative (DEI) is mentioned in the report (p.4), the Chaplaincy should be mindful of the increasing numbers of online distance learning (ODL) students matriculated at UoE, moreover, of the current perception, amongst some ODL students, that the Student Support Services are designed or meant to serve only on-campus students.
- In learning of the experience of many students, Chaplaincy members have developed an awareness of problems encountered by Jewish and Muslim students, 'some of whom feel inhibited to display aspects of their faith within the University'. Clearly, the Religion and Belief Advisory Group is undertaking important work, and similarly important is the support provided by Chaplains to student societies and groups on concerns over Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism, but are there opportunities for further work across the University community, in order to promote more successfully an inclusive and tolerant environment?

5.5 Finance

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

Responded well and actioned everything. General progress has been made in the area of debt collection, although it remains an issue to be monitored whilst ensuring it is being carried out sensitively. Progress has been made in improving customer service.

Areas for the service to consider:

- Payment of fees is not part of the online registration process. Should it be? Finance can reflect on this and potential ways in which payment might be joined up with other processes.
- We welcome the introduction of feedback gathering from students, yet it seems to be largely based on face-to-face interactions and small samples. It would be useful to consider how feedback might be captured from those using online payments as well.
- It would be useful to have some information on the relationship with the Students' Association, in particular clarification of the respective roles of Finance and the Advice Place regarding the provision of information and guidance on money and finance.
- We welcome the development of the Finance Vision. How will this be evaluated?

5.6 Information Services

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

The service has responded to all recommendations made in last year's report that were mostly recommendations for additional information.

Areas for the service to consider:

- It would be good to know the uptake of Lynda.com. How does usage justify purchase/running costs?
- There has been some disquiet expressed in the College of Science & Engineering (CSE) about the cost of printing for students. Has the service considered alternative charging models?
- Should the service be more active in engaging academics and support staff around access to computing facilities by students? For example, should we seek to ensure all students have access to portable computing devices? Would this be more cost effective than extending library provision of PCs?
- The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)/Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) library scores are quite low and the service should take steps to find out why and, if possible, try to correct the issue(s); or at least explain why they cannot be fixed more effectively. Are there targets for these satisfaction ratings?
- As Lecture Recording rolls out, consideration will need to be given to preparing academic staff for lecture recording, editing and use of the recorded material.
- To work with other parts of the University (via Learning & Teaching Committee) to develop standards for the use of the VLE, bringing us in line with comparator institutions.

5.7 Institute for Academic Development (IAD)

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

There were two key overarching objectives:

1. To continue to build engagement with IAD support (e.g. increasing participation in IAD workshops and courses; increasing views of online resources), aiming for an overall increase in take up of 10-15% per year.

2. To deepen the impact of IAD support, for individuals, and for Schools and programmes.

And two key recommendations were made to IAD:

1. 'Consider how to increase engagement of students and Schools in CSE that appear to be under-represented in service use.'
2. 'Continue with its priorities as presented in the report.'

To a large extent these are addressed in the report's provision of statistics on use of facilities and website and also on courses, workshops and other support provided by IAD staff. The monthly use of the web-based support for both UG and postgraduate taught (PGT) students is interesting in that it tails off significantly from December and March respectively, presumably reflecting the University's two semester model. The trend is similar to previous years but in both cases shows lower engagement in this period than in the previous academic year. With regard to engagement with CSE it appears good progress has been made, but the point that students seem more willing to attend a Central location than King's Buildings is noteworthy. The concept of 'deepening' impact is mentioned in the report, but this is a particularly challenging concept to evidence. Moreover, it is not clear what the IAD understands by this. Feedback metrics for satisfaction are indicative and positive, and the report also demonstrates wider engagement across schools, programmes etc., with some substantial developments such as the programmes to contextualise learning and academic skills development in several degrees.

Areas for the service to consider:

- Partnership working is a central feature of the work of IAD. An obvious synergy would be with Moray House School of Education which could also provide research, and practice-informed support for other Schools in collaboration with IAD.
- The three key priorities outlined in the report seem appropriate. It would be useful to 'unpack' the concept of 'deepening impact' and what is intended.
- The priority of working with 'thematic Vice and Assistant Principals in developing and implementing work plans linked to University strategic priorities' is strategically important, and this may reasonably extend to working with the relevant College Deans.
- It is recommended that greater weight is put on embedding academic development locally within Schools. This approach will enable IAD to reach larger numbers with a restricted resource.
- Consider how support for Taught Masters Students will have to adapt to the University's strategy to significantly increase the number of postgraduate taught students who enrol at the institution, particularly with regards to curriculum development.
- Continue to contribute to wider University work to expand and strengthen the work already done on the support given to tutors and demonstrators. It is strongly recommended to introduce School level versions of the Introduction to Academic Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators across a greater number of Schools than is currently offered.
- The secondment model has been developed by IAD and features in the report. Undoubtedly, the individuals involved benefit greatly from the secondment. What is

less clear from the report, though, is what impact the secondments are having on the wider University/Colleges/Schools.

5.8 International Office (now Edinburgh Global)

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

The recommendations made last year have been responded to in detail in the report.

Areas for the service to consider:

- One area that it would be helpful to have more information on in terms of the student experience is the extent to which the work of the Student Support and Advice team goes beyond immigration support and guidance.
- It would also be useful to know what the barriers are to increasing outbound student mobility. Is it lack of opportunities or lack of take-up of opportunities?
- To consider what support is provided to the network of Exchange Coordinators to support them in their role.
- Consider how Edinburgh Global can assist and support Schools to respond to the demand for international opportunities, such as work-based and shorter duration opportunities, in particular providing a framework to establish such opportunities with partners.

5.9 Sport and Exercise

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

The recommendations made last year have been fully considered and responded to in detail in the report. The decision not to progress with the Quest award application is sound given the key priorities at present and the Gold Investors in People (IIP) award.

Areas for the service to consider:

- The discussion of the member base's year profile suggests that there are significant differences across student year (first-year students, 45%; second-year students, 22%; third year students, 16%; fourth-year students, 15%). Are there issues to explore here?
- The Master Plan to consider expansion of sporting facilities is very impressive and welcome. We would ask that the spatial implications for the Master Plan take into account the increasing demand for intra-mural sport too.
- Consider working towards a greater range of opening hours as part of the current review, acknowledging the strong student demand.
- Consider ways to expand and improve awareness through the Supporting Physical Activity programme, which has clearly proven to be of significant benefit to students with their studies, as well as exemplifying how University Sport & Exercise offers a holistic view of the benefits of physical activity.

- Consider an alternative set of Key Performance Indicators, and Key Targets, which can measure the number of students actively participating in sport who do not have sporting backgrounds.

5.10 Student Administration

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

All recommendations from last year's report have been responded to resulting in the establishment of a Teaching Space Oversight Group, the development of a space modelling methodology and closer working with Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP) to ensure early awareness of student growth. In addition, the priorities set by the service have been progressed successfully, leading to improved integration and centralisation of timetabling, digital transformation, and integration of sponsorship application and award processes within EUCLID.

Areas for the service to consider:

- New modelling to support timetabling has the potential to significantly improve space allocation and improve the student experience moving between classes but the effectiveness will need to be monitored and evaluated. There is possibly a gap and need to consider the systems for timetable building on course selection associated with spotting clashes to decide whether a combination of subjects is possible.
- While it is helpful that there is central coordination of scholarships, the disconnect between Development and Alumni and the Schools might be preventing the development of further funding. The timing of the release of PGR Scholarships is not helpful for Schools and the central control means that opportunities to attract and convert the best PGR students are missed.
- How does Student Administration know that students are satisfied with the services offered? The report does not provide any indication of themes arising from feedback.
- In terms of immigration compliance, there is also an indirect risk on the ability of teaching offices to conduct their normal business while also being required to conduct elements of the tier 4 monitoring. Is there scope for more centralisation, or centrally developed tools, to remove some of the load/responsibility from teaching office staff?

5.11 Student Counselling Service

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

All recommendations have been responded to fully.

- *'Consider how to further develop the programme of psycho-educational workshops'* – Four new (or modified) types of workshop (themes being mindfulness, sleep, anxiety and stress) were introduced successfully.
- *'Consider how to continue to provide a high quality service in the context of rising demand and financial and space constraints – considering what further efficiencies might be gained'* – Some administrative efficiencies were introduced and some increase in resource allowed some further progress to be made. The decision to review approaches to providing an initial appointment and longer term support for the

large number of students on the waiting list seems to have led to a creative and efficient outcome (the Managing Mood & Managing Anxiety Programme), halving the waiting list by the end of a seven week period. What is particularly noteworthy is that this was based on evidence collected elsewhere (UK and North America). However, it is clear that whilst there may have been little obvious detriment to some students, the low proportion attending ongoing group sessions means that this is not universal solution to growing numbers.

Areas for the service to consider:

- This is a key Service to the students and the University as a whole. It is plain that the demands on it are increasing at a rate not seen elsewhere in the University, and that some elements of its work mitigate high reputational risk for the institution (as well as personal risk for students and staff). Student expectations do need to be addressed and managed, and may be achieved through closer relationships with the Students' Association and the Advice Place, including the management of no-shows to protect scarce resource.
- Consider whether making the business case for a database/caseload management system development should also be a priority, especially as it seems as though this is becoming a limitation on the system.
- The 'disproportionately higher use from students in five schools in CAHSS' are being 'prioritised for the Student Mental Health training', begs questions around why this might be and what can be learnt from this? It would be very helpful to see an analysis and overview of the possible factors.
- Partnerships with some Schools seems strong, but maybe an initiative to include stating and clarifying joint working practices with the Service through the 'School Development Plans' would be worthwhile.
- The report discusses the under-representation of Chinese students in the usage statistics, noting that stigma relating to mental health is a major barrier particularly acute within Chinese populations. What is the Service doing to reach out to underserved student groups in general?

5.12 Student Disability Service

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

The report includes responses to the recommendations from last year. Work on waiting times and managing expectations is being progressed. A specific issue relating to accessibility for students with visual impairment is mentioned so it does seem important to clarify how matters of current concern for online students are being addressed.

Areas for the service to consider:

- Consider the outcomes and impact of the Disability review on the service.
- Consider what length of waiting time is acceptable and whether waiting times can be reduced by evening appointments.
- Given increasing numbers of students going abroad, to what extent are students with disabilities taking up these opportunities, and what might be done to support them further?

- Consider how online disabled students are being supported.
- Implementation of outcomes of the Mental Health Thematic Review and working with the University's Mental Health Strategy Group the changes to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) for English domiciled students.
- The responses to student surveys are limited. It would be useful to consider alternatives to surveys to gather feedback and insight into the experience of the service.

5.13 Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA)

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

All recommendations have been responded to.

Areas for the service to consider:

- Brexit represents a new (and evolving) risk to home/EU numbers. What can SRA do to keep Schools up to date with the potential impact on admissions policy (is the 20 month lead time from draft prospectus entry to admission an issue?).
- Scottish applications are down. To what extent is this an issue? Has there been an impact on applicant quality?
- How can we position ourselves to deal effectively with the different challenges posed by the Scottish, RUK and EU markets?

5.14 Student Systems

Response to recommendations in previous year's report:

All recommendations from the previous year's report have been responded to, although there are ongoing challenges with assessing impact and maintaining the accuracy of the DRPS information.

- Student Systems lies at the heart of the University's service structure, providing mission critical functionality for all staff and students. This year has seen the development of a clear roadmap for the service, development of the Student Data Dashboard, EUCLID assessment tools (replacing SMART) and PGR Administration Tools. The service has also been key in the development of a number of strategies including course evaluation, service excellence, the enhancement of student communication and the digital transformation strategy including increased use of learning analytics. While, of course, everyone will complain when some system fails it should be noted that the systems maintained by the service are incredibly reliable even at peak times.
- In the 2014-2015 QA report, the service was asked to "*Consider how to develop a more effective way to assess the impact of the department and its projects...*" (page 4). Clearly this remains a challenge as, whilst the current report gives some detail of service usage figures for EUCLID and Path (page 6), there is little evidence of the effectiveness and impact of Student Systems. This will in part be due to many of the developments being very recent. However, the issue of impact and how to assess it requires further consideration.

- Maintaining the accuracy of the DRPS information is an ongoing challenge and one that depends on the actions of Schools. Student Systems should consider what support is needed from the wider University to ensure the information is kept up-to-date.

Areas for the service to consider:

- It is important that the roadmap integrates with the outcome(s) of the Service Excellence Programme (SEP), but care needs to be taken that SEP does not interfere with the priorities of service.
- It is important that the service integrates with Information Services Group to ensure systems, processes and user requirements can work together smoothly and so that high level plans are feasible, deliverable and robust.
- The student data dashboard is looking really great. It will be worth putting time and effort into ensuring it is widely seen and used.

Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

7 April 2017

Appendix 1

Proposed Student Support Service Review Timeframe

Date	Activity	Responsibility
Last week June	Reporting template circulated to Services	Academic Services
First week October	Service reporting deadline	Service Directors
	Readers allocated	Academic Services
Third week October	Readers' reporting deadline	Readers
Fourth week October	Composite report ¹	Academic Services
	Draft recommendations returned to Service Directors	Academic Services
First week November	Readers' meeting ²	Academic Services
Second week November	Full sub-committee meeting ³	Academic Services
Third week November	Agreement of recommendations	Service Directors and Academic Services
	Finalising report to QAC	Academic Services and Assistant Principal
Fourth week November	Report submitted to QAC	Academic Services
First week December	Approved recommendations returned to Service Directors for use in Service Expectation Reviews	Academic Services
January/February	Service Expectation Reviews	Governance & Strategic Planning and Services

¹ The composite report comprises all areas of good practice and areas for development identified by Readers. It is circulated to attendees of Readers' meeting to inform discussion on themes for full sub-committee

² Readers' meeting convened by Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, following which themes for discussion are circulated to full sub-committee

³ Full sub-committee meeting: all Service Directors and Readers invited to attend and includes brief presentations from a selection of services on promising practice for sharing and round table discussion on themes from Readers' meeting. Outputs are reported to QAC in the annual report submitted in fourth week November.

Thematic Review 2017-18: Underserved Student Groups

Executive Summary

This paper seeks to determine the scope of the next Thematic Review of Student Support Services which will focus on Underserved Student Groups.

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

The paper is relevant to the University's Strategic Goal of 'provide the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning".

Action requested

For Discussion and agreement.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications**
Not applicable.
2. **Risk assessment**
No change to existing practice.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
No change to existing practice.
4. **Freedom of information**
Open.

Originator of the paper

Brian Connolly
Academic Services
April 2017

Thematic Review 2017-18: Underserved Student Groups

Thematic Review

In April 2015, Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) agreed that future reviews of Student Support Services would be conducted on a thematic basis rather than service-based. Thematic review looks at the quality of the student experience in relation to a particular theme or aspect of student support, rather than an individual service. Themes and confirmation of the services to be included in the review, will be determined by SQAC. The process is the same as for the periodic review, but may only involve services in a limited way in relation to the specific theme. All services may be included in this type of review.

Underserved Students

Underserved student groups has been identified as a key theme from the Student Support Services annual reports 2016-17. This term refers to those groups of students that either have lower levels of use of services on offer and/or face barriers to access. Some examples of underserved student groups identified in the reports included, but were not limited to, students as parents; students as carers; commuting students; part-time students; widening participation students, online distance learning students.

At the last meeting of SQAC, held on 9 February 2017, it was **agreed in principle** that underserved student groups would be the focus of next year's thematic review but a decision on the exact scope was deferred until the April meeting.

Scope

In the regard to the scope of the theme, the Committee is invited to consider the following two options:

- **Board and high level option – All Underserved Student Groups**
This option would provide the review panel with sufficient leeway to examine a wide range of issues and surface problems from across the University which may have been hidden due to the nature of the groups involved (either due to their small size or proclivity for disengagement etc.). However, due to the broad nature of this category, and the disparate experiences of the students involved, this approach may run the risk of overlapping and duplicating work already underway in several areas across the University. It may also merely skim the surface of the issues of each group and simply highlight further areas of more detailed work to be followed up by groups with more tightly defined remits.
- **Narrow and in-depth option – Students as Parents and Carers**
This option has the benefit of directly aligning with and responding to a specific issue that the Students' Association (and NUS Scotland) have identified. A more limited scope would provide an opportunity for a more in-depth review and the possibility of resolving issues (and reporting back on the implementation of recommendations) within the same academic year. The number of students touched by this type of review may be significantly smaller but the direct impact on the students concerned could be more significant than would be the case with a broader, high level review. Given that the review will be focusing on underserved groups, and that it is often

due to their relatively small sizes that they have gone underserved (i.e. resources have tended to follow numbers) there is an argument that narrow and deep is the more appropriate review model for such groups. Finally, a tightly defined, in-depth review would also provide a contrast to this year's broad and mainly high level review of support for disabled students. Taken together, they would provide precedents and tangible examples of the variety and diversity of approach that could be employed for different types of thematic review in the future.

Brian Connolly
Academic Services
April 2017

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

19 April 2017

Oversight of Initial Teacher Education Provision

Executive Summary

Interim oversight of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) provision until a new review schedule commences in 2017-18.

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

The paper is relevant to the Committee's remit to oversee the delivery of annual reporting from Schools and Colleges.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to consider the College and School oversight of ITE provision. College representatives are asked to ensure that the outcomes of the Committee's discussions are made available to and considered by the relevant College committee(s).

Resource / Risk / Compliance

- 1. Resource implications**
Not applicable.
- 2. Risk assessment**
No change to existing practice.
- 3. Equality and Diversity**
No change to existing practice.
- 4. Freedom of information**
Open.

Originator of the paper

Dr Robert Mason, Associate Dean (Quality Assurance), College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science
April 2017

Oversight of Initial Teacher Education Provision

Following a request from the Moray House School of Education, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) approved the rescheduling of Teaching Programme Reviews (TPR) of undergraduate provision in the School. As a result of this change the review of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) provision was delayed by two years until 2017/18 under the condition that the School ensure oversight of ITE provision during the interim period.

The reasons for the rescheduling were that the last TPR of Initial Teacher Education included three BEd programmes (Physical Education, Primary Education and Design Technology Education), and two one-year PGDE programmes (Primary and Secondary). The major change was the replacement of the BEd programmes with two completely new MA programmes - MA Primary Education with one of six subjects offered in conjunction with other schools and MA Physical Education. These new programmes follow a different structure to the old ones, and every single course is new. The programmes have been phased in from the Year 1 intake in September 2014. In 2017-18 the first students on the new programmes will enter fourth year, meaning all the new courses will be up and running and by then the systems for managing the programmes will have seen through a full cycle of courses, thus making it an appropriate point for review.

Therefore, in line with the SFC requirement, the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science invites the Committee to consider the following statement from the Moray House School of Education:

The School of Education provides six ITE programmes. Two of these are in their final year of sun-setting (BEd Primary and BEd Physical Education), two are in their third year of existence (MA Primary and MA Physical Education), and two are continuing (PGDE Primary and PGDE Secondary). Each of these programmes has undergone the same scrutiny as the rest of our programme provision, in terms of external examiner reports, course and programme monitoring reports, and SSLC minutes all being reviewed. All of the evidence indicates that, in 2015-16, all six programmes were fit for purpose and delivering a high standard of teacher training. There will be a TPR for the ITE programmes in session 2017-18 (March 2018) to review progress and developments in learning, teaching and assessment.

The Committee is invited to consider the School's oversight of ITE provision.

Dr Robert Mason,
Associate Dean (Quality Assurance)
College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

19 April 2017

Enhancement-led Institutional Review Follow-Up Report

Executive Summary

The paper presents the year on Follow-up Report of the University's 2015 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR). The Follow-up Report was submitted to the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland by the required deadline of 3 March 2017. The Report is being presented to University Court for endorsement on 24 April 2017 and will be presented to Senate in May 2017 for information.

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

The Committee is responsible for overseeing actions in response to the ELIR reports.

Action requested

For information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Theme leads will implement and communicate actions within their area. The Senate committees' newsletter includes an item on ELIR actions.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

The implementation of the plans have resource implications for support services as well as for Colleges and Schools, which need to be taken account of when setting the priorities for the Senate Committees.

2. Risk assessment

The ELIR has been managed within the University's risk management process.

3. Equality and Diversity

The paper does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. Equality and diversity considerations will be taken into account by the theme leads.

4. Freedom of information

Open.

Key words

Enhancement

Originator of the paper

Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Nichola Kett, Academic Services



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

The University of Edinburgh Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2015/16 Follow-up Report – 3 March 2017

Introduction

The University of Edinburgh welcomed the ELIR reports and the successful outcome was communicated widely to staff and students, including through the University's website¹. A themed approach is being taken to implementation as part of an integrated planning process in order to ensure alignment with existing learning and teaching priorities and Assistant/Vice Principal roles and responsibilities. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) is responsible for overseeing actions in response to the ELIR reports. Learning and Teaching Policy Group also receives regular reports on actions and discusses and advises on matters in line with its strategic remit. Management of the overall response process is being undertaken by the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance. Reports on progress to SQAC have been made every three months during the first year following the ELIR outcome, and will continue to be made every six months thereafter. The aims are to make substantial progress during the first year, to ensure all actions are completed by the end of year three and that, as far as possible, there is evaluation of their impact.

The five themes and their leads are: (1) assessment and feedback (Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback, Professor Susan Rhind); (2) personal tutor system (Assistant Principal Academic Support, Professor Alan Murray); (3) postgraduate research student experience (Assistant Principal Researcher Development, Professor Jeremy Bradshaw); (4) staff engagement in learning and teaching – workload allocation models (Vice-Principal People and Culture, Professor Jane Norman); and (5) student representation – college and school level (Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka, Edinburgh University Students' Association, hereafter referred to as the Students' Association, and the College Deans of Quality, Professor Robert Mason, Dr Gordon McDougall and Professor Jeremy Bradshaw). The University was also encouraged to progress existing work on student data dashboards and this is being led by Barry Neilson (Director of Student Systems).

Theme leads are responsible for developing and implementing a plan of work to address areas for development and for providing progress reports to SQAC. The following paragraphs are an overview of the information gathered from these reports.

The Students' Association Vice President Academic Affairs is a member of SQAC and has the opportunity to comment on progress reports and was sent a draft version of this report. The Students' Association have been involved in follow-up activity and are leading one of the themes.

Assessment and Feedback

A broad and balanced approach has been taken to addressing the areas for further development relating to assessment and feedback identified in the ELIR reports, recognising that the National

¹ <http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/elir> and <http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/teaching-matters/features/institutional-review>

Student Survey (NSS) is an important indicator of success but not the only one that should be considered.

The ELIR reports encouraged progressing with planned further analysis of NSS free text answers. In order to do this, a methodology for thematic qualitative analysis of NSS data was developed, initially using three schools as pilots. This has been expanded with half of all Schools now complete and the remaining due by the end of March. The Student Surveys Unit also made available to staff via an internal wiki a more quantitative analysis of free text comments in October 2016. Key findings from these analyses specific to assessment and feedback, highlight issues of perceived fairness, lack of transparency and a need to better manage expectations. These themes are now forming the basis of discussion and prompting action among the Directors of Teaching Network and through individual discussions with Schools, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) and the Assistant Principal (Assessment and Feedback). IAD carried out a project exploring student perceptions of the NSS question set which has informed the development of our NSS processes. In addition, the September 2016 meeting of the Directors of Teaching Network, led by an external consultant, focussed on NSS results and prompted attendees to consider and review their action plan. As an alternative source of information, an analysis of the 2014/15 and 2015/16 External Examiners' reports was carried out which revealed many more commendations than suggestions or issues for the topics 'student feedback' and 'assessment methods'. Text analysis highlighted the constructive nature of much of the feedback and the clear efforts being made to improve, whilst amongst the small number of issues raised, the theme of inconsistency was highlighted. This mirrors the theme of inconsistency highlighted by students in NSS free text comments previously identified that is being discussed with Schools through the mechanisms described above.

The ELIR reports asked the University to work with students in Schools to address matters raised and to understand specific issues and needs. This is being undertaken at a School level, using both local information and information provided through University-level initiatives. A University-wide approach to course enhancement questionnaires was implemented in 2016/17 and the core question set includes the question 'Feedback so far has been helpful and informative'. It is anticipated that a reasonably complete picture of semester 1 performance in relation to this metric across Schools will be available by mid-semester 2. This will then inform further conversations between individual Schools and the Assistant Principal (Assessment and Feedback). During semester 1 2016/17 mid-course feedback was introduced, giving students the opportunity to give early feedback on courses and for immediate issues to be addressed. An evaluation of this exercise revealed positive feedback in general and no immediate concerns with assessment and feedback.

The Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) project continues to work closely with Schools to explore students' experiences of assessment and feedback. To date, 24 programmes across 20 Schools (spanning all three Colleges) have been audited and a further three audits are planned for 2016/17. Follow up action continues with several Schools and key themes emerging from audits have been reported to the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee² (LTC). The key themes informing ongoing practice are: over-assessment and deadline log-jams; inconsistency in assessment and teaching; agency/assessment literacy; and the importance of aligned authentic assessment and a sense of place and belonging. As the LEAF project progresses, we are learning more about the experiences of Edinburgh students and the issues that affect them. Solutions that help LEAF programmes develop are likely to be adaptable to other programmes and can help develop support that is local and discipline-based and therefore more likely to have longer-term 'ownership' at programme and discipline level. Furthermore, both good practice that is identified and the solutions themselves can be shared to the benefit of the wider University community.

² <http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/agendapapers20160921.pdf> (Paper Q)

In relation to the ELIR recommendation to implement feedback policy and practice in a clear and consistent manner, the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group has been formalised as a Task Group of LTC³ with responsibility for reviewing the Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles⁴ to support the consistent implementation of assessment and feedback policy (as prominently outlined in the Learning and Teaching Strategy⁵ published in January 2017) and practice (as outlined in the Assessment regulations). It is anticipated that this exercise will be completed by September 2017 and will result in the creation of an interactive resource with case studies. In relation to Taught Assessment Regulation 16⁶ and the 15 day feedback turnaround deadline, in January 2017 LTC agreed that, from semester 2 2016/17, Schools would no longer be required to report on turnaround times at an institutional level, but increased emphasis would be placed on local oversight, monitoring of turnaround times and ownership. Heads of School must ensure that arrangements are in place to monitor and address any problems regarding feedback turnaround times.

In order to promote the importance of the provision of formative feedback opportunities that help student progress and consistent with Taught Assessment Regulation 15, a series of presentations at College and School level continue to highlight the importance of formative feedback experiences and provision of opportunities for students to gain skills in assessment literacy. The balance of formative and summative feedback is also explored through the LEAF project audits.

With reference to reflecting on the positive experiences of assessment and feedback reported by Online Distance Learning (ODL) students, a high level agreement has been made to move towards the increased usage of online submission of assessment and return of feedback and marks where appropriate and the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) implemented it at the start of 2016/17 through its electronic submission of assessment and return of feedback project. Additionally, the Learning and Teaching Strategy outlines a commitment "... to the creative use of digital technologies in our teaching and assessment where appropriate whether online, blended or on-campus". The Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group continues to receive updates on the CAHSS project. Furthermore, opportunities to share practice will continue through the Directors of Teaching Network and the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Working Group.

The University's Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group has discussed how to approach the actions identified in the ELIR reports relating to information provided to students about marking schemes and grade descriptors. An initial stage of action is underway involving gathering examples from across the Colleges and analysing available sources of student feedback for relevant responses.

The work undertaken as part of this theme aims to result in: students and staff having a sound mutual understanding of standards and expectations in assessment and feedback; increased understanding at School-level of students' issues and needs in relation to assessment and feedback; a continued small percentage year on year increase in NSS and course enhancement questionnaire assessment and feedback question scores; and continued positive comments on assessment and feedback from External Examiners.

Personal Tutor System

A holistic approach has been taken to addressing the areas for further development of the Personal Tutor (PT) system identified in the ELIR reports, with feedback from a wide variety of sources being considered. Results from the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey, NSS and the Postgraduate

³ http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/16_november_2016_-_agenda_and_papers_final.pdf (Paper I)

⁴ http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/feedback_standards_guiding_principles.pdf

⁵ http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning_teaching_strategy.pdf

⁶ <http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf>

Taught Experience Survey have been considered along with the PT-related results of the Teaching Award nomination analysis⁷ and an external benchmarking exercise. Additionally, consultative meetings on the measures that have been taken to encourage excellence in teaching and student support have been held with every School. The PT system was one of the less frequently raised issues by staff at these meetings, however, staff noted that the University could do more to understand and manage students' expectations regarding the PT system.

A number of actions have been taken to revisit the way in which Schools are implementing the PT system. The PT Oversight Group (a sub-committee of SQAC) have agreed actions in relation to: minimising and effectively managing the changing of PTs; sharing good practice examples identified through the Teaching Award nomination analysis; and monitoring of free text comments relating to PT/tutee contact. The Group have concluded that more robust and granular internal survey data is required if meaningful conclusions are to be drawn and/or judgements made in regard to the relative performance of both Schools and individual PTs.

The Learning and Teaching Policy Group have agreed to: (1) consider how Schools/Colleges/University can communicate to students regarding what to expect from their PT, and how the PT role relates to the broader academic and pastoral support arrangements; and (2) to explore the models of student support teams operating in different Schools, and the way that they interact with the PT systems in the Schools, and assess whether some models are more effective than others. An agreed set of activities is planned in order to progress these actions, including a review of website information and consultation with a virtual student panel. Three non-mandatory proposed enhancements to the PT system to help support staff in their roles as PTs have been discussed and broadly supported by the PT Oversight Group and the Senior Tutor Network: guidance on holding meaningful meetings; pre-arrival questionnaires; and PTs working in a supportive group (PT group practices).

In response to consistent feedback from staff about the different needs of ODL students and the extensive existing support provided, the PT Oversight Group approved a pilot approach in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine for postgraduate taught students. In December 2016 the Senior Tutor Network was asked to consider appropriate ways of supporting ODL students within the PT system framework and it was agreed that the Assistant Principal (Academic Support) would consult further in order to establish the needs of ODL students in relation to the PT system to inform any developments and a meeting of key stakeholders has been organised for March 2017.

The ELIR reports outlined the value of the University providing additional clarification for students around the aims of the system and providing students with information on alternative avenues of support in order to align expectations of students and staff. A review of the Academic and Pastoral Support Policy⁸ and the School Personal Tutoring Statement template⁹ took place in advance of academic session 2016/17 in order to provide greater clarity on expectations of both staff and students. The School Personal Tutoring Statement and the My Personal Tutor webpage¹⁰ now include a prominently placed standard paragraph on the aims of the PT system. Students are provided with information on alternative avenues of student support through many different mechanisms, for example, the student website¹¹ and programme and course handbooks¹². The

⁷ https://issuu.com/eusa/docs/teaching_awards_report_2015_16_issu

⁸ http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/academic_pastoral_support.pdf

⁹ <http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/schoolpersonaltutoringstatementtemplate.docx>

¹⁰ <http://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/personal-tutor>

¹¹ <http://www.ed.ac.uk/students>

¹² <http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/progcoursehandbooks.pdf>

Personal Tutor staff website¹³ was extensively redeveloped for September 2016. This website aims to support staff in their PT system roles and was redeveloped using staff feedback. The Academic and Pastoral Support Policy contains information on briefing, training and development and notes: "All Schools will offer a training session for Personal Tutors and Student Support Teams at the start of each academic session". Since the roll out of the Student Mental Health training programme this academic year, 127 staff have attended training. There are another eight sessions planned for this semester, and the programme will continue in 2017/18.

In the ELIR reports, the University was encouraged to continue to support staff and students to embed peer learning and support and to continue working with the Students' Association to deliver appropriate training for peers. There is growing engagement with Peer Learning and Support activities and the commitment for development is outlined in the Edinburgh University Students' Association and University Student Engagement Statement and the Learning and Teaching Strategy. LTC discussed peer learning and support at its January 2017 meeting and identified a number of practical issues to take forward. The Spring 2017 meeting of the Senior Tutor Network will take the form of a show and tell, highlighting the successes and challenges with peer learning and support systems across the University.

Work on the enhancement of the Personal Tutor system aims to ensure that staff and students are clear on the aims of the system, their respective roles and that expectations are met. Progress will continue to be monitored through student survey feedback and opportunities to develop further sources of feedback will be explored.

Postgraduate Research Student Experience

The University is addressing two of the areas for further development from the ELIR reports relating to the postgraduate research (PGR) student experience through the creation of a programme of work titled the Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development programme.

Aligning with the ELIR reports' findings that the University should review the effectiveness and regularity of research supervisor training, one of the strands of the programme is Supervisor Training and Support which aims to:

- Enhance the content of compulsory supervisor briefings by sharing practice across Colleges and ensuring updated database of resources;
- Identify, design and pilot additional optional training for supervisors, including facilitation guides for Schools to use;
- Consult with Schools and Colleges to design an online toolkit to support supervising at a distance;
- Explore ways in which to ensure accurate, central recording of supervision training; and
- Identify ways to recognise and share practice of excellence in supervision.

The ELIR reports also asked the University to analyse the needs and experience of PGR students (School, College and University) to ensure effective support (particularly in the context of increasing numbers) and clarify where students go for further support. Another one of the strands of the programme, Mentorship and Wellbeing, aims to:

- Explore the PGR mentor function across the University and identify a number of possible models. This involves benchmarking current practice, scoping and defining different models.

¹³ <http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/student-support/student-support-website>

- Benchmark and carry out a gap analysis of support for PGR wellbeing across the University.

In line with the ELIR reports' recommendation to ensure that PGR students who teach are properly trained and supported, the Senatus Researcher Experience Committee has set up a Task Group to review the Code of Practice on Tutoring and Demonstrating, which sets out the University's training and support arrangements for tutors and demonstrators. The Group has produced a new draft document to replace the Code¹⁴, on which it is seeking views from stakeholders in February/March 2017.

In relation to the recommendation that PGR students who teach should be made aware of career development resources available through the IAD, PGR students who teach can consult the IAD webpages for Tutors and Demonstrators for information on workshops, routes to Higher Education Academy accreditation and relevant resources¹⁵. IAD also launched a new brochure¹⁶ for PGR students in 2016/17 which gives a comprehensive overview of professional and personal development opportunities available.

The ELIR reports encourage the University to effectively communicate and consistently implement the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students. Including a reference to the Code is now a requirement of the Programme and Course Handbook Policy. The Code is currently undergoing a review to ensure that its purpose is clear, that information is contained within the appropriate place and to minimise duplication of information. Two focus groups with students and staff have been held to guide the development of the Code. Consideration will then be given to communicating and implementing the updated version of the Code.

Methods for monitoring progress with the recommendations relating to the postgraduate research student experience will be determined as implementation and evaluation plans develop for the programme and Task Group.

Staff Engagement in Learning and Teaching – Workload Allocation Models

The ELIR reports encouraged the University to progress with plans to develop existing workload allocation models to recognise in a consistent way contribution to priority learning and teaching areas and the Academic Work Allocation Models – Development Principles and Operational Guidance has since been agreed and published¹⁷. In terms of implementation, Heads of College were contacted in early January 2017 to alert them to the publication of the Guidance. They were asked to encourage individual Heads of School to take this forward, and were reminded of the responsibility Heads of School have for developing and maintaining appropriate models for their respective Schools which are in line with the principles set out in the Guidance and that reflect the work undertaken by the School. Heads of College were also asked to cascade to Heads of School a reminder of the need to consult with affected staff as part of the process of introducing a new work allocation model or revising an existing one. Feedback on the Guidance will be sought from Schools.

Related developments which demonstrate the University's holistic commitment to enhancing the student experience include work on: annual review; continuing professional development; reward and recognition; recruitment; and capability.

¹⁴ <http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/reviewing-the-code-of-practice-for-tutoring-and-de>

¹⁵ <http://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/tutors-demonstrators>

¹⁶ http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/iad/Postgraduate/PhD_researchers/PGR_Researcher_IAD_Brochure_onlinev2_01617.pdf

¹⁷ http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Academic_Work_Allocation_Models_Development_Principles_and_Operational_Guidance.pdf

Student Representation – College and School Level

A number of recommendations were made in relation to enhancing student representation at College and School level and these have been taken forward through joint working between the Students' Association and the University, namely the College Deans of Quality. The ELIR reports encouraged the University and the Students' Association to continue working in partnership to ensure that there is more effective student representation at College and School level.

In relation to progressing work to promote and implement more effective representation at College level, since January 2016 the Students' Association has worked with the three Colleges to clarify their committee structures and which College level committees need student representation. The Students' Association effectively recruited student representatives for each of these College level committees for 2016/17 and produced a College Committee Student Member Handbook¹⁸ in partnership with the Colleges to prepare these student representatives for their role. A meeting was scheduled for mid-February 2017 to check in with College committee student members to assess the effectiveness of these new processes and support mechanisms. Additionally, the Students' Association and College Deans of Quality have been exploring new roles for one elected student College Rep per College to be implemented in the future. The Students' Association has drafted a general role description for the position. In response to various communications with the Colleges, the Students' Association has revised the timetable for implementing the College Rep positions to allow time to be taken to ensure that all stakeholders have had an opportunity to consider how these new positions can be tailored to support the needs and expectations of the Colleges and Students' Association. Furthermore, the payment rate (which would be paid by the Students' Association) also needs to be confirmed. Therefore, the roles will not be included during the March 2017 Students' Association elections, but the aim is to resolve issues for subsequent years so that the new College Rep role is as effective as possible.

The ELIR reports asked the University to review the processes for appointing students to School committees and to provide more effective training and preparation for the roles, ensuring that staff in Schools understand the student roles and are able to support students to contribute effectively. In 2015/16, the Students' Association received responses from School Directors of Quality to establish which School level committees include student representation and how they are chosen and supported by the School. The information gathered shows wide variation in the recruitment processes and committees which include student representation. In many cases, elected School Convenors or Class Reps become the student representatives on School-level committees. In 2016/17, the Students' Association produced a Student Representative Handbook¹⁹ and provided training to student representatives. 100% of all elected School Convenors (a total of 55 individuals) participated in the Students' Association's in-person training for their role. 73% of Class Reps (a total of 1,306 individuals) successfully completed the Students' Association's online basic training for their role, an increase on last year's high engagement after the move to online training. This year, a record number of Class Reps and School Reps have also written a blog post (totalling over 600 thus far) to share their work as a student representative, and copies of these anonymised blog posts are shared with the wider student body via the Students' Association's School pages²⁰. In addition, the Students' Association has been working with administrative and support staff to hone and improve the processes of recruitment and registration for Class Reps and has produced guidance for administrative and support staff²¹ and guidance for academic staff²² on these processes. The

¹⁸ https://issuu.com/eusa/docs/college_committee_student_member_ha

¹⁹ https://issuu.com/eusa/docs/student_representative_handbook_201

²⁰ https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/your_school/

²¹ <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/studentrepresentation/staffinformation/supportstaff/>

²² <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/studentrepresentation/staffinformation/academicstaff/>

Students' Association held meetings in August 2016 and January 2017 to work in partnership with support staff to share the new guidance and best practices. The Students' Association will continue to work to train and support large numbers of student representatives to be effective in their role within each School.

The ELIR reports noted that there would be benefit in the University disseminating the outcomes of the 2014/15 Postgraduate Programme Review of Online Distance Learning Postgraduate Taught Programmes in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. The recommendation relating to student representation from this review and the work of the 2015/16 SQAC Task Group on Student Representation for Distance Learners have been disseminated and have led to revised guidance for Student-Staff Liaison Committees²³ as well as all-student and all-staff emails about the purpose and mechanisms of student representation. The recommendations from this Task Group will continue to be communicated and implemented. In addition, the Students' Association will continue to review how well it supports and engages ODL student representatives.

Student Data Dashboard

The ELIR reports encouraged the University to progress with the work of the Student Systems Roadmap and, in particular, the student data dashboard. The first phase of the staff-facing dashboard (undergraduate) has been delivered successfully²⁴ and the project has closed. Positive feedback has been received from stakeholders, particularly with reference to the ability to provide a detailed level of information to a large proportion of both academic and administrative staff. Feedback is being collated and analysed, and analytics on the use of the dashboards is being collected. The development was commended in the recent annual review of student support services and is being used to support quality assurance and enhancement processes. Further iterations of the dashboard are planned dependent on funding.

Summary

This follow-up report outlines the actions taken by the University of Edinburgh to address the areas for development identified in the ELIR reports. The significant progress made is detailed and planning for areas still to be addressed is outlined. We are confident that our approach over the next three years will deliver enhancements to the student experience and that we will be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of these actions by the time of the next ELIR.

²³ http://www.edinburgh.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/student_staff_liaison_committees_principles.pdf

²⁴ <http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/data-matters/student-dashboard>

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

19 April 2017

Review of Quality Code Mapping Documents

Executive Summary

The paper informs the Committee about the review of Quality Code mapping documents which has been undertaken.

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

Aligns with the strategic goal to provide the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning.

Action requested

The Committee is asked to **approve** the updated mapping documents.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

The mapping documents are available on the Academic Services' website at:
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/quality-code>

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

There are no specific resource implications.

2. Risk assessment

The Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all those involved in delivering higher education which leads to an award from or is validated by a UK higher education provider. It makes clear what institutions are required to do, what they can expect of each other, and what the general public can expect of all higher education providers. Therefore, it is important that the University's quality framework maps to the Quality Code chapters.

3. Equality and Diversity

The paper itself does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

Quality code, mapping

Originator of the paper

Nichola Kett, Academic Services, 11 April 2017

The last exercise to map the Quality Code chapters to the University's quality assurance framework took place between 2013 and 2015. It was therefore timely to review the mapping documents.

The following mapping documents were reviewed to check for factual accuracy, to reflect any obvious significant changes and to check for broken links. Editorial changes were also made to ensure consistency across the mapping documents.

Chapter	Link to updated mapping document
Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards	http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/amappingmarch2017.pdf
B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval	http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/b1mappingapril2017.pdf
B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education	http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/b2mappingdecember2016.pdf
B3: Learning and Teaching	http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/b3mappingapril2017.pdf
B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement	http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/b4mappingapril2017.pdf
B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning	http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/b6mappingapril2017.pdf
B7: External Examining	http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/b7mappingoctober2016.pdf
B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints	http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/b9mappingoctober2016.pdf

The following mapping documents are still to be reviewed:

Chapter
B5: Student Engagement
B8: Programme Monitoring and Review
B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others
B11: Research Degrees
Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Simplification

The 8 mapping documents that were reviewed have reduced in total length from 51 to 37 pages.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

19 April 2017

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy

Executive Summary

The paper provides highlighted minor amendments to the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy at paragraphs 27.3, 45, 53 and 58. These amendments were identified following the undergraduate and postgraduate taught External Examiner annual reports to QAC.

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

The paper aligns with the University's strategic objective of leadership in learning.

Action requested

QAC is invited to approve the amended policy.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Policy updates will be communicated by Academic Service in the annual new policies and regulations communication in June 2017.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
No resource implications are associated with the paper.
2. **Risk assessment**
As the paper proposes minor amendment to an existing policy, no risks are identified.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
As the paper proposes minor amendments to an existing policy, no equality and diversity implications are required.
4. **Freedom of information**
The paper is **open**

Originator of the paper

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
6 March 2017



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Purpose of Policy

The Policy sets out the role, powers and responsibilities the University assigns to its External Examiners for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. The Policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of Schools, Colleges and at the Institutional level for External Examiner Processes.

Overview

The policy replaces: (i) Code of Practice for External Examiners of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes and (ii) Guidance to Schools/Colleges regarding the Freedom of Information and Data Protection implications of the University's Code of Practice on External Examining

Scope: Mandatory Policy

This policy applies to staff who are engaged in assessment, processes involving External Examiners appointed for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes or courses and those involved in development of Course or Programme Handbooks. The policy must be applied, unless an opt out has been awarded by Quality Assurance Committee or as otherwise stated in the policy, on the basis of a case proposed by a College. The boxed "Application of the policy" provides guidance and must be applied, unless the College has approved an exemption on the basis of a case proposed by a School. These concessions and exemptions are recorded by the approving body.

Contact Officer Susan Hunter Academic Policy Officer Susan.Hunter5@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	Approved: 05.02.2015	Starts: 28.05.2015	Equality impact assessment: 28.05.2015	Amendments: April 2017	Next Review: 2018/2019
Approving authority	Quality Assurance Committee				
Consultation undertaken	Working Group of Quality Assurance Committee				
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Services				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Taught Assessment Regulations www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment Guidance on policy, principle and operation of Boards of Examiners: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners External Examiner Handbook: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerhandbook.pdf				
UK Quality Code	UK Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining				
Policies superseded by this policy	Code of Practice for External Examiners of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 2138.				
Keywords	External Examiner, Board of Examiners				



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy

This policy aligns with the *University's Taught Assessment Regulations*, which are agreed annually by the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. Nothing in this policy supersedes the *University's Taught Assessment Regulations*. See:

www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf

General

1. The conduct of assessment and examinations in the University is governed by the University's *Taught Assessment Regulations* and by decisions taken, from time to time, by Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. This policy sets out the role, powers and responsibilities the University assigns to its External Examiners for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. It is intended primarily for the information of University staff involved in examinations and Boards of Examiners. The *Handbook for External Examiners of Taught Programmes* provides External Examiners with guidance on their roles, powers and responsibilities:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerhandbook.pdf
2. Additional guidance on assessment procedures may be found in the University's *Taught Assessment Regulations*:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf
3. Policy, principle and operational guidance regarding Boards of Examiners is available at: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners
4. All sections of the policy apply to External Examiners appointed to a course(s) or taught programme(s) referred to as Course External Examiners and Programme External Examiners respectively, unless otherwise stated.
5. Student Administration exercises general oversight of examination procedures on behalf of the University and the detailed arrangement for examinations, including the provision of examination accommodation. See:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration.
6. Student Systems exercise general oversight of the receipt and notification of results on behalf of the University. See: www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/.
7. Several different University and College committees have an involvement in areas covered by this Policy. Senatus Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) monitors the appointment of External Examiners by Colleges. QAC also ensures that appropriate action has been taken in regard to External Examiners' reports by way of the annual College Quality Assurance and Enhancement reports. QAC ensures that quality assurance and policies and projects are informed by the thematic annual analysis of the External Examiner reports. The relevant College undergraduate and postgraduate



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

committees ensure that External Examiners' appointments are consistent with the assessment regulations and this Code.

8. This policy aligns with the UK quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B7: External Examining (October 2011):
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/quality-code-B7.pdf.

Purposes and Functions of External Examiners

9. The External Examiner system forms a key part of the University's quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms. External Examiners help to ensure that degrees awarded by the University are comparable in standard to those of other equivalent departments in UK universities, although their content may differ. They also ensure that the assessment process is operated equitably and fairly in respect of the treatment and classification of students, and in line with the University's policies and regulations. External Examiners also advise on the quality and enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment.
10. In order to achieve these purposes, External Examiners need to be able to:
 - a) participate in assessment procedures (see related section 16); and
 - b) comment and give advice on assessment procedures and standards and jointly agree, as members of the Board of Examiners, the detailed assessment, award and final degree results.
11. An important requirement of the External Examiner's role is the provision of an annual report based on what the External Examiner has observed of the University's assessment processes and students' assessed work.

Application

- 11.1 External Examiners are invited to provide feedback on good practice and opportunities to enhance the quality of programmes and/or courses, where appropriate. External Examiners are invited to offer a view of how standards compare with the same or similar awards at other Universities of which they have experience. External Examiners are also invited to comment on course content, balance and structure and on degree programme curricula. See sections 60, 61 and 62 which set out the expectations for External Examiners on completing External Examiner Reports



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

12. Colleges or Schools may also choose to invite External Examiners to see and comment on reports and feedback related to curriculum review and quality of educational

Application

- 12.1 This may be on an informal basis, or as part of the external advice on review and development of courses and/or programmes.

provision.

13. External Examiners may be asked to comment on the wider quality and enhancement aspects of a programme or course, such as its design, curriculum, mode of delivery and assessment methods.
14. External Examiners have the right to see any assessment material pertinent to the role and may comment about any aspect of a course or programme for which they are appointed as External Examiner.
15. External Examiners are encouraged to make use of opportunities to communicate with the School informally about the teaching of the course, assessment issues and overall performance of the students.
16. The External Examiner's role is primarily that of a moderator of the assessment process and an External Examiner will not be asked to assess directly the work of individual students unless this is explicitly stated in the External Examiner's terms of appointment. Where External Examiners are expected to advise on individual cases, the final decision will still be made by the Board of Examiners, with the views of the respective examiners made known to the Board of Examiners.
17. External Examiners may be required to have oversight of the decision process of the Undergraduate Progression Board. Schools will specify which Course or Programme External Examiner has responsibility for progression decisions and specific Progression Boards. This responsibility is usually exercised by a Programme External Examiner.
18. In fulfilling these functions, the University expects that the External Examiner has agreed with their own institution / employer the time commitment required for the role.

Role of Course External Examiners

19. Each course must have an External Examiner appointed to it known as a Course External Examiner. They are expected:
 - a) to assess and comment on whether the course enables students to achieve the defined learning outcomes and whether the assessment is appropriate in this regard;
 - b) to consider the level of achievement of candidates on the course, in relation to standards elsewhere in the sector for the same kind of course within similar degree



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

programmes;

- c) to review and approve, if appropriate, all examination papers and assessment criteria for the courses examined;
- d) to scrutinise a representative sample of all assessed work across each of the courses examined in order to judge whether marks are fairly and consistently applied to students across the courses, and whether markers are applying the marking scheme consistently and using the full range of marks where justified;
- e) to participate as a member of the relevant Board of Examiner meetings and to agree jointly, as a member of the Board of Examiners, the decisions of the Board of Examiners; and
- f) to be satisfied that the business of the Board of Examiners is correctly and robustly carried out, in line with the University's policies and regulations.

Application

19.1 External Examiners appointed to a course or courses will be treated as Course

External Examiners. A Course External Examiner can be appointed for multiple courses, where this is deemed appropriate. A Programme External Examiner may be appointed as a Programme External Examiner for a programme and also be appointed as a Course External Examiner for one or more courses.

Role of Programme External Examiner

- 20. There must be at least one Programme External Examiner appointed who has responsibility for oversight of each programme that leads to a higher education award. *(This section of the policy will not come into effect until August 2016 to allow for full appointment of Programme External Examiners).*



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Application

20.1 External Examiners appointed to a programme will be treated as a Programme

External Examiners. A Programme External Examiner can be appointed for multiple programmes, including their exit awards, where this is deemed appropriate.

20.2 A Programme External Examiner may be appointed to a programme and also be

appointed as a Course External Examiner for one or more courses. Where there are no Course External Examiners appointed, the Programme External Examiner will be deemed to also be the Course External Examiner for the courses within the programme.

20.3 For undergraduate programmes, it is likely that the Programme External Examiner

will also be examining a course or courses on the programme and oversight of the programme will be an additional role. For postgraduate programmes, a Programme External Examiner may be appointed as a Course External Examiner for courses within the programme(s).

21. Programme External Examiners are appointed to give oversight of a whole programme. Programme External Examiners are expected:

- a) to assess and comment on whether the programme design enables students to achieve the defined learning outcomes for the programme;
- b) to affirm that the programme overall meets recognised national standards for the final award;
- c) to consider the application of the scheme of award for classification of honours to ensure this is correctly and fairly applied to all students on the programme;
- d) to participate as a member of the relevant Board of Examiner meetings and to agree jointly, as a member of the Board of Examiners, with the decisions of the Board of Examiners; and
- e) to be satisfied that the business of the Board of Examiners is correctly and robustly carried out, in line with the University's policies and regulations.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Application

21.1 Programme External Examiners do not necessarily need to have knowledge of all the subject areas covered by the programme in order to perform the role of Programme External Examiner. This is because Programme External Examiner are appointed to have oversight of the academic standards for the programme(s) and/or award(s) for which they are appointed. Further information about the operation of the Board of Examiners can be found in the University's Taught Assessment Regulations: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf

22. For combined degree programmes, the “owning” school will be responsible for appointing Programme External Examiners.

Selection – general points

23. External Examiners should be selected from amongst suitably qualified people who meet the person specification outlined in this policy (See sections 29 and 30). Schools and Colleges must also consider any potential conflicts of interest prior to appointment (See section 31).
24. The number of External Examiners for any particular degree programme or course should be sufficient to cover the range of studies therein. More than one External Examiner may be needed where there is a large number of students, the course or programme covers a wide range of studies, and/or a large volume of academic work contributes to the course or programme.

Application

24.1 Schools should use their judgement and should avoid both over-recruitment of External Examiners and excessive over-loading of individual External Examiners.

25. The appointment of External Examiners is the responsibility of Colleges on behalf of the University and they must have robust and documented mechanisms for approval of appointments in place.
26. Schools make the nominations to the Colleges after consultation with the staff members teaching the course or programme and having ascertained that the proposed individual is willing to accept the nomination as External Examiner.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Application

26.1 Schools and Colleges may operate different nomination and appointment processes depending on their respective quality assurance structures. Nominations are made in the name of the relevant Head of School and appointments are approved in the name of the Head of College. The information contained in the External Examiner nomination form should affirm to the College that the person nominated has the necessary authority and experience and meets the other requirements set out in relation to qualifications / expertise, conflicts of interest and terms of office below.

27. External Examiners should normally be resident in the United Kingdom.

Application

27.1 If the proposed External Examiner is resident abroad, the School should take account of UK visa and immigration requirements, travel costs and, where appropriate, check that the College is prepared to pay the cost of travel to Edinburgh before proposing the appointment.

27.2 Where an External Examiner from outside the UK is appointed, the School should confirm that the individual has the required knowledge of the UK HE system.

27.3 Human Resources ~~are responsible for the University's policy website provides~~ [information on Eligibility to Work in the UK and information and guidance for recruiters on immigration and visa requirements](#). See: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/human-resources/recruitment/eligibility-immigration/recruiters-guidance/overview.

28. In some areas of professional disciplines, External Examiners are subject to validation by external organisations and professional bodies.

Qualifications/Expertise

29. In order to ensure that External Examiners are competent to undertake the responsibilities expected of them, only individuals who can show appropriate evidence of the following will be appointed:



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

- a) appropriate knowledge and understanding of the UK HE Sector's agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards, including the relevant subject benchmarks, the national qualifications frameworks and UK Quality Code for Higher Education (See www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code), along with knowledge of quality assurance and enhancement processes;
- b) sufficient standing and experience to be able to command authority and respect of academic peers and, where relevant, professional peers;
- c) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate. External Examiners from outside the HE system, for example from industry or the professions, may be appropriate in certain circumstances;
- d) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
- e) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- f) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
- g) fluency in English and, where programmes are delivered or assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s); and
- h) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Application

29.1 Schools may wish to develop their own School-specific guidance on the requisite qualifications and experience for External Examiners, as appropriate to their own specific disciplines.

30. In exceptional circumstances, an External Examiner may be appointed who does not meet the criteria with respect to standing and/or experience. Appointments of External Examiners in these circumstances must be approved by the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee on the basis of a College recommendation. Such an appointment should never be made as a sole Programme External Examiner for a specific degree programme.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Application

- 30.1 These exceptional circumstances may arise where an External Examiner is appointed from industry or where the nominee has no previous experience as an External Examiner. Where an External Examiner who is not an academic is appointed for a particular course, the School will need to ensure that a mechanism for assuring academic standards is maintained, for example, by having another External Examiner who is an academic on the Board of Examiners.
- 30.2 Where an External Examiner has no previous experience as an External Examiner for any institution, a more experienced External Examiner will be appointed to act as mentor to work with the first-time External Examiner to provide guidance and to ensure that the Examiner fulfils the requirements of their role. Schools must consider whether first-time External Examiners have additional information and development needs when compared with experienced examiners.

Conflicts of Interest

31. Individuals in any of the following categories will not be appointed as External Examiners:
- a) Members of the University Court, University Committee members or employees of the University.
 - b) Anyone with a current or previous personal, family or legal relationship with a student being assessed.
 - c) Anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study or any of the courses in question.
 - d) Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or course(s) in question. Significant involvement in this context means directly involved with a close knowledge of one another's work.
 - e) Former staff or students of the institution, unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the individual have completed their programme(s) of study.
 - f) Anyone whose appointment would create a reciprocal external examining arrangement involving cognate programmes at another higher education institution.
 - g) Anyone whose appointment immediately follows the appointment of an External Examiner from the same department in the same higher education institution.



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- h) Any nominee who has a colleague from the same department of the same institution already acting on the Board of Examiners to which the nominee is to be appointed.
- i) Any nominee who has an honorary position at the University or has held an honorary position at the University within the last five years.

Application

- 31.1 This is a non-exhaustive list. Schools and Colleges are asked to use their judgement when ascertaining whether a conflict of interest exists.
- 31.2 With regard to section 29 (f), staff who perform External Examiner duties in other Universities should keep their School informed in order to ensure that reciprocal arrangements involving cognate programmes do not occur.
- 31.3 Schools should avoid a situation where a member of the University and a member of another HEI are both simultaneously sitting on the *same* Board of Examiners at both institutions. Schools should attempt to select examiners from the full pool of experts available rather than continually re-appointing from a small, familiar group, to maintain objectivity.

Terms of office

- 32. The duration of an External Examiner's appointment will be for four years. An exceptional extension of one year may be permitted, if necessary.
- 33. Where an External Examiner retires from his or her institution during their four year External Examiner term, their appointment with the University as an External Examiner will cease at the end of the relevant academic session. An exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity may be approved.
- 34. An External Examiner who has completed their term of appointment is not eligible for a new appointment until five years have elapsed.
- 35. In view of the time commitment required to fulfil the duties of an External Examiner, it is recommended that an individual should hold no more than one other External Examiner appointment for courses or taught programmes during their period of employment as an External Examiner in the University.

Application

- 35.1 It is recognised that in specialised subjects where the pool of expertise is small, it may be necessary to appoint a single External Examiner to more than one Board of Examiners simultaneously. Schools should exercise judgement in whether an individual External Examiner is being allocated a manageable workload.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

36. It is recommended that the period of office for all undergraduate and taught postgraduate External Examiners begins on the 1st August, finishes on the 31st October for all undergraduate External Examiners, and on 30th November for all postgraduate taught External Examiners.

Appointment and Induction

37. Once the relevant College has approved an External Examiner's nomination, the School/College will communicate with the External Examiner notifying them of their appointment.

Application

37.1 The notification of appointment to the External Examiner is the responsibility of the Colleges. This responsibility can be delegated by the Colleges to the Schools. The appointment notification should include:

- a) a formal letter of appointment and details of the External Examiner contract, including a statement on the External Examiner's duties. This should include the courses or programmes they are appointed for, deadline for return of the External Examiner report and a statement that the External Examiner will operate within this policy and within the University's other regulations and policies;
- b) the External Examiner Handbook;
- c) guidance on the payment of fees and expenses, including relevant forms. The School or College will provide an explanation of how the External Examiner's fee is calculated or the amount if a fee is set. It should be explained that the fee will be subject to the External Examiner's satisfactory fulfilment of their duties and will be paid on the receipt of the External Examiner's final report. The School / College will also provide information on the University's Expenses Policy.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

38. Schools will brief External Examiners as appropriate so as to enable External Examiners to fulfil their duties, including giving due attention to the needs of first-time External Examiners.

Application

- 38.1 This information should include links to relevant sections of the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, course handbooks, programme handbooks, objectives of the courses, curricula and teaching methods, methods of assessment and marking scales or grade schemes, the schedule for aggregation of marks of the various components in the overall assessment and any arrangements for credit on aggregate or reassessment of parts of the programme. The School must also ensure that the External Examiner is briefed on their oversight role, where they have one, for an Undergraduate Progression Board.

39. At the beginning of the academic session, the School should provide the following information to the External Examiner:
- information on dates of meetings;
 - details of the Board of Examiners' composition;
 - detailed arrangements for other examining activities such as attendance at orals or practicals; and
 - any other material the School considers necessary for the External Examiner to fulfil their role effectively.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Application

39.1 The External Examiner Reporting System will ensure that the following documentation is available (via hyperlink) on the External Examiner Dashboard:

- the University's External Examiner Handbook
- the University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy
- the University's Taught Assessment Regulations
- Chapter B7 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

39.2 The External Examiner Dashboard on the External Examiner Reporting System informs the External Examiner of the report return deadline.

Termination of Appointment

40. The University can terminate an External Examiner's appointment at any time where the External Examiner is deemed to have not fulfilled their obligations or if a conflict of interest arises which cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

Application

40.1 Schools are expected to review the work of External Examiners and make recommendations for termination to the College for contractual non-compliance should this become necessary. The College is responsible for monitoring the External Examiners' compliance with their contracts. Schools and Colleges must make reasonable efforts to resolve issues of non-compliance through discussions with the External Examiner concerned. In rare cases where these matters cannot be resolved, termination of the appointment may be carried out by the Head of College on the basis of advice from Human Resources. The reasons for the termination of the appointment along with efforts to resolve the issues, should be fully documented.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Participation of External Examiners in Assessment and Examination Procedures

41. External Examiners are full members of the Board(s) of Examiners. All External Examiners have the right to attend meetings of all relevant Boards of Examiners.

Application

- 41.1 See the University's *Taught Assessment Regulations* which set out the rules which must be followed in taught student assessment, including the operation of the Board of Examiners meetings: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf

42. In order to be quorate, at least one External Examiner must participate in and approve the decisions of the Board of Examiners.

Application

- 42.1 An External Examiner's approval of the decisions of the Board of Examiners indicates that they are satisfied with the conduct of the assessment process. See the University's *Taught Assessment Regulations* which set out the quoracy requirements for Board of Examiner meetings and the operation of the Board of Examiners meetings: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf

43. External Examiners should attend all Board of Examiners meetings relevant to their appointment.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Application

43.1 If an External Examiner is not able to attend at least one Board of Examiners meeting in a year, his or her non-attendance must be reported to the College. If an External Examiner cannot attend a Board of Examiners meeting due to illness, travel disruption or similar unavoidable events, he or she should contact the School as soon as possible. Special arrangements can be put in place when an External Examiner cannot attend a meeting in person which may include, where practically possible, participation by live video link or telephone. Such arrangements must be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Examiners.

43.2 Where an electronic link is used in this way it must be live and in real-time for the External Examiner to be considered as participating in the meeting. Where this arrangement is employed, the External Examiner must be provided with all the preparatory documentation for the Board in advance of the meeting. Where an External Examiner is too ill to participate, even remotely, during the academic year, the School will seek a replacement External Examiner, to be appointed through the usual School/College process.

44. The External Examiner's role is primarily that of a moderator of the assessment process. In some disciplines, an External Examiner may need to assess students directly in some parts of the assessment (e.g. orals) and this should be explicitly stated in the External Examiner's contract. In all other cases, the External Examiner must never be asked to mark/grade or otherwise assess directly the work of individual students.

45. External Examiner(s) must review and approve draft examination papers. Draft examination papers should be accompanied by model answers, where applicable and appropriate, or solutions and the marking schemes to be applied.

Application

45.1 It is expected that Course External Examiners will carry out this function.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

46. External Examiners will be provided with a sample of summative examination scripts or student coursework to review.

Application

- 46.1 The samples must provide the External Examiners with enough evidence to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard and are consistent. External Examiners should see samples of summative assessments from the top, middle and bottom of the range. The principles governing the selection of these samples must be agreed in advance and communicated to the External Examiner.
- 46.2 External Examiners should also consider borderline cases which relate to the decisions of the Board of Examiners on pass/fail boundaries, progression, or in the case of final year candidates, the classification or award of a degree. An External Examiner has the right to see any summative assessment on request.
- 46.3 Where a School determines 50% or more of the summative assessment by coursework, orals, online tests, peer or self-assessment, the External Examiner must receive or view samples of work and be provided with sufficient information about these assessments. See the regulation on “Availability of assessment” in the University’s Taught Assessment Regulations:
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf

47. Examinations that contain practical, oral or performance elements are invigilated by members of academic staff and may be conducted jointly with an External Examiner. Schools must inform students about how they will be orally assessed and whether this will involve an External Examiner.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Application

47.1 Where External Examiners directly conduct oral examinations, they should have necessary information about the oral assessment to allow them to judge the student's performance in the orals. Where the External Examiner does not directly examine the student, he or she has the right to view oral examinations and presentations (either in person or by audio-visual means) where practicable and proportionate. See the regulation on "Oral assessment" in the University's Taught Assessment Regulations: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf

48. External Examiners should have the same amount of involvement in both the content and process of practical examinations as they have for written papers and coursework.
49. Some Arts disciplines require assessment by live performance or exhibition. Participation by External Examiners in these forms of assessment must meet current standards and practices of the sector and relevant professional bodies, including, where appropriate the creation of retainable documentation of the performance and/or exhibition.
50. External Examiners may be required to have oversight of the decision process of an Undergraduate Progression Board. This oversight may be done remotely; the External Examiner does not need to be physically present.

Application

50.1 The Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy sets out the responsibilities of External Examiners who have oversight of the decision process of the Undergraduate and how they should be supported effectively so they can fulfil their role.

50.2 See Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf

External Examiner Report Submission

51. External Examiners are required to submit a report annually to the Principal of the University via the External Examiner Reporting System.
52. External Examiners are also required to provide an additional reflective overview at the end of their periods of office.



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Application

52.1 This reflective overview is included as a section in the (EERS) External Examiner report and will be filled out by External Examiners who are in their final year.

53. ~~Dates~~ The deadlines for submission of the External Examiner reports ~~at are~~ 31 July for undergraduate and 30 November for postgraduate taught_ level ~~Deadlines~~ are set by Senatus Quality Assurance Committee.

54. External Examiners are expected to provide informative comment on the extent to which:
- the University is maintaining threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements;
 - the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the course(s) or programme(s) and is conducted in line with the Universities policies and regulations;
 - the academic standards and the achievements of the students are comparable with those of other UK higher education institutions of which the External Examiner has experience.
55. External Examiners are expected to provide informative comment on quality assurance and quality enhancement and are asked to do the following:
- confirm that sufficient evidence was received to enable the role to be fulfilled and if evidence was insufficient, give details;
 - state whether issues raised in the previous report(s) have been, or are being, addressed to their satisfaction;
 - address any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional body and highlight areas of good practice and innovation; and
 - recommend, where appropriate, opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.
56. External Examiners are expected to provide informative comment on teaching, course and programme structures and content including:
- good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment; and
 - opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.

Actions in response to External Examiners' Reports



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

57. Schools are responsible for ensuring that they have robust mechanisms in place for handling External Examiner reports and for taking appropriate action where required in response to those reports.

Application

- 57.1 Schools are expected to use data contained in the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) to identify themes and issues from individual External Examiner reports that require action. Information on EERS user roles is available on the Student Systems website: www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/support-guidance/academic-staff/external-examiner-reporting

58. A senior person responsible for teaching and quality assurance matters, designated by the Head of School, will take responsibility for responding to each External Examiner report by a deadline specified by the Senatus Quality Assurance Committee. It is expected that external examiner reports will be responded to within six weeks so that information contained in reports can be acted upon promptly in order to maximise its use to schools and students. This response should demonstrate that the University has given full and serious consideration to the comments made and indicates the actions that will be taken or not taken as a result of the comments.

59. It is the College's responsibility to oversee the operation of processes in Schools of responding to External Examiners' reports. Each College is also responsible for handling issues or suggestions arising from External Examiners' reports that pertain to the College, so that appropriate action is taken where required at the College level.
60. The College is responsible for identifying issues or suggestions that have institutional level implications and raising these matters in appropriate forums at an institutional level.
61. It is the College's responsibility to ensure that issues raised in a particular report, that are judged to be particularly serious or important, are copied to the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance acting on behalf of the Principal.

Application

- 61.1 This is only likely to occur in exceptional cases where institutional action is necessary or where serious quality assurance issues which affect more than one degree programme or School have been identified.

62. Certain External Examiners are appointed subject to validation by external organisations. If appropriate, Schools may choose to send the reports of these External Examiners to the relevant organisation, provided they are accompanied by information setting the Examiner's comments into context and noting any action that will be taken as a result of the report.

Analysis of Themes arising from External Examiner Reports



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

63. The University is committed to using External Examiner reports and responses widely to enhance the student experience.

Application

63.1 Business Information reports will facilitate thematic analysis of reports and responses.

64. The annual College Quality Assurance and Enhancement reports to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee will include a summary of External Examiners' themes and the appropriate action taken.
65. External Examiner reports provide invaluable independent feedback to the University at programme and course level, and sometimes also at institutional level. Colleges and the University's Senatus Quality Assurance Committee use information from External Examiner reports to identify common themes in order to help shape their strategic approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement.

Details of External Examiners

66. The names, positions and institutions of External Examiners must be included in the relevant course/programme handbook and made available to students. Where an External Examiner is appointed to fulfil a role on behalf of a professional body, this will be stated.

Application

66.1 This information will also be made available to relevant staff in the University, and, where relevant, to external bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency.

66.2 Students must be informed in the course/programme handbook that they must not make direct contact with External Examiners, and that other routes exist for queries about the assessment process.

Participation of students

67. Students have the right to view External Examiners' reports. Schools are responsible for making External Examiner reports available to students on request.



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Application

67.1 See sections 72 and 73 for further guidance on freedom of information and data protection matters. Schools should record the frequency of requests.

68. Schools will make themes extracted from External Examiner reports, and the Schools' summarised response to these themes available to student representatives.

Application

68.1 In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, QAC has agreed that the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) is the best forum for consideration of themes arising from External Examiners reports and summarised responses of Schools/Subject areas.

68.2 In order to streamline material being presented to SSLCs, Schools are encouraged to summarise points from External Examiner reports and group them into themes, together with the response from the School/Subject area/Programme and highlight areas of good practice.

68.3 Each School should decide which SSLC is most appropriate to their structure for the consideration of the summary reports.

68.4 Following consideration of the themes at the SSLC, comments and suggestions from the meeting will be collated and reported to relevant School Committees or member of staff. Depending on recommendations, ongoing actions would be reported to SSLC meetings later in the academic year and ultimately through subsequent External Examiner reports.

Expenses and Fees

69. Colleges are responsible for determining how to set External Examiner fees, and for arranging for the payment of fees and expenses. In some circumstances, Colleges may devolve responsibility for paying fees and expenses to Schools. Payment of expenses must be in line with the University's Expenses Policy.

Application

69.1 Payment of the External Examiner's fee is made annually by the Finance Office after receipt of a completed report from the External Examiner, and on the basis of payment instruction from Colleges or Schools.



External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy

Causes for Concern

70. External Examiners have the right to raise any matter of serious concern with the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, if necessary, by means of a separate confidential report. The Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance will respond in writing, outlining any actions to be taken as a result.
71. Where an External Examiner has a serious concern relating to systematic failings in the academic standards of a programme or programmes and has exhausted all procedures internal to the University, including the submission of a confidential report to the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, he/she may invoke the QAA's concerns scheme or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

Data Protection

72. External Examiner reports are not published by the University. External Examiner Reports are disclosable upon receipt of a request for copies of the reports in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Application

- 72.1 Schools are responsible for making External Examiners' reports available to students and the public on request. There is no requirement to publish External Examiners' reports. Care should be taken to redact the report where it contains information that could identify other students.
- 72.2 If the School is unsure about any aspect of a request made under the Freedom of Information Act or the Data Protection Act, contact your local practitioner or the Records Management Section. Requests for the disclosure of any restricted reports made directly, and separately to the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, will be judged on a case by case basis in line with the University's freedom of information obligations.

73. The External Examiner Handbook informs External Examiners not to identify students or staff by name in their reports. It should be noted that, where an External Examiner identifies a student, the student will have the right under the Data Protection Act 1998 to make a subject access request. Even if a student is not named it may be possible to identify the student, for e.g. via a student's exam number or matriculation number.

External Examiners For Taught Programmes Policy



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Application

73.1 External Examiner reports are accessible to those who have access to the EERS system and Business Information Suite. This means that a significant number of staff in the University are able to access External Examiner reports and Schools' responses. The External Examiner Reporting System includes a mechanism for reporting a data breach. Further information on using this tool can be found in systems guides.

Approved: 5 February 2015

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

19 April 2017

Arrangements for consulting with stakeholders on learning, teaching and student experience matters

Executive Summary

The Learning and Teaching Policy Group has developed some key principles and standard practices that Senate and the Senate Committees could adopt when consulting with Schools, Colleges and stakeholders regarding changes strategy, policy or procedure on learning, teaching and student experience matters. Central Management Group approved these principles and standard practices at its meeting on 1 March 2017.

In general, Senate and the Senate Committees are already following the arrangements set out in this paper. Formal articulation of principles and standard practices will however lead to more consistent approaches, and will ensure that all stakeholders are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities.

Committee members are invited to note in particular that:

- Where individuals have been appointed to Committees or task groups to represent Colleges or Schools, it is important that they are able to represent the views of their constituencies and to have authority to make decisions on their behalf; and
- Committee members convening task groups should refer to these principles and standard practices when constituting task groups and designing their consultation arrangements.

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

Aligns with University Strategic Objectives of Leadership in Learning and Research.

Action requested

The Committee is invited to consider and comment upon the paper.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Academic Services will communicate them to the Senate Committees. It will also communicate them to key College contacts and highlight them to key School stakeholders in Schools via the Senate Committees' Newsletter.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

The operation of consultation processes has resource implications for project teams and for stakeholders engaging with the processes. It is important, when planning projects, to allocate an appropriate level of resources to consultation activities. The paper highlights the importance of making a balanced judgement regarding the appropriate approach to the appropriate level of resources to commit to consultation activities.

2. Risk assessment

The arrangements for effective consultation set out in the paper will assist the University to manage a range of risks associated with stakeholder buy-in and change management.

3. Equality and Diversity

Effective consultation will assist the University to understand the equality and diversity implications of particular projects.

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

Consultation

Originator of the paper

Tom Ward
Director of Academic Services
1 March 2017

Arrangements for consulting with stakeholders on learning, teaching and student experience matters

Background and context

1. Recent experiences, for example regarding the development of the Evasys Course Enhancement Questionnaire and the consultation on the University's new Learning and Teaching Strategy, have highlighted that mechanisms in the University for consulting with and seeking buy-in from key stakeholders on learning, teaching and student experience matters do not always work as effectively as they could. There are therefore benefits in reflecting systematically on the approaches to take to consultation in different circumstances.

Key principles

- Senate and the Senate Committees should make their decisions on the basis of a proper understanding of the views of relevant stakeholders, while recognising that, given the diversity of the University's academic community, effective consultation processes will not always lead to consensus.
- The nature of consultation activities should be proportionate to the scale of change that is being proposed and the likelihood of it proving contentious.
- Given the scale and diversity of the University, consultation arrangements will always rely predominantly on individuals with leadership or representational roles in Colleges and Schools representing the views of their constituencies and having authority to make decisions on their behalf on task groups and committees.
- All task groups on issues with direct implications for the student experience should include Student Association representatives.
- When consulting on issues which have an impact on staff, Senate Committees and task groups should recognise the University's commitment to working in partnership with its trade unions and its obligations to consult and negotiate as appropriate.
- Once a consultation process has concluded and a decision made, it is important to provide feedback to those stakeholders who have engaged with the consultation processes.

Approaches to consultation

2. The attached Annex sets out a table with a range of possible approaches that Senate or a Senate Committee could take to consultation on a particular issue. In general, the more significant or contentious the proposal development, the more of the elements further down the table the consultation processes would need to involve. The Annex is indicative, and a degree of judgement will be required regarding the approaches to consultation required for each development. It is unlikely

that any consultation process, however significant and contentious the development, would require all the approaches set out in the Annex.

Practical issues regarding the operation of consultation processes

3. Consultation processes – and particularly those lower down the table in the Annex – can be very onerous, both for the staff leading and supporting them, and for the stakeholders engaging with them. For some issues, it is not clear how contentious the proposals may be (and therefore how deep the consultation is required to be) until after the event. This uncertainty could lead colleagues to over-engineer consultation processes in order to avoid the risk of being accused of inadequate consultation. Were this to happen, the number of different developments that the Senate Committees could take forward would be unnecessarily constrained. As such, it is important to make a balanced judgement regarding the level of consultation.

4. The Senior College Academic Administrators, in consultation with their Deans, will take responsibility for selecting their Colleges' representatives on task groups.

Issues with a staffing dimension

5. Given the University's increased interest in issues such as developing robust evidence on the quality of teaching, and recognising student education as a key element in our staff recruitment, promotion and annual review processes, it is likely that some of the issues that Senate and its Committees address in the coming years will involve close interaction between academic and employment policy. When determining appropriate approaches to consultation on these issues, it will be important to establish at the outset whether advice and guidance is required from People Committee and what input and sign-off is required from Central Management Group and/or other relevant Court Committees with responsibility for employment policy matters.

6. When consulting on issues with a staffing dimension, in addition to general stakeholder consultation it is also important to recognise the University's commitment to working in partnership with its trade unions and its obligations to consult and negotiate as appropriate before decisions are taken by the University which have an impact on staff.

7. When developing stakeholder consultation plans, University HR Services should be consulted on the appropriate way to ensure early sharing of information and meaningful consultation, and where appropriate, negotiation take place with the recognised trade unions.

Annex – possible approaches for consultation on learning, teaching and student experience matters

Nature of proposed change	Example	Typical approaches to consultation	Comments
<p>Modest change / unlikely to be contentious</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>More significant but unlikely to be particularly contentious</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Modest change to existing academic policy or regulation</p>	<p>Discussion and decision at relevant Senate Committee</p>	<p>Relies on representatives of stakeholders having sufficient knowledge of the views of their constituencies to be able to represent them effectively.</p>
		<p>Establish task group with representatives of relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>Allows for a broader range of relevant perspectives, including those of stakeholders who are not represented on the relevant Senate Committee.</p>
	<p>Development of a new policy that appears unlikely to require significant changes to Schools' practices, or development of policy required to address external regulatory requirements</p>	<p>Consult relevant networks of staff (eg Senior Tutors network, Directors of Learning and Teaching network)</p>	<p>Will provide broad impression of Schools' views on the issue, but will not highlight the extent of variation of views between different and may not take account of the views of some Schools (eg since not all colleagues attend network meetings).</p>
		<p>Invite Colleges, Student Association and other stakeholders (eg support services) to consult with their constituencies and provide written submissions</p>	<p>Provides the relevant Senate Committee or task group more robust evidence regarding stakeholders' views. However, College-level submissions may not always allow them to understand fully the variation of views between different Schools.</p>
		<p>Invite relevant office-holders in Schools to consult with their constituencies and to provide their own written School submissions</p>	<p>Provides the relevant Senate Committee or task group with an understanding of the views of individual Schools, and provides assurance that all Schools are aware of and have discussed the proposed change. The relevant</p>

<p>Relatively significant with the potential to be contentious</p> 	<p>Development of a new policy that is likely to require extensive changes to many Schools' practices, or which may raise significant issues of principle.</p>		office-holders in the Schools would typically be academic leaders such as Director of Quality or Director of Learning and Teaching, but may in some circumstances be Directors of Professional Services.
		Project leader (eg relevant Convener of Senate Committee or Task Group) to offer to attend all Colleges' relevant Committees, and relevant Student Association meetings, to present and seek views on the issue	Provides valuable opportunity to raise awareness, gauge views, and dispel any myths about the proposed development.
		Invite Heads of Colleges and Heads of Schools to consult with their constituencies and to provide their own written submissions	Heads of Colleges and Schools will provide particularly valuable perspectives on proposed developments that are particularly contentious or that raise significant issues regarding management and resources.
		Project leader (eg relevant Convener of Senate Committee or Task Group) to offer to attend all Schools' relevant Committees to present and seek views on the issue	Provides valuable opportunity to reach large number of staff to raise awareness of and dispel any myths about the proposed development, and to gauge views.
		Focus groups of staff and / or students	Allows the Committee / task group to hear directly from staff and students who are not in management or representational roles, eg particular categories of staff or students with a particularly relevant perspective on the issue

 Very major institutional change	Proposals for significant changes to the University's academic year, or curriculum structures		(eg disabled students when developing policy regarding accessibility).
		Sample-based surveys of samples of relevant categories of staff and / or students	Similar benefits to focus groups, but with the potential to produce more robust evidence.
		Create project webpages with information about the proposals and how stakeholders can express their views on them	Makes the consultation process more transparent. Likely to be more relevant where the proposals are of potential interest to a large number of stakeholders and involve complex documentation.
		Open meetings for staff and / or students	Provides a high profile opportunity for all staff and / or students to express their views on the issue, giving a high degree of transparency to the consultation process. Typical approaches would be to hold one meeting per College.
	Surveys of all staff and students	Very transparent approach that will allow all staff and students to express their views.	

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

19 April 2017

**Internal Review Themes 2015/16
Update**

Executive Summary

The paper provides an update on action taken as a result of the Internal Review Themes 2015/16 report which was considered by the Committee in September 2016.

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

Aligns with the strategic goal to provide the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning.

Action requested

For information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Actions arising from the paper were remitted as appropriate. College Deans of Quality were asked to communicate the themes and the outcome of the discussion to relevant College committees and to promote further. Academic Services communicated the themes and responsibility for further action at University level to Schools which had provision reviewed during the academic year in question. A sharing good practice event was held and material has been identified for the Institute for Academic Development case study wiki.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

No specific resource implications are identified at this point.

2. Risk assessment

Failure to respond to areas for development identified through quality assurance processes would constitute an institutional risk.

3. Equality and Diversity

The paper itself does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

4. Freedom of information

Open

Key words

Internal review, TPR, PPR, good practice.

Originator of the paper

Nichola Kett, Academic Services, 3 April 2017

Internal Review Themes 2015/16

GOOD PRACTICE

A Sharing Good Practice identified during Internal Reviews event was held on 23 November 2016. Good practice shared at this event is also being shared through the Teaching Matters website using a staggered approach (published articles: <http://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/?p=1454>; <http://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/?p=1497>; <http://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/?p=1372>; three more articles will be published are due to be published between now and June).

A number of colleagues have been identified as possible providers of good practice case study examples. The Institute for Academic Development's case study wiki is undergoing development and, once this is complete in June 2017, contact will be made with these colleagues.

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Assessment and Feedback

Assessment and feedback was identified as an area for further development in a number of reviews, with a subtheme of transparent processes which are made clear to students.

- Ensure prompt feedback and clear communication (Applied Sport Science and Sport and Recreation Management)
- Reconfigure the curriculum in favour of courses with larger volumes of credits to reduce summative assessment (Mathematics)
- Making fuller use of the marking scale (Applied Sport Science and Sport and Recreation Management and Mathematics)
- More transparent assessment strategies (Psychology)
- Consistent provision, quality and timeliness of feedback (Veterinary Studies)
- Transparency and consistent use of marking schemes (Veterinary Studies)
- Consult students on their experience of formative feedback to ensure expectations and needs are met (Divinity)
- Staff training on quality of feedback and feedforward, management of turnaround times and students' expectations of feedback, and ensure the appropriateness of types of assessment (Veterinary Studies PGT)

Remit to: Professor Susan Rhind, Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback and Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) theme lead for Assessment and Feedback.

Action taken:

The themes of perceived fairness, lack of transparency and a need to better manage expectations are forming the basis of discussion and prompting action among the Directors of Teaching Network and through individual discussions with Schools, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) and the Assistant Principal (Assessment and Feedback).

A University-wide approach to course enhancement questionnaires was implemented in 2016/17. Semester 1 responses to the question 'Feedback so far has been helpful and informative' showed that all Schools met the previously agreed 60% satisfaction threshold in relation to feedback, and average satisfaction was more than 70% (it should be noted that response rates were low).

The Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group has discussed how to approach actions relating to information provided to students about marking schemes and grade descriptors. An initial stage of action is underway involving gathering examples from across the Colleges and analysing available sources of student feedback for relevant responses.

In relation to the 15 day feedback turnaround deadline, in January 2017 Learning and Teaching Committee agreed that, from semester 2 2016/17, Schools would no longer be required to report on turnaround times at an institutional level, but increased emphasis would be placed on local oversight, monitoring of turnaround times and ownership. Heads of School must ensure that arrangements are in place to monitor and address any problems regarding feedback turnaround times.

The Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) project continues to work closely with Schools to explore students' experiences of assessment and feedback.

In order to promote the importance of the provision of formative feedback opportunities that help student progress and consistent with Taught Assessment Regulation 15, a series of presentations at College and School level continue to highlight the importance of formative feedback experiences and provision of opportunities for students to gain skills in assessment literacy. The balance of formative and summative feedback is also explored through the LEAF project audits.

The Edinburgh Learning Design Roadmap (ELDeR) is a learning design service which was launched in June 2016. ELDeR focusses on the design of student learning experiences, where student feedback and assessment literacies are given top priority. Usage of the service is increasing and it is being publicised through key meetings and the University's website.

Student Support

The Personal Tutor system also produced themes for further development, with the training of Personal Tutors being a prominent subtheme.

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of those delivering the Personal Tutor system (Mathematics and Psychology)
- Greater participation in Personal Tutor training (Divinity)
- Clear process of developing and maintaining Personal Tutor skills (GeoSciences)

Remit to: Professor Alan Murray, Assistant Principal Student Support and ELIR theme lead for the Personal Tutor System.

Action taken:

A review of the Academic and Pastoral Support Policy and the School Personal Tutoring Statement template took place in advance of academic session 2016/17 in order to provide greater clarity on expectations of both staff and students. The Personal Tutor staff website was extensively redeveloped for September 2016. This website aims to support staff in their PT system roles and was redeveloped using staff feedback.

The Academic and Pastoral Support Policy contains information on briefing, training and development and notes: "All Schools will offer a training session for Personal Tutors and Student Support Teams at the start of each academic session". Since the roll out of the Student Mental Health training programme this academic year, 127 staff have attended training, there are another eight sessions planned for this semester, and the programme will continue in 2017/18 (information correct as at January 2017).

Training and Support for Postgraduate Tutors and Demonstrators

The training and support for postgraduate tutors and demonstrators as a theme for further development produced a variety of recommendations across the reviews.

- Consider ways of supporting and including them in decision making (Applied Sport Science and Sport and Recreation Management)
- Encourage and clarify teaching career tracks (Psychology)
- Transparent selection mechanism, clear guidelines for preparation time and receiving feedback at course or individual level (Biological Sciences)

Remit to: The Researcher Experience Committee Task Group reviewing the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators.

Action taken:

The Task Group on the Code of Practice for Tutors and Demonstrators has now met several times and has produced a draft policy to replace the current Code of Practice. Stakeholders have been invited to comment on the draft which is available on the Group's project page:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/reviewing-the-code-of-practice-for-tutoring-and-de>

The draft policy has taken account of the recommendations in the following ways:

- **Supporting tutors and demonstrators:**
The document has a section on the mandatory induction and training which must be given to tutors and demonstrators (section 5) and the document's appendix sets out the information and guidance which must be included in their formal induction. The document also has a section on the roles and responsibilities of tutors and demonstrators and how they should be supported in their duties (section 3).
- **Encourage and clarify teaching career tracks**
The draft document has a section on non-mandatory training and development (section 7), stating the value to tutors/demonstrators of being given the opportunity to develop beyond their current tasks and drawing attention to optional training that will allow this development.
- **Transparent selection mechanism**
Section 1 of the document covers recruitment processes, stating that they must be transparent and open in line with the University's recruitment and selection policies.
- **Clear guidelines for preparation time**
Section 2 of the document includes the following: "Tutors and demonstrators must be remunerated for contact hours and such time as the School judges is necessary for preparation of teaching material, marking and assessment of work, in line with the relevant work allocation." The appendix states that tutors/demonstrators must be told how many hours they are expected to work, including preparation time, as part of their formal induction.
- **Receiving feedback at course or individual level**
A section on feedback and review is included in the document (section 6) and the appendix states that this should be covered in the formal induction.

There is nothing specific in the document about including tutors and demonstrators in decision-making. This may be an issue to emerge from the view-seeking exercise (tutor/demonstrator views on the draft policy will be sought via focus groups).

Postgraduate Research Supervision

The review produced recommendations on the theme of postgraduate research supervision around clear processes and procedures for student giving feedback on their supervisors and a recommendation about separate School training.

- Implement a process for students giving feedback on supervisors without them being present and outside the context of assessment (Biological Sciences and Divinity)
- Clarify expectations of co-supervision, develop procedures for change of supervisor, and set an upper limit for the number of students staff can be primary supervisor for (Biological Sciences)
- The Institute for Academic Development considers running supervisor training sessions separately for each School (Divinity)

Remit to: Professor Jeremy Bradshaw, Assistant Principal Researcher Development and ELIR theme lead for Postgraduate Research Student Experience.

Action taken:

The high level themes will be considered as part of strand one (Supervisor Training and Support) of the Excellence in Doctoral Research and Career Development programme.

The Institute for Academic Development's (IAD) recommendation has been responded to. The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences has changed the way that sessions are delivered. They now consists of a College session (covering policy, etc.) and School sessions which look at case studies. Schools are responsible for setting these up, although IAD can (and does) assist.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

19 April 2017

Internal Review Report Responses

Executive Summary

The paper contains the following responses: PPR of Divinity 2015/16, Year on response; TPR of Linguistics and English Language 2016/17, 14 week 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

For comment and consideration of the recommendations. The Committee is asked to note the following comments:

PPR/TPR	Recommendation (s)	Comment
PPR Divinity (PGR)		We look forward to hearing about progress on the recommendations in the School Annual Quality report
TPR Linguistics and English Language (UG)	2, 3, 4, 8.	We look forward to hearing about progress on these recommendations in the year on response

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Comments on the progress towards completion of recommendations will be reported back to the School/Subject Area. The responses will be published on the Academic Services website.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**
No additional resource implications.
- 2. Risk assessment**
No risk associated.
- 3. Equality and Diversity**
An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the internal review process.
- 4. Freedom of information**
Open.

Key words

Postgraduate Programme Review, Teaching Programme Review, PPR, TPR,

Originator of the paper

Gillian Mackintosh, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services,
11 April 2017

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Internal Review: year-on report on recommendation actions
PPR of DIVINITY November 2015

Priority	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	CHSS P&R Committee consider options for supporting wider adoption of PG Tutor Mentor Role. <i>Responsibility: CHSS P&R Committee.</i>		School sent information to CHSS 1/3/16. CHSS P&R referred to CHSS Staffing Committee: paper submitted to meeting 6/6/16. [School also shared this information with EUSA, 8/16.]	June 2016
2	School should pursue opportunities for programme development in response to market changes and to reflect staff research interests <i>Responsibility: School BoS.</i>	Ongoing	PGSC discussion, 27/4/16; Marketing review, April 2016-; BoS discussion, 4/5/16; to be reviewed PGSC 26/4/17.	Ongoing
3	IAD should consider running supervisor training sessions for Schools separately. <i>Responsibility: IAD.</i>		DPGS and Dr Fiona Philippi of IAD discussed and agreed on response, April 2016 see p.2	April 2016
4	School should pursue opportunities for sharing delivery of courses and programmes with other Schools to enhance sustainability. <i>Responsibility: School BoS.</i>	Ongoing	PGSC discussion, 27/4/16; Marketing review, April 2016-; BoS discussion, 4/5/16;	Ongoing
5	Provide an opportunity for PGR students to give feedback on supervision without supervisor present and, if possible, outside the context of assessment. <i>Responsibility: School BoS.</i>	April 2016	Feedback on supervision (without supervisor present) requested at Review Boards summer 2016.	June 2016
6	Online marking: consider issues of staff health and safety; consult students re impact of online marking on quality of staff engagement. <i>Via Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC).</i>	Jan. 2017	Online marking: DPGS requested staff & student feedback on S1 experience; to be discussed at BoS 1/3/17.	tbc March 2017
7	School to take further measures to ensure greater participation in personal tutor training. <i>Responsibility: School PG Committee.</i>	Oct. 2017	Discussion at PGSC, 27/4/16, and with Senior Tutor, implemented Sept 16 see p.2	Sept. 2016
8	Explain Athena SWAN charter to students clarifying why important to the School and to students. <i>Via Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC).</i>	Jan. 2017	DPGS liaised with Athena SWAN coordinator; discussed at PGSC 27/4/16; reviewed ahead of Silver award submission.	Jan. 2017

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9	Investigate possibility of greater flexibility and personalization in skills and training provision. <i>Responsibility: School BoS.</i>	May 2016	PGSC reviewed 27/4/16, made recommendation which BoS approved 4/5/16, implemented Semester 1 2016/17 <i>see below</i>	October 2016.
10	School should regularly consult students on experience of formative feedback to ensure expectations and needs are being met. <i>Via Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC).</i>	Ongoing	Feedback received from SSLCs in S1 & reviewed in subject areas. Feedback from both semesters to be reviewed at PGSC 26/4/17.	Ongoing

Additional information

No barriers to progress to report.

Recommendation 3 This arose from comments by several new staff, who had attended a general supervisor briefing, and found this less satisfactory than having a School-specific session. IAD already runs separate supervisor briefings for individual Schools, and in the past Divinity has had School-specific sessions. Often new staff are asked to attend a briefing elsewhere because we judge (perhaps mistakenly) that the School is not generating enough participants to warrant a School-specific session. After discussion with Dr Fiona Philippi, the following response by IAD was drawn up and sent to the Internal Review Team by IAD in April 2016:

‘The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) does run separate supervisor briefings for individual Schools, as well as an annual College level session. These are organised in collaboration with Colleges and Schools. As the School of Divinity has a relatively small number of supervisors, supervisors have been previously advised to attend the general College session. However, following discussion between the School and IAD, it is proposed that a School-specific session is now run on a regular basis for the School of Divinity. IAD and the School will work together to develop this session.’

Recommendation 7 For training at the start of 16/17, arrangements were announced earlier, and attendance was higher.

Recommendation 9 The School’s Postgraduate Director consulted extensively with PGR and PGT students and with colleagues. As a result, PGSC (27/4/16) and BoS (4/5/16) agreed to amend the content and structure of the School-wide ‘Approaches to Research’ course in Semester 1 2016/17. This received good student feedback. Key changes were: delivered via a full-day workshop and sessions in the initial weeks of Semester 1, rather than over six weeks; separate induction for Masters by Research, as well as for PhD/MPhil and taught Masters; PGT Programme Directors played a greater part and delivered more programme-specific guidance to their individual cohorts; Library induction included subject-specific tours of New College Library; incoming PG students who were already familiar with School resources - eg previous UGs moving to PGT, or PGTs moving to PhD -could request exemption from a specific session. (This option already exists but the introduction of attendance monitoring may have obscured it.) The School continues to offer follow-up skills and training sessions eg on applying for postdocs and academic posts. The School circulates IAD newsletters and advertises IAD opportunities.

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Review

14 week response report on recommendation actions

TPR of: Linguistics and English Language

Date of Review: 4-5 October 2016

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	It is recommended that the subject area make a commitment to electronic marking and the provision of electronic feedback for coursework, and to return degree examination scripts (with comments) to students on Year 1 and 2 prehonours courses.	January 2017	The electronic marking roll-out was discussed at the School's Senior Management Committee of November 23, and at the subject area staff meetings of 9th November 2016 and 30th November 2016. The main barrier to electronic marking is the fact that the software is not fit for purpose, particularly when marking anonymously, as the marker has to work from a barely legible image that the software makes of the PDF uploaded by the student. This has issues of health and safety, workload, and meeting the handing-in deadline for marks, particularly in the case of courses with large enrolments. Nevertheless, the subject area staff meeting of 30th November 2016 agreed on a workable solution. There are no barriers for the issue of returning examination scripts.	Completed.
2	It is recommended that the subject area to aim for more consistency, structure and information to be provided to students in relation to the Personal Tutor system.	January 2018	The staff meeting of 12 th October 2016 invited the Senior Tutor to give them guidance on this issue. The ESES survey showed that it was particularly students on joint degree programmes with other Schools that returned low scores on their PT experience. The staff meeting of 30th November 2016 decided to allot students on a particular joint degree programme to a PT who makes it his or her business to become an expert on that particular programme, so that students will get expert advice about course choices and other academic issues. This will be implemented for the next academic year.	
3	The review team recommends that the subject area examine issues of development and progression through the first three years, particularly in areas where students have little prior experience.	January 2017	The subject area has examined issues of development and progression and has identified a number of lacunae, particularly with respect to skills (writing skills; knowledge of parts-of-speech, basic parsing, statistics) that cannot be addressed by lecturing but require repeated practice/structured drills. Solutions: - pay attention to writing in pre-honours lectures; - the creation of the PPLS Writing Centre, which became operational in February 2017. The	Completed – issues have been identified

			PPLS Writing Centre offers undergraduate students the chance to go over their work with postgraduate tutors working in the same area. With respect to paring and parts-of-speech: overhaul the first year course. The first step has been taken towards this goal by splitting up the first year 40 credit course Linguistics and English Language 1 (LASC08015) into two 20 credit courses, Linguistics and English Language 1a and Linguistics and English Language 1b. These courses are due to run for the first time in 2017-2018, with their content finalized in May 2017. The issue of statistics is identified, but not ease to solve, as not every linguistics student requires it, so a blanket roll out at pre-honours is not the solution. A possible solution is to offer information about dissertation topics, and pathways to these topics in terms of course options, at an earlier point than at present.	
4	For study abroad students, the review team recommends structured communication between the student and subject area throughout the study abroad year.	August 2017	The subject area will keep in touch through a LEARN module where a video of the dissertation conference of 20 April 2017 will be posted, as well as selected lecture recordings of honours courses. Staff who are supervising students who are working on Long Essays while abroad will be encouraged to give feedback by skype.	
5	The review team recommends that the dissertation (or project) should be compulsory but with flexibility in the type of assessment.	No change	The dissertation will remain compulsory, so that this is a continuation of existing practice and does not require a change.	Completed
6	The review team recommends that the subject area pay postgraduate tutors to attend courses (e.g. Institute for Academic Development courses), to ensure baseline pedagogical consistency.	No change	This turned out to be already in place as School policy.	Completed
7	For visiting students, the review team recommends the provision of more information, and access to previous teaching materials pre-arrival.	January 2018	This is difficult to tailor to individual students, but we will explore the possibility of a dedicated LEARN module(s) with information.	
8	The review team recommends that the subject area works closely with the timetabling unit in an attempt to alleviate the impact of timetabling problems and ensure the provision of suitable flexible teaching spaces to positively impact student experience.	No date – ongoing until solved	The subject area has been unsuccessful so far in this endeavour and the lack of flexible teaching space is continuing to impact the student experience. The School has also been involved in this effort.	
Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review		The outcomes of the review are communicated to the students via the Staff Student Liaison committee meetings. The students abroad will be notified by email as soon as the LEARN module is in place. If visiting students can be identified and contacted before their arrival here, they too will be notified by email.		