

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Meeting to be held on Thursday 25 February 2021  
at 2pm via Microsoft Teams**

**A G E N D A**

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4. Quality Processes and Digital Maturity SQAC 20/21 3B  
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6. Annual Monitoring – update Verbal
7. Personal Tutor (PT) System Oversight Group – update SQAC 20/21 3C
8. Enhancement Themes – update SQAC 20/21 3D
9. Internal Periodic Review SQAC 20/21 3E
- 10. Any Other Business**
- 11. Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 22 April 2021, 2pm, MS Teams

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 December 2020  
at 2pm via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:**

Professor Tina Harrison <b>(Convener)</b>	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Brian Connolly	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Dr Gail Duursma	School Representative (Engineering), College of Science and Engineering
Olivia Eadie	Assistant Director and Head of Operations and Projects, Institute for Academic Development
Dr Katherine Inglis	School Representative (Literatures, Languages and Cultures), College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Nichola Kett	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Professor Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, College of Science and Engineering
Stuart Lamot	Edinburgh University Students' Association Representative
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Dr Claire Phillips	Dean of Quality Assurance, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Professor Leigh Sparks	Deputy Principal, University of Stirling
Paula Webster	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling, Student Systems Partnership

**Apologies:**

Fizzy Abou Jawad	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
Dr Jeni Harden	School Representative (School of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Convenor welcomed Professor Leigh Sparks, Deputy Principal University of Stirling to his first meeting as the new External Member.

The Convenor reported that Katie Scott had left the University for a post at another institution and thanked her for all her work as a member of the Committee.

## 2. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9 September 2020

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

## 3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### For Discussion

## 4. School Annual Quality Reports 2019-20

The Committee discussed the report from the sub-group tasked with reviewing the School annual quality reports. The Committee also discussed a report outlining a selection of good practice identified by the sub-group.

It was noted that in response to the Covid-19 pandemic the Committee had suspended the normal annual monitoring, review and reporting processes for 2019-20. Instead a light-touch interim process has been put in place with the aim of complimenting ongoing academic contingency work during this academic year. Schools were invited to complete a streamlined reporting template focused on the impact of and learning from the Covid-19 pandemic but which also allowed for optional updates on actions identified from last year's reporting cycle and a reflection on other aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience. During this interim process, reflection on available data sets using the PowerBI Quality Data Dashboards has also been light-touch.

The Committee noted that the sub-group had focused on sections 2 and 3 of the reports (the optional section 1 information would be used to ensure continuity when the regular reporting process resumed) considering the following:

- what worked well across each College, including good practice that could be shared across the College and University?
- what could have worked better or required further development by the School, College or University?

The following themes of positive practice were noted:

- **Student and Staff Welfare**  
The sense of community evoked by the pandemic and support that academic and professional service staff provided for their students and each other within Schools was a strong positive theme throughout the reports. Of particular note was the good communication at local level between staff and students which helped manage expectations and allay anxieties at a very challenging time for all.
- **Teaching & Learning**  
The transition to hybrid delivery led to innovation in teaching & learning across Schools. Students and staff were particularly pleased with the partnership approach to curriculum adaptation and the co-creation of learning materials. It was noted that these discussions and new approaches would provide the University with a sound foundation on which to build the impending Curriculum Review.

- **Assessment**  
Schools adapted and reformed assessment processes while maintaining standards in a very challenging year. Online and Open Book assessments were particularly well received by students, with feedback noting how the assessments allowed them greater scope to demonstrate their learning than traditional paper examinations alone. Staff also noted the positive impact this diversification of assessment methods had on the consistency of marking and their workload (once adaptations were made).
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**  
There were examples of Schools striving to promote an inclusive learning environment during the pandemic.
- **Administration**  
Schools rapidly developed new and innovative administrative systems and procedures in response to the pandemic. Of particular note was the move to online Boards of Examiners and PhD vivas which allowed Schools to draw on a wider and more international pool of external examiner expertise. The beneficial financial and environmental sustainability effects were also noted.

The following themes for further development at University level were noted:

- **Staff Welfare**  
Schools reported concerns that the pandemic has exacerbated existing issues in relation to staffing and workload pressures. As noted above a strong positive theme throughout the reports was the sense of community evoked by the pandemic and support that academic and professional service staff provided for their students and each other within Schools. However there is concern that the ongoing situation is having a significant impact on staff well-being and the potential impact that this might have on the student experience.

**Action: Committee Secretary to refer issue (with examples) to the University Secretary for response.**

- **Communication**  
A theme that emerged across the School reports was University communications to students and staff and the need to ensure that University level communications to students align with local communications and plans as a key element to managing student expectations. There was also a widespread desire from staff for more information and clarity in relation to initiatives or projects that were halted due to the pandemic, such as the Personal Tutor (PT) and Student Support Review, the Student Experience Action Plan, and the Curriculum Review, to assist Schools in their own curriculum and student experience plans.

**Action: Committee Secretary to refer issue (with examples) to the Adaptation and Renewal Team for response.**

- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Schools highlighted in a number of reports the impact of the pandemic on students with protected characteristics, caring responsibilities, and students from widening participation backgrounds.

**Action: Committee Secretary to refer issue (with examples) to Convenor of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.**

- **Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC)**

Schools broadly welcomed the new ESC service and were able to recognise the longer-term benefits, but reported that the initial implementation had caused additional workload for staff, due to systems issues and response times, at a time when they were already under pressure. Some simplification of the process is in discussion as part of the recently announced assessment mitigation measures, in anticipation of a further increase in ESC requests from students. Looking ahead, the value of the ESC service will be in monitoring the ESC data to identify potential 'at risk' students, but the service needs to have the capacity to do this.

**Action: Committee Secretary to refer issue (with examples) to the Deputy Secretary for response.**

- **Online Learning Platforms**

Schools reported broad frustration with the various online teaching platforms that the University had in place at the outset of the pandemic, in part reflecting the rapid shift to digital delivery, and reported a desire for a strategic assessment of online learning technology going forward as part of the broader curriculum review and reform.

**Action: Committee Secretary to refer issue (with examples) to the Chief Information Officer and Director of Learning Teaching & Web Services for response.**

- **On-campus Space and Resources**

Access to the University's on-campus space and resources continues to be a persistent theme across School reports. Concerns were raised in terms of the quality and suitability of teaching and community building space that was under strain before the pandemic and which may be under further strain when students return to campus under social distancing constraints. There are opportunities going forward to consider the role and purpose of both physical and digital learning spaces as part of the wider curriculum review, drawing on the lessons learnt from hybrid teaching.

**Action: Committee Secretary to refer issue (with examples) to Convenor of Space Strategy Group for response.**

- **Assessment and Progression Tools (APT)**

Some Schools (predominantly in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) reported issues with the functionality and reliability of APT. Concerns were noted that ATP was not adequately flexible to deal with complex course structures and required manual calculations/checking.

**Action: Committee Secretary to refer issues (with examples) to Director of Student Systems and Administration for response.**

The Committee noted that the that the streamlined interim process had been well received by Schools and commended the Directors of Quality and all the School staff who had collaborated in the process for their excellent work under very challenging circumstances.

The Committee agreed that, as was the case in the Schools, there had been some positive lessons from the adaptation of quality processes that should be built upon going forward. In particular, the streamlining of the reports while maintaining a good level of information on QA issues and activities. The Committee discussed the merits of a themed template that would allow for a more standardised approach to reporting while also allowing Schools the scope to expand on specific local issues and activities. It was agreed that Academic Services would explore reporting options, and the plans for the next QA reporting cycle, and discuss with the College Deans early in 2021.

**Action: The Convenor to prepare a report on the areas for further development for consideration at University Executive.**

## 5. College Annual Quality Reports 2019-20

The Committee considered the annual College Quality Reports for 2019-20. It was noted that many of the issues had been addressed during the previous discussion on the School annual reports.

### 5.1 College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

The College Dean of Quality thanked Alastair Duthie (Academic Administrator, Enhancement and Quality) for his work on the report.

The following key issues were noted for action at University level:

- **Assessment and Progression Tools (APT)** – need improved functionality and additional resource.
- **Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC)** – need additional support and resource for this key service.
- **Learning Technology and Platforms** – need full integration and practical support/training.
- **Communications** – improved student communications and expectation management.
- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Support** - clear route to University support for initiatives identified in local EDI Action Plans; including reviewing and further developing support for Widening Participation (WP), care experienced and students with caring responsibilities in order to improve their university experience.
- **Personal Tutor and Student Support Review** - support for a return to the PT system review delayed due to Covid-19 at the first opportunity.

### 5.2 College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

The College Dean of Quality thanked Victoria Bennett (Quality Officer) for her work on the report.

The following key issues were noted for action at University level:

- **Staff Welfare** - an increase focus on staff welfare and support, especially mental health and well-being.
- **Staffing Levels** - a commitment to protect staffing levels for those involved in delivering teaching and supporting students. Uncertainty about post replacement is adding to degree of stress among staff.
- **Extensions and Special Circumstance (ESC)** - review of the new centralised ESC service with a view to addressing the impact of increased workloads for staff locally and student experience currently being experienced.
- **Communications** - careful consideration of external messaging to avoid the implication that online or hybrid models are inferior to in-person, on campus approaches for learning and teaching.
- **No Detriment Policy** - consider a broad (University-level) reflection on the No Detriment Policy including any impact/unintended consequences which may result in an uplift of awards.
- **Survey Fatigue** - with the advent of Pulse Surveys, whilst acknowledging their purpose, there is concern that this may lead to survey fatigue among our students and potentially impact on highly valued responses to more locally-gathered student feedback. Any reduction in course- and programme-level feedback could hamper our ability to improve our courses.
- **Data Requests** - consider processes to enhance the co-ordination of requests for information/data from central university to reduce workload in local areas.
- **Data Provision** - whilst acknowledging the welcome progress with data provision: Schools/Deaneries have access to less of the student survey responses (there is no information from courses with fewer than 10 responses); the course mark apps only provide average course mark and pass rate; demographic data is limited in granularity (restricting ethnicity to black, Asian, and minority ethnic “BAME” and “white” is likely to miss lots of information due to differences in attainment between groups within BAME grouping); PTES free-text responses are not specific to programme (separate data for online and on-campus programmes and MSc by research under taught regulations as well as standard taught MScs would assist with local interpretation and planning).

### 5.3 College of Science & Engineering

Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture thanked Heather Tracey (Deputy Head of Academic Affairs) for her work on the report.

The following key issues were noted for action at University level:

- **Personal Tutor and Student Support Review** - clarity is required over the plans for implementation of recommendations from the PT and Student Support Review, including timescale for intended implementation.
- **Mental Health Training** - provision of further training in mental health support for student support teams, to enable them to deal with School-level mental health support needs (e.g. via named contacts).
- **Communication** - need for improved channels of communication on key decisions coming out of core governance structures.
- **Postgraduate Research (PGR)** - move forward improvements associated with PGR annual review process as identified via the Service Excellence Programme (SEP).

- **EUCLID** - establish processes around the Student Systems Partnership Prioritisation Board to enable more visible prioritisation of EUCLID Developments.
- **On-campus Space and Resources** - prioritise developments to the built environment where quality of estate is poor (e.g. Engineering, Biology, GeoSciences). The delay in building projects is negatively impacting student recruitment and experience. Consideration of transport options for the King's Buildings campus and reinstatement of the shuttle bus are a priority for students accessing campus.

The Convenor commended the Colleges on the quality of the reports.

**Action: Academic Services to direct College issues to relevant individuals/areas for consideration and ensure that responses are disseminated to the College as part of the 2021-20 annual quality reporting process.**

## 6. MOOCs Annual Update 2019-20

The Committee received and discussed an update on the University's portfolio of MOOCs including: portfolio summary data; new courses; courses completing development; courses approved by strategy board; and enrolment and certificate data for all courses.

The Committee noted that MOOCs would be included in the annual quality reporting process once the regular reporting process had resumed.

## 7. No Detriment Policy

The Committee considered an analysis of the outcomes of the University's "no detriment" policy implemented for taught programmes in response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on students. It was noted that some Schools had seen increases in the proportion of undergraduate students achieving a first class or upper second class degree but at University level the increase was modest. However, though the proportion of students achieving a first class degree increased the attainment gaps for black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) and Widening Participation (WP) students have widened. The Committee agreed that further analysis is required to understand what has driven these differential levels of attainment in relation to equality and diversity.

**Action: Academic Services and the Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling, Student Systems Partnership to consider options for further analysis of the impact of the No Detriment Policy.**

## 8. Annual Reports 2019-20

### 8.1 Undergraduate Taught External Examiner Reports: Thematic Analysis

The Committee considered an analysis of data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) covering undergraduate programmes for the academic year 2019-20.

The Committee noted the high number of commendations across the University and the low number of issues requiring attention. The main theme of commendation across all three Colleges was the assessment process and the most commendations of a single sub-theme was for good practice and innovation (in the Programme Development theme). Of the issues highlighted by External Examiners the most frequently mentioning were in relation to the provision of information and issues raised in a previous report.

and resulting challenges have placed on colleagues. The majority of services reported that staff had adapted well to working from home, although this was more challenging for a few services where some key provision relies on in-person interaction (for example Student Disability Service and the Advice Place).

- **Working across boundaries**

Nearly all services reported on the benefits of improved and closer working with other areas. There was an increase in collaborative working with other teams, services and with Colleges and Schools to ensure appropriate responses to challenges and to support rapid change. This resulted in strengthening existing relationships and forging new ones.

- **Digital processes for enhancement**

Out of necessity, many processes had to be pivoted to digital provision. Services found much of this resulted in improved and streamlined processes which they intend to maintain and build upon. For some, the rapid change to digital processes meant implementing planned changes sooner. For others, digital processes remain more challenging in some areas, for example where key provision relies on in-person interaction. The Director of the Careers Services notes, “Just because we can deliver an effective service digitally doesn’t mean we should.”

The Committee approved the report and the areas identified for further consideration by the student support services.

## 9. **Student Staff Liaison Committee Guidance**

The Committee approved the following change to the membership section of the Operational Guidance of Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC): *‘Society Office Bearers of relevant academic societies within the School or subject area may attend SSLC meetings’*.

### **For Information and Formal Business**

## 10. **Task Groups**

The Committee noted the updates on activities of the two current task groups: the Personal Tutor (PT) system Oversight Group and the Data Task Group.

## 11. **Thematic Review 2018-19: Update**

The Committee noted the progress update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Thematic Review 2018-19: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students’ experiences of support at the University.

## 12. **Enhancement Theme: End of Theme Report**

The Committee noted the University’s end of year 3/theme report of the Enhancement Theme, Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience.

## 13. **External Examiners: Exceptional Appointments Report 2019/20**

The Committee noted the report on College approvals of exceptional External Examiner appointments made during 2019/20.

**14. Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses**

The Committee confirmed that it was content with progress implementing the recommendations from the internal periodic reviews.

**15. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**16. Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 25 February 2021, 2pm, MS Teams

The University of Edinburgh  
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

25 February 2021

**Quality Processes and Digital Maturity**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper invites Committee members to discuss future developments to quality processes.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. No recommendations are proposed in the paper. Actions identified in the Digital Maturity report will be discussed within Academic Services and with the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance initially.

**Background and context**

3. In semester one 2021/21, Professor Tina Harrison and the Quality Team worked with the Digital Transformation Programme in IS to undertake an assessment of digital maturity of the quality processes and the Senate Quality Assurance Committee.
4. The assessment explored how we could enhance our quality assurance processes and the work of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee through digital transformation. The objectives of the assessment were:
  - Improving the presentation and use of quality process outcomes;
  - Widening participation in quality assurance (QA) processes, focusing specifically on good practice sharing and student engagement;
  - Understand how to improve QA processes at the University; and
  - Enhancing efficiency and engagement during meetings with key stakeholders
5. The final report has recently been published and a summary report is available on the Committee wiki at:  
<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SQAC/Thursday+25+February+2021>

**Discussion**

***Digital Maturity Report Recommendations***

6. The recommendations from the Digital Maturity report can be broadly summarised as follows:
  - **Central quality hub:** use a single digital platform as a central hub for quality process outcomes (including good practice examples) to support collaborative working, workflow automation, organisation and storage, communication, escalation of actions, and closing the loop on actions. As part of this, explore coding/theming of quality process outcomes to support analysis and create an accessible source of data/evidence.
  - **Communication:** as part of a wider review of communication strategies, present the outcomes of quality processes in more engaging and accessible formats.

- **Student engagement:** continue work with the Students' Association to support student representation communication and student engagement with quality processes.
- **Data:** support data evaluation during quality processes and explore formalising the use of metrics in quality processes.
- **Meetings** (including SQAC and events): continue to explore options and engage with stakeholders

#### ***Deputy Secretary (Student Experience)***

7. Gavin Douglas Deputy Secretary Student Experience, who was interviewed as a key stakeholder for the Digital Maturity assessment, will attend the Committee meeting to outline his views on quality process enhancements.

#### ***Data to Support Quality Processes***

8. A number of discussions on data to support quality processes have taken place and these are summarised below to support the discussion.
9. At the meeting in February 2020, the Committee agreed to implement a new system for monitoring retention, progression, and attainment data. This decision was made in response to recommendations from the 2017/18 and 2018/19 Thematic Reviews. The Committee also discussed this matter at its meeting in September 2020, and agreed to task a small group to examine data set and methodological options for monitoring student retention, progression, and attainment data.
10. The Online Remote Examinations and Assessment working group [report](#) remitted the following action to the Committee:
  - The outcome of future online assessments should be prospectively mapped to a variety of student characteristics, to understand whether there is any change in systematic advantage or disadvantage of particular student groups. This should be reported through standard data dashboards and Schools asked to reflect on the data and outcomes in annual QA reports.

Guidance to on interrogating dashboards to explore this data is in preparation.

11. Additionally, at its meeting in December 2020, as part of the discussion on the No Detriment Policy paper, the Committee agreed that further analysis is required to understand what has driven differential levels of attainment in relation to equality and diversity.

#### **Resource implications**

12. No resource implications have been identified in this paper. There will be resource implications associated with enhancing the quality processes, however, there will be benefits to both the Quality Team (where resources are reducing) and also the wider University.

#### **Risk management**

13. No risks are associated with this paper.

#### **Equality & diversity**

14. No issues are associated with this paper.

**Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed**

15. Academic Services will manage implementation and communication of any actions.

**Author**

Nichola Kett, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services

19 February 2021

**Freedom of information**

16. The paper is open.

The University of Edinburgh  
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

25 February 2021

**Personal Tutor System Oversight Group**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides an update on the activities of the Personal Tutor System Oversight Group.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. For Information.

**Background and context**

3. The Committee, at the meeting held on Wednesday 9 September 2020, agreed that the Group would be maintained as an oversight forum during the transition to the new evolved model of Student Support.

**Discussion**

4. The Group met on Wednesday 17 February 2021 to consider considered examples of good practice and areas for further development arising from the School Annual Quality Reports 2019-20 and feedback from Senior Tutors gathered by the Deans of Students.
5. The Group also discussed how the University should manage the interim period during the transition from the PT system to the proposed evolved model of student support.

**Resource implications**

6. To be considered by the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review.

**Risk management**

7. Enabling a smooth transition between the PT system and the proposed new system of student support will be vital to ensuring the quality of the student experience at the University.

**Equality & diversity**

8. To be considered by the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review

**Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed**

9. The Group agreed that the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review team, the Deputy Secretary Student Experience and the Vice-Principal Students should be sent a copy of the notes of the meeting to help inform plans.

**Author**

**Brian Connolly**  
Academic Services

**Presenter**

**Brian Connolly**  
Academic Services

**Freedom of Information**

Open

**Senate Quality Assurance Committee  
Personal Tutor System Oversight Group**

Notes of the meeting held on **Wednesday 17 February 2021**  
at **10am** via **Microsoft Teams**

**Present:**

Professor Alan Murray <b>(Convener)</b>	Assistant Principal Students
Ros Claase	Senior Service Excellence Partner, Service Excellence Programme
Brian Connolly	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Rosie Edwards	Service Excellence Partner, Service Excellence Programme
Professor Scott Pirie	College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience, College of Science and Engineering

**Apologies:**

Nichola Kett	Head of Enhancement Team, Academic Services
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**1. School Annual Quality Reports**

The Group considered examples of good practice and areas for further development arising from the School Annual Quality Reports 2019-20.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) suspended the normal annual monitoring, review and reporting processes for 2019-20. Instead a light-touch interim process was put in place with the aim of complimenting ongoing academic contingency work during this academic year. Schools were invited to complete a streamlined reporting template focused on the impact of and learning from the Covid-19 pandemic but which also allowed for reflection on other aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience.

SQAC identified a number of themes arising from the reports and areas for further development at University level. The key themes related to the Personal Tutor (PT) system are:

- **Communication**

A theme that emerged across the School reports was University communications to students and staff and the need to ensure that University level communications to students align with local communications and plans as a key element to managing student expectations. There was also a widespread desire from staff for more information and clarity in relation to initiatives or projects that were halted due to the

pandemic, such as the Student Support and Personal Tutor Review, the Student Experience Action Plan, and the Curriculum Review, to assist Schools in their own curriculum and student experience plans.

- **Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC)**

Schools broadly welcomed the new ESC service and were able to recognise the longer-term benefits, but reported that the initial implementation had caused additional workload for staff, due to systems issues and response times, at a time when they were already under pressure. Some simplification of the process is in discussion as part of the recently announced assessment mitigation measures, in anticipation of a further increase in ESC requests from students. Looking ahead, the value of the ESC service will be in monitoring the ESC data to identify potential 'at risk' students, but the service needs to have the capacity to do this.

A report on these, and the other areas for further development, will be considered at the February meeting of the University Executive.

### Good Practice

The Group noted that the interim process had not required Schools to reflect on the PT system, however many had taken the opportunity to highlight an example of good practice as follows:

College	School/Deanery	Good Practice
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	Edinburgh College of Art	ECA pro-actively adopted specific elements of the broader UoE-wide review-in-progress of the PT system that we felt were immediately realisable and especially relevant within the context of our School.
	Economics	The new post of Manager of Student Welfare has allowed the School to address a number of issues that fell between roles of SSOs, PTs and Senior Tutor in the previous set up such as: (i) targeted coaching and study skills support for individual students; (ii) community engagement and development within the School (as part of the Sense of Belonging Initiative). The Senior Tutor and Student Support Officers are thus able to focus on their roles.
	Moray House School of Education and Sport	The School appointed a Coordinator for accessible learning in August 2019 and over the past year she has worked hard and in collaboration with colleagues within and beyond the School to increase inclusion and the School's capacity to be inclusive through a range of actions: Coordinating the allocations of students with specific SOA to personal tutors with background in that area.
	History, Classics and Archaeology	A 'Teaching in HCA' site provides a variety of resources to support teaching and Personal Tutoring, and assembles information on HCA and University policy, providing a 'one-stop shop' for teaching staff, especially those who are new to the School.  PT activities are reinforced by a number of year-wide group meetings each semester.

	Literatures, Languages and Cultures	Student Support Office and personal tutor support: the team transitioned rapidly from a mode of working in which 1:1 conversations with vulnerable students took place on site, to remote working. Multiple channels of communication were opened to maximise student engagement. Complex student cases were managed quickly, supportively, and meticulously. Personal tutors offered intensive 1:1 and group support to students in March-May, and offered virtual meetings to all students in semester 1, which has proved to be critical to supporting students as case numbers spiked in October.
	Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences	PPLS joined the Making Transitions Personal programme in 2019. Briefings informed PTs where MTP information is in EUCLID and best practice about its usage. The PT guidance document was updated in line with key changes, and communicated widely to PTs. PTs were encouraged to offer students both small group and 1:1 meetings, recognising that 1:1s do not suit all students. We will continue to develop this way of supporting PTs.
	Social and Political Science	Our efforts to articulate more clearly defined roles of UG PTs and SSOs continues to evolve. At the first opportunity, the School intends to renew these efforts and work to reduce PT/student ratios, working with subject areas to institute a more standard and transparent way of managing this process at the local level.
College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine	Edinburgh Medical School	MBCbB pastoral support: While the majority of students reported that the pastoral support they received in the period following lockdown (March to July 2020) was adequate, 12% in Y4 and 9% in Y5 raised concerns that there was a lack of contact, particularly from their personal tutor. There have been concerns in the past about variability in the quality of engagement with students from PTs. This may also have been exacerbated due to increased clinical commitments of PT at this time. We have replaced the role of PT with Professional Mentors (PM). The PM will give individual advice and encourage good medical practice in action. The Professional Mentor can give examples of coping with stressful clinical situations, and in establishing a healthy work-life balance. They can provide information on career options, how to develop career plans or focus on career goals, and have an understanding of possible career steps and evaluation of progress and self-reflection. Students are provided with the Professional Mentor List and supporting Biopics. They will be encouraged to contact anyone who they think suits their needs and interests. Students are encouraged to set agendas for meetings, follow through on discussed actions, accept constructive criticism, and

		be able to assess their own performance and the benefits derived from the mentoring relationship. They can share their online Portfolio to discuss ideas around professionalism and career development or they can share extracurricular ideas or discuss work-life balance. The hope is that students will develop a strong, friendly, mentoring relationship which will help them during their studies and beyond.
	Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences	The Master of Family Medicine programme is revising its PT system. The programme has appointed several new teaching fellows who have taken on personal tutoring as part of their role.
Science and Engineering	Physics and Astronomy	Widening participation students are tracked by the School via the acceptance process, and if they accept and come, their names are passed to the Senior PT, prior to the allocation of Personal Tutors to ensure they are allocated to an experienced PT who understand the difficulties that these students may have so they can be aware of their background when advising on course choices, for example to take the new “Fundamentals of Algebra and Calculus” on-line course offered by the School of Mathematics. This also makes PTs in general more aware of their background.

## 2. Feedback from Senior Tutors

The Group considered examples of good practice and areas for further development arising from Senior Tutor feedback gathered by the Deans of Students.

The Deans were asked to gather informal feedback in their respective Colleges about how PTs and Student Support staff are getting on this academic session – to find out if there are any lessons learned vis a vis student support, if there is any best practice to consider and whether hybrid is further exposing the challenges with the current system.

The following good practice was noted:

- **Online Support** - PT/SSO Teams channels have worked well (sense of community/support, facilitated training, improved communications between PTs and SSOs).
- **Online Meetings** - Some PTs like using Teams for PT meetings and have had successful group meetings (greater convenience and flexibility, more informality).
- **Student Engagement** - higher student participation in some fora (Staff Student Liaison committees, chat function helps student voice).
- **Single Point of Contact** - many students have found it helpful to have a single point of contact.
- **PT Prep Meetings** - meetings for PTs in advance of group meetings with students have been helpful for both new tutors but also for more experienced tutors to keep us up-to-date and to suggest specific topics for discussion.

- **Toolkits** – the toolkits have been helpful and supportive.
- **Wellbeing** – the new integrated service has been well received.

The following challenges were noted:

- **Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC)** - concerns about the timing of the implementation of the new ESC and the additional workload and stress this caused PTs, SSO, and ECS staff. Concerns regarding the extra assistance required to inform PTs and students of the new ESC system and the necessity to highlight to students the importance/benefits of involving the PT (if feasible/appropriate) when submitting a SC application (inherent risk of circumventing the PT). A major concern is the lack of automated notice to PTs that a case has been submitted.
- **Communication** – the initial lack/delay of communication to staff at the outset of the pandemic so that they could adequately support their students (e.g. whether to stay at home or move back to Edinburgh).
- **Online Meetings** - challenges of managing difficult conversations on Teams/boundaries in view of home working.
- **Social Isolation** - concerns about the lack of personal contact with students. Not meeting in person has made it harder to really know the new tutees. Non-verbal cues can be lost in online meetings and these are often key to establishing an effective rapport and communication.
- **Mental Health** - concerns about numbers of students with mental health issues and managing students of concern.

### 3. Transition Arrangements

The Group discussed the anticipated implementation of a new system of student support as proposed by the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review. It was noted that in the context of the ongoing pandemic the new system was unlikely to be fully implemented for a number of years. However, some areas of the University have already begun to diverge from the current PT system (i.e. the Medical School with its Professional Mentors) and there is anecdotal evidence that staff in other areas are transitioning from PT roles in the expectation of change. Therefore a strategic decision is needed in relation to how the University manages this interim period during the transition from the PT system to the proposed evolved model of support.

The Group agreed that the following issues need to be addressed:

- **Communication**  
In the immediate short term, a clear statement is needed on the status of the Review in terms of: What aspects will be rolled out? What the timelines will be? What resource will be made available (especially for the Wellbeing Advisors that will be critical to the new system)? How these changes align with the broader Curriculum Transformation projects? This statement should be directed to Heads of Schools and Colleges, and then cascaded to their staff and students, so that everyone involved in the PT system is aware of current plans and the direction of travel.
- **Policy**  
If local divergence from the PT system is permitted, does the [Academic and Pastoral Support Policy](#) need to be replaced by a new interim statement of policy applicable

across the whole University? Adherence to the PT system is intrinsic to the current Policy (e.g. all UG and PGT students must have a PT, all Schools/Deaneries must have a Tutoring Statement and organise a specific number of meetings for tutees) so an extended period of transition will require a more permissive policy statement.

- **Lead-in Time**

It was noted that Schools and Deaneries will need a long lead-in time for any new system of student support in order to: work out how different university policies and guidance will be impacted by the new system (support for study/academic progression/conduct/crisis situations); work out what the relationship will be between the Schools/Colleges and the central Wellbeing service; devise new work flows and lines of responsibility; consult with Schools/Deaneries and communicate to the University community; work out if we have the resource to run the system.

- **Resources**

It was noted that the implementation of the new, evolved model of student support will require additional resources for Schools/Deaneries in order to recruit sufficient professional services staff for the new system.

- **Interim Period**

Plans for the current transitional period need to ensure a clear direction of travel toward the new system of student support. Work undertaken during this interim period (e.g. to amend the Senior Tutor role, review the Support for Study Policy, and create a university-wide escalation framework) should contribute to and align with preparation for the implementation of the new system of student support. Otherwise a lot of time could be wasted on developing new processes for the current system that might be soon be out of date.

The Group agreed that the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review team, the Deputy Secretary Student Experience and the Vice-Principal Students should be sent a copy of the notes of the meeting to help inform plans.

**Brian Connolly**  
Academic Services  
February 2021

The University of Edinburgh  
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

25 February 2021

## **Enhancement Themes Update**

### **Executive Summary**

This paper presents the University's year one institutional plan and information on sector-wide projects and collaborative clusters of the Enhancement Theme, Resilient Learning Communities.

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

The paper is relevant to the Committee's responsibility for the quality assurance framework.

### **Action requested**

The Committee is asked to:

- note the institutional plan;
- cascade information about sector-wide projects and collaborative clusters as appropriate; and
- encourage sharing of examples of community building.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

See the 'Dissemination of Work' section of the report.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Resource implications for any additional activities/projects are managed by Academic Services in consultation with the relevant colleagues.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

Risks are considered as part of individual activities/projects.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

Equality and diversity will be considered as part of individual activities/projects.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

Open.

### **Key words**

Enhancement theme, evidence for enhancement

### **Originator of the paper**

Nichola Kett, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services  
10 February 2021



## Resilient Learning Communities

### Institutional Plan for: University of Edinburgh

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Institutional lead	Professor Tina Harrison (Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)		
TLG staff representative	Nichola Kett (Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement)		
TLG student representative	Fizzy Abou Jawad (Vice President Education)		
PhD Intern	To be appointed		
Edinburgh University Students' Association staff member	Stuart Lamont, Academic Policy Coordinator		
Institute for Academic Development	Dr Jon Turner, Director		
Doctoral education/researcher development representative	Dr Fiona Philippi (Head of Doctoral Education/Deputy Head of Researcher Development, Institute for Academic Development)		

#### Planned activity: Year 1

Overall outcomes/activity
<b>Overall aim: to identify activities that effectively build a sense of community and belonging and share these across the University in order to enhance the student experience.</b>

Outcomes and activities that develop throughout our work on the Theme will be detailed in future reports.

### Year 1 outcomes/activity

#### 1) Gather examples of community building in the hybrid context

This work is underway and will continue throughout the academic year, linking to existing quality processes where good practice examples are identified.

#### 2) Share examples

Examples will be shared through the methods outlined below. We will also explore new ways of sharing examples both within the University and across the sector.

#### 3) Support new activity

We are keen to support new community building activities, particularly those that are student-led. It is hoped that two PhD interns will be appointed, to work on behalf of the Doctoral College, in the Institute for Academic Development to strengthen the sense of community and belonging for postgraduate research students, with one intern focussing on the use of social media. We are also seeking to appoint up to 5 PhD interns to develop student-led activities as part of the University's work on Student Support, Community and Belonging.

#### 4) Evaluate

Consideration will be given to how to evaluate activities throughout our work on the Theme.

#### 5) Appoint a PhD intern to support Theme work

The post holder will support and contribute to the University's work on community building. Main responsibilities will be to:

- Support staff and student involvement in Enhancement Theme work.
- Assist with gathering and sharing good practice examples of community building from across the University and Students' Association.
- Develop and provide support for a network of PhD interns working on community building activities, to ensure oversight and coordination.
- Undertake external benchmarking activity to inform the University's work on the Enhancement Theme.
- Support communication, reporting and evaluation activity related to the Enhancement Theme, including assisting with drafting the end of year report to the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland.
- Participate in relevant internal and external events and meetings.

We previously identified the following existing University activities and priorities that link to the Theme:

- [Near Future Teaching](#) – the future of digital education
- Curriculum Review

- [Graduate attributes](#)
- Equality and diversity
- [Widening Participation Strategy](#)
- [Sense of belonging](#)
- Review of the Student Mental Health Strategy

### Dissemination of work

#### Communication methods:

- Internally: email; Institutional Team; Senate Quality Assurance Committee; Doctoral College Forum; Directors of Teaching Network; Teaching Matters blog; Learning and Teaching Conference; Students' Association groups/networks.
- Externally: Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC); Theme Leaders' Group (TLG); Enhancement Themes conference; and the University's and Students' Association's websites.

The Institutional Team will use existing committees, groups and networks to communicate about the Theme, to engage staff and students in Theme work, and to disseminate University and sector Theme outputs.

Building community is a sub-theme of the University's Learning and Teaching Conference, which takes place in June 2021. The Institutional Team will be involved in shaping Conference contributions.

Community and academic community are established tags on the [Teaching Matters blog](#).

An outcome of Theme could be a graphic representation of good practice activities similar to that produced for the [student transitions Enhancement Theme](#) to support dissemination of work.

### Collaborative cluster work

#### Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Communities

Colleagues from the Institute for Academic Development and the Moray House School of Education and Sport, plus involvement from the Universities of St Andrews and the West of Scotland, are leading a collaborative cluster looking at PGT learning communities.

### Supporting staff and student engagement

As outlined above the Institutional Team will use existing committees, groups and networks to communicate about the Theme, to engage staff and students in Theme work, and to disseminate University and sector Theme outputs.

Staff and students will be kept informed of the work of the Theme through the communication methods outlined above. Support and guidance can be provided by the

Institutional Lead and Theme Leaders Group staff member. Students will be supported through the Students' Association.

**Evaluation**

Consideration will be given to evaluation of impact as the areas of work develop.

<b>Plan author:</b>	Nichola Kett with contributions from Institutional Team members.
<b>Date:</b>	14 December 2020

Return to: <mailto:ARCAAdmin@gaa.ac.uk>

## ENHANCEMENT THEMES UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2021

The current Enhancement Theme (where students and staff across universities in Scotland work together on a topic to improve practice) is [resilient learning communities](#).

<b>Sector-wide Projects</b> involve higher education institutions working collaboratively with QAAS to enhance approaches to learning, teaching and the student experience	<b>Collaborative Clusters</b> bring together groups of institutions, including both staff and students, to work collaboratively with each other and QAAS to progress an area that will have benefit for the whole sector
<a href="#">Anti-Racist Curriculum (ARC) Project</a> Advance HE and QAAS will work with the tertiary sector to identify and curate existing resources, learn from current practice, and recognise best practice both in Scotland and beyond.	<a href="#">Decolonising the Curriculum in the Time of Pandemic</a> Aims to work with staff and students to expand and deepen sector-wide understanding of what decolonising the curriculum means in practice.
<a href="#">Higher Education: More than a Degree</a> (student-led project supported by QAAS and sparqs) Will explore issues and themes relevant to how HEIs and students' associations have recreated student communities in an online environment, and what enablers and barriers this has created.	<a href="#">Student Mental Wellbeing within our BAME and LGBTQ+ Learner Communities</a> Aims to build the capabilities of HEI staff to create inclusive curricula and learning communities that promote a sense of belonging and mental wellbeing for students with protected characteristics.
<a href="#">Addressing the Digital Divide</a> Will explore existing approaches to addressing the digital divide in the Scottish HE sector and internationally, seeking to develop a framework focused on embedding digital inclusion into quality enhancement processes.	<a href="#">Personalised Approaches to Resilience and Community (PARC)</a> Aims to develop, implement and evaluate activities that better prepare the individual student to be successful. It will take a direct approach to targeting and supporting student need and utilise diagnostic testing of students on pre-arrival/arrival.
<a href="#">Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)</a> Aims to consider how we recognise and help learners to build on learning accumulated in non-traditional pathways in 2021 and beyond.	<a href="#">Re-imagining Resilience for Taught Postgraduate Students</a> (led by the University) Aims to identify what resilience looks like in a pragmatic context, establishing a shared vocabulary that can be used to embed effective resilience strategies in universities, programmes and groups such as students and staff.
<a href="#">Stories of Resilience</a> Aims to support the development and nurturing of empathy across the Scottish HE sector by providing a platform where students and staff can share their experiences in their own words.	<a href="#">Exploring the Potential of Micro-Credentials and Digital Badging</a> Aims to explore the potential development of micro-credentials in relation to Graduate Apprentice programmes and work-based learning, their understanding by stakeholders, and their increasing relevance in our current disrupted circumstances.
<a href="#">Scottish Sector Learning from Covid-19</a> Aims to extend the evidence base of the Scottish sector's response to the pandemic with a thorough analysis of key information sources. Focused on identifying common practices and distinctive approaches to changes in discharging quality processes.	<a href="#">Programme Leadership: Strengthening Resilience, Support Learning Communities</a> Aims to deepen community and collaboration between programme leaders across the Scottish higher education sector and beyond.
<a href="#">Quality Assurance Agency Back Catalogue Review</a> Review of existing resources to ensure that they are accessible for our learning communities, practical for supporting institutional and sector colleagues in responding to present challenges, and relevant to the current Scottish HE sector priorities and interests.	<a href="#">Resilient Academic Leadership</a> Aims to explore the construct of 'resilience' as an intangible asset, with potential value to the Scottish sector in revealing its influence on the creation of successful groups or communities that can lead and effect change in the HE context.
<a href="#">Enhancement Theme Evaluation</a> Evaluation of the impact of 20 years of the Enhancement Themes and the enhancement-led approach in Scotland and of the current theme.	<b>The University's work on the Enhancement Theme is focused on gathering and sharing examples of community building activities.</b> <b>If you have any examples to share, please email <a href="mailto:nichola.kett@ed.ac.uk">nichola.kett@ed.ac.uk</a></b>

If you would like to know more about any of the areas of work listed and/or how to get involved, please email [ARCAAdmin@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:ARCAAdmin@qaa.ac.uk)

## Senate Quality Assurance Committee

25 February 2021

### Internal Periodic Review Responses

#### Description of paper

1. The Year on response from Internal Periodic Reviews 2018/19 and 14 week responses from Internal Periodic Reviews 2019/20.

#### Action requested / recommendation

2. For comment and consideration of the recommendations. The Committee is asked to confirm that they are content with progress.

#### Background and context

3. The following Year on response from Internal Periodic Reviews 2018/19:
  - Edinburgh College of Art (postgraduate taught and research provision)

The following 14 week responses from Internal Periodic Reviews 2019/20:

- Centre for Open Learning (undergraduate provision)
- Politics and International Relations (undergraduate provision)

IPR	Comment
<b>2018/19 responses</b>	
Edinburgh College of Art	<p>We look forward to hearing about progress on the recommendations in the School Annual Programme Monitoring report and we note the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on progressing with some of the recommendations.</p> <p>We note the introduction of regular, twice-per-semester ECA-wide student-staff liaison committee (SSLC) meetings (which build upon and link into the many local Subject Area SSLCs already in place) as an example of positive change.</p>
<b>2019/20 responses</b>	
Centre for Open Learning	We look forward to hearing about progress in the year on response on the recommendations that are still to be actioned. We note the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on progressing with some of the recommendations.
Politics and International Relations	We look forward to hearing about progress in the year on response on the recommendations that are still to be actioned. We note the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on progressing with some of the recommendations.

#### Discussion

4. See attached paper.

#### Resource implications

5. No additional resource implications

**Risk management**

6. No risk associated

**Equality & diversity**

7. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the internal periodic review process

**Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed**

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

**Author**

*Gillian Mackintosh  
Academic Policy Officer  
19 February 2021*

**Presenter**

*Academic Services*

**Freedom of Information  
Open**

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

1-year response report (incorporating the previous 14-week response report)

**PPR of (School):** Edinburgh College of Art  
**Date of review:** March 2019  
**Date of 14 week response:** 25/10/2019  
**Date of year on response:** February 2021 (delayed due to impact of Covid-19 pandemic)

The School/Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. 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.

<b>Rec. Number</b>  (or sub-number)	<b>Recommendation</b> (Note that in preparing this document a number of key staff members, noted in brackets, have been added by ECA as they will play an important supporting role in implementing the relevant recommendations.)	<b>Timescale for completion</b>	<b>14-week response</b>  <b><u>Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion</u></b>	<b>1-year response</b>  <b><u>(including where relevant a note of the “completion date”, and anything important that relates to what was said in the 14-week response)</u></b>
1	The review panel <b>strongly recommends</b> that ECA take immediate steps to ensure all postgraduate tutors and demonstrators receive a contract of employment before they commence any teaching duties. Teaching planning and allocation deadlines should be created in consultation with HR and firmly adhered to so that there is sufficient time for HR to process contracts for tutors and demonstrators before they begin teaching.	Initial policy setting already complete at ECA level. Will have full effect School-wide by:  August 2020	At the time of its PPR, ECA had made good progress in implementing the relevant contractual aspects of the University of Edinburgh’s <a href="#">Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators</a> (web link). More recently, the new <a href="#">Collective Agreement</a> (web link) with the UCU has re-enforced ECA’s resolve to address the causes of contract delays.  We recognise that teaching planning plays a key role in these issues. Since the PPR, ECA has implemented a new School-wide policy that requires earlier teaching planning by all 5 of ECA’s Subject Areas, which will ensure that ECA is able to issue offers and contracts in good time. Specifically, ECA has taken steps to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Implement more robustly a previously-agreed CAHSS GH timeline and process which requires Subject Areas to define and agree teaching plans in February;</li> <li>(ii) Offer contract hours to continuing GH by May/June;</li> <li>(iii) Ensure that the majority of contracts are issued between June – August.</li> </ul>	<b>Date of completion: November 2020 (but with some ongoing issues due to P&amp;M system)</b>  Since the 14-week report ECA considers that the issues identified by the PPR panel around the timely creation of contracts for tutors and demonstrators, and associated issues of timely payment, have been resolved. This progress is as a result of the plans outlined in said 14-week response.  The only caveat ECA would note is that, as with other areas of the University, ECA is now managing contracts and related issues through the new People & Money system. A significant number of issues have been identified with the practical operation of this system, which have been discussed extensively at University-level. ECA notes that these issues <u>have</u> had a negative effect on the positive progress made in this area, and as with other parts of the University is keen to see all issues with P&M ironed out as soon as possible.

	<p><b>Who:</b> Director of Professional Services and ECA Senior Management Team</p>		<p>These improvements are set in a context where ECA is simultaneously implementing earlier overall planning in a number of areas, with clearly defined and observed timelines and deadlines across a wide range of interdependent planning processes.</p> <p>To support the reforms in teaching planning and GH contract processes, alongside the noted wider reforms, ECA has recently appointed a brand new admin post (effective 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2019). Part of the remit for this new post is to support the DoPS in working with the 5 Heads of Subject, and other administrators involved in teaching planning and GH contract and offer making, to better understand and implement solutions to the barriers that result in late teaching planning. This work will directly support ECA’s adherence to the agreed CAHSS timelines and activities.</p> <p>These tasks are complex and involve contributions to wider cultural shifts, bound up as they are in matters of planning culture, workload concerns, availability of information/data, and adequate systems and resource. Supporting a shift to earlier teaching planning will, however, have the immediate effect of ensuring that the majority of our tutors receive contracts and offers in good time. ECA Planning &amp; Resources Committee (P&amp;RC) will oversee, and be accountable for, the successful implementation of these changes.</p> <p>N.B. ECA recognise that, although there may be a small number of legitimate reasons for contracts or offers of additional hours to be issued at shorter notice than noted above, such cases will need to be justifiably exceptional in future, and comprise only a small minority of the overall number of contract offers.</p>	
2	<p>The panel note that change will continue with the new estates strategy and in-coming head of ECA but <b>recommend</b> that early consideration be given</p>	<p>August 2020 for direct changes to curriculum approval timelines.</p> <p>2021-2023 for implementation of</p>	<p>A number of initiatives and changes are already in progress to support development of a more sustainable and attractive suite of postgraduate programmes and courses, that will together demonstrate a clearer overall postgraduate strategy (see also Recommendation 4). Of particular note:</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: August 2020 + February 2021 (but aspects will be ongoing indefinitely)</b></p> <p>Further to the 14-week response, ECA notes that major steps have been made towards a more strategic approach to estates and facilities utilisation and prioritisation in regards to all learning, teaching,</p>

	<p>to enhancements to postgraduate provision, and enhancements carried out expeditiously, to allow curricular developments to inform decisions on physical estate.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> ECA Principal and ECA Senior Management Team</p>	<p>the new ECA strategic plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on the achievement of the £5.5m AHRC Creative Informatics grant, led by ECA in October 2018, we are developing further links and collaborations with and within EFI. ECA is a key contributor to the ongoing development of EFI PG programmes and courses, with 6 of our staff partially funded to develop new curriculum, and a number of further staff likely to contribute in the coming months. Some of these staff members will continue to actively contribute to EFI over the coming years.</li> <li>• ECA’s Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group, chaired by the ECA Principal, is currently implementing changes in timeline and process for vetting and supporting the development of new and significantly revised programmes and other curriculum changes. A crucial component of these new processes will be the assessment of such proposals against clearly defined criteria, which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribution of the proposal towards achieving the overall PG profile and recruitment strategy for ECA;</li> <li>▪ Consideration of areas of synergy and collaboration with other taught programmes within and beyond ECA;</li> <li>▪ The value of any areas of joint teaching or collaboration;</li> <li>▪ Contribution to any new and/or innovative areas of teaching and research that we wish to grow and/or develop.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Within the current planning round, covering the period 2020-23, ECA will reiterate its strategic objective to engage with the wider University through offering courses, collaborations, and other linkages. Together these engagements will strengthen ECA’s visibility within the University, and broaden the scope of its contributions.</li> <li>• ECA has established a short-term “Size and Shape Group”, which has met monthly since May 2019 to consider, articulate, and plan for the desired size and distribution of its student population over the</li> </ul>	<p>and research matters (including UG, PGT, and PGR disciplines, courses, and programmes). Chief amongst these developments has been the solidification of the ECA Space Strategy Group (incorporating as it does participation from all areas of ECA, and both academic and Prof Service representatives). This Group (which reports to ECA Planning and Resources Committee) is tasked with ensuring that spaces and facilities are both represented clearly in the appropriate audit trails, and are prioritised for usage in ways that are informed by the ECA Plan (and associated L&amp;T, research, and Subject Area strategies).</p> <p>As noted in the 14-week response, a new degree programme development process has recently been introduced, to ensure that all future programme developments have a clearer and stronger articulation of the ways in which estates and associated facilities are to be used and supported. This process will be of great benefit to the ECA Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group in ensuring that only the most soundly-conceptualised programmes, which have a clearly articulated vision for estates and facilities usage (where relevant), progress forward to the formal proposal stage, and that if/when they do, the appropriate shared understanding amongst all stakeholders will already be in place.</p> <p>Furthermore, ECA has very recently amalgamated the previously-separate key areas of Learning and IT support, and Technical Services support, into a singular Professional Service structure. The Head of this new service was appointed on 17 February 2021, and will be a key leader in helping to ensure that all our estates-related facilities are conceptualised, supported, and delivered in ways that are strategically informed, sustainable, and which ensure appropriate parity across key stakeholders.</p> <p>See also Recommendation 6.</p>
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			<p>next 10 years. The work of this Group has been informed by all of the interdependent discussions and plans described above, and is actively feeding in to the wider estates planning work within the School.</p> <p>In short, ECA is thinking hard about what curriculum it should offer, the size and distribution of student population that should engage with this curriculum, and how the future estate should be configured to optimally support this. ECA is undertaking this work with an eye on the farther future, 10 years away and beyond, accepting that any forward-thinking School will always be in a state of ongoing change. The apparently high estate demands required by many of ECA's diverse set of disciplines make this a particularly important moment for careful consideration, with a view to future student demand, developing pedagogical approaches, and the future shape of these disciplines.</p>	
3	<p>The review team notes that many students and staff members do not feel themselves to be part of a wider ECA community, identifying most clearly with their subject area. The panel <b>recommends</b> that the ECA leadership team work with colleagues at all levels and across all subject areas to collectively articulate a shared vision and sense of purpose in terms of the culture and identity of ECA.</p> <p><i><b>Who:</b> ECA Principal and ECA Senior Management Team</i></p>	August 2020	<p>Through the current planning round (see also Recommendation 2) and through the work we are doing to inform our estate development, ECA P&amp;RC will work and consult with staff and students to collectively understand and articulate our shared values, vision, and purpose. Indeed, a major driving factor for the ongoing estates development plans, which ECA hopes will lead to the majority of academic colleagues and students being based in or around the Lauriston campus, is to foster a more cohesive sense of academic, physical, and social community.</p> <p>In the nearer term, ECA will look carefully at whether there are practical steps that can be taken to further develop the sense of an ECA community for students and staff. Such steps may include aiming to deliver more disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching, currently dispersed across the central area, within the existing Lauriston estate. ECA will also look carefully at the extensive existing portfolio of PG-focussed research seminars, looking for any potential areas of synergy or overlap that might be leveraged to bring such communities closer together.</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: Summer 2020 (+ ongoing)</b></p> <p>ECA recruited a new Principal (Prof Juan Cruz) in the autumn of 2019. A key area of work for the ECA Principal over the past year, despite the massive impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on all aspects of day-to-day operations in our School, has been to undertake a significant package of work to consider the value proposition of ECA as a whole, a significant part of which relates directly to the issues of community and identity which form the basis of this recommendation.</p> <p>Key progress made over the past year includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular ECA-wide 'staff forum' events (conducted via Teams since March 2020), nearly all of which have attracted the largest staff participation levels since the ECA-UoE merger;</li> <li>• An extensive series of value proposition workshops, conducted by an expert external company (NOUS), attendance at which has been drawn from across ECA (with both</li> </ul>

academic and Prof Service colleagues well represented);

- Regular, twice-per-semester ECA-wide student-staff liaison committee (SSLC) meetings (which build upon and link into the many local Subject Area SSLCs already in place).

As a result of the NOUS workshops, in particular, ECA is heading towards a much more widely understood and shared sense of identity, the first articulations of which are now incorporated into the latest ECA Plan & Vision document – though of course this will be an ongoing process, subject to refinement and distillation as ECA's staff base evolves, and our programme offer develops. Naturally, there is also a strong interaction here with University-level developments (for example, the forthcoming curriculum transformation project).

On a more practical front, ECA would draw attention to the major success of the ECA café refurbishment, now fully operational (until Covid-19) since the PPR was conducted on-campus in 2019. This has become a major centre of community focus for ECA, and on a regular (pre-pandemic) weekday is a hive of cross-ECA activity (for both staff and students). ECA understands that a number of other areas of the University are drawing inspiration for their own community-building plans from the successes of the ECA café.

Further issues relating to the shape and structure of our physical campus presence and distribution remain on the table, focussed to a significant extent through the ECA Space Strategy Group. But the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our previously-established estates (re)-development plans will be significant – and a full resumption of these conversations depends upon a wider and prolonged return to on-campus occupancy for staff and students.

<p>4.0 (Overall finding, with sub-points listed separately below)</p>	<p>The panel further <b>recommends</b> the articulation of a clear postgraduate strategy.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> <i>PGR and PGT Programme Directors and Boards of Studies (ECA PGT Director &amp; ECA PGR Director)</i></p>	<p>August 2020 (combined UG/PG L&amp;T strategy)</p>	<p>ECA acknowledges that it needs to develop a formal PG strategy that sets key School-wide objectives, and describes the strategic steps needed to achieve them. However, this strategy cannot and should not be framed in isolation; rather, it needs to tessellate sensibly with ECA’s UG offerings.</p> <p>In this 14-week response ECA has addressed a number of identified sub-Recommendations, noted below. The work to fit them together to form a singular, cohesive, integrated UG/PG strategy, is ongoing. A number of focussed meetings have already taken place, involving the ECA Directors of L&amp;T (UG, PGT, PGR) and other senior colleagues. Over the current academic year this work will crystallise into a single ECA L&amp;T Strategy, which will include components that speak specifically to PGT and PGR.</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: ongoing (but with caveats as noted)</b></p> <p>As noted in the 14-week update, ECA is currently working on producing a single L&amp;T strategy, which includes components devoted specifically to PGT and PGR. This document remains in active development.</p> <p>It should also be noted that as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, ECA produced an extensive (~60 pages) “Hybrid Teaching Strategy” document, focussed on supporting ECA’s rapid adaptation to online/hybrid teaching for its several hundred courses. This document singularly integrated UG and PGT areas, to help support academics and Prof Service teams across the School to prepare for a/y 2020-21. The document is available to all ECA staff via: <a href="https://edin.ac/eca-hybrid">https://edin.ac/eca-hybrid</a></p> <p>The Hybrid Teaching Strategy document will be updated ahead of a/y 2021-22.</p> <p>Beyond then, if the University can assume a return to something more like “normal”, ECA’s plan is to further evolve the Hybrid Teaching Strategy document to become a singular ECA Learning &amp; Teaching Strategy (integrating UG and PGT together), which will be integrated within the wider ECA Plan &amp; Vision.</p> <p>As noted elsewhere in the 1-year response to Recommendations 4.7 and 4.8, the Covid-19 pandemic had led to an enormous range of challenges for many areas of the University, and particularly for ECA – especially in the domain of L&amp;T. In Spring 2020, and in direct response to the huge uncertainties created by the pandemic, ECA made the decision to suspend a significant number of PGT programmes with historically low recruitment numbers (a range of other factors were also considered in this process, but student intake data was the most important consideration) – this process was conducted following prompts from the wider University for Schools to</p>
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				streamline and consolidate their course and programme plans, and of course many programmes were also suspended in other Schools. A significant concern during this process was the issue of impact upon student recruitment in September 2020. In the end, and as noted in 4.7 and 4.8, PGT recruitment was very strong, and certainly well above what might have been expected with a ~50% reduction in programme count. Considered now with a few months of further distance, ECA is looking carefully at what can be learnt from this process, alongside a burgeoning set of potential curricular plans emerging across the School for a new and strategically considered set of PGT programmes. A further factor in play here is the opening of EFI, with ECA a major partner in this new cross-University curricular enterprise. Developments in EFI continue to stimulate much discussion about the future direction that certain aspects of ECA's PGT offer should take.
4.1	<p>The panel further <b>recommends</b> that the postgraduate strategy recommended in Section 1.5 take greater account of the specific challenges for students undertaking practice-based research.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> PGR Programme Directors (ECA PGR Director)</p>	<p>Initial work in Semester 1/2 of 2019-20.</p> <p>Then, August 2020 for Subject Area actions, with further, longer term outcomes in capital development and programmes</p>	<p>A working group of Subject Area PGR Directors has reported on this, and the report has been discussed more widely with ECA management. We will run a workshop with students this year (a/y 2019-20) to garner responses and to foster further discussion of the issues. The outcomes will be discussed at the ECA PGR Committee in the current academic year, with a view to agreeing actions in Subject Areas/programmes. There will also be input to the ECA capital plan in terms of enhancing practice-based provision and identity, and in discussions of new courses and programmes associated with EFI.</p> <p>In parallel, ECA will seek to learn from identified examples of good practice in external organisations and events. There are ongoing discussions with a number of such external groups that may lead to the development of an ECA-hosted event, initially as a one off, focussed on Practice as Research. Such an event would draw in a range of ECA PGR-, and potentially PGT-oriented, students and staff.</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: March 2021 (+ ongoing)</b></p> <p>The PGR-focussed workshop noted in the 14-week update had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This event has recently been discussed within the ECA PGR Committee, and has been rescheduled for Semester 2 (a/y 2020-21), to take place in March 2021.</p>
4.2	The panel <b>recommends</b> that future		During academic year 2018-19 the PGR Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) discussed the need for	<b>Date of completion: Summer 2021 (+ ongoing)</b>

	<p>postgraduate strategies put together by ECA should incorporate opportunities for ECA students and staff members to socialise and share their research outside of their specific subject areas. Specifically, they <b>recommend</b> establishing an ECA-wide PGR forum to be attended by both students and staff members. This should be an annual opportunity for all PGR students to present their work to a wider audience than their own supervisory team and subject area colleagues.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> PGR Programme Directors (ECA PGR Director)</p>	<p>May/June 2020 (initial pilot event)</p> <p>August 2020 (complete planning of the new PGR Forum)</p> <p>August 2021 (delivery + evaluation of the PGR Forum)</p>	<p>opportunities to present work to peers outside Subject Area and disciplinary boundaries. There is recognition that research groups and the Research Successes Forum provide opportunities for interaction, but that exchanges of research ideas, practice, and findings across ECA's PGR community could be more fluid than at present.</p> <p>The PGR Team supported an event run by and for students during Semester 2 of 2018/19. However, there is a clear need for further development and fostering of staff engagement. PGR students feel that this is important for a sense of research community, and that it is an area of PRES evaluation that shows room for improvement.</p> <p>Development of a new event, with a working title of "ECA PGR Forum", will be done in consultation with the 5 Subject Area PGR Directors and the PGR SSLC during Semester 1/early Semester 2 2019-20, and also through engaging the support of the ECA RKEI Director so as to foster wider research staff engagement. There will be a pilot event, run by the PGR SSLC with Subject-Area PGR Director support in May/June 2020, and a roll-out of a minimum of 2 events per year in 2021-22. Barriers to success include the ongoing pressure on research staff to engage with REF in the period, securing appropriate facilities, and budget availability.</p> <p>In parallel, and directly related the comment on Recommendation 3, ECA will explore the potential to involve PGR students more directly in framing and running research seminars, a practice that is well known in other institutions. An idea currently being explored is to develop tiered mentorship programmes involving PGR students at various stages of their studies, with oversight from more experienced academic(s). Such an approach has the potential synergic benefit of giving PGR students experience in leadership and management, a valuable area in which to demonstrate competence when seeking later employment.</p>	<p>In addition to the PGR-focussed comment in 4.1, discussions are taking place at the moment about a larger PGR/Research "festival of research" type event, potentially due to take place in summer 2021. This event was discussed during the November 2020 ECA PGR Committee (and noted in the associated minutes), and at the February 2021 ECA RKE committee. There is a possibility that this could be timed to coincide with the UG Graduate Show, to serve as a showcase of contributions from across ECA.</p>
4.3	PGT students report that in general they are satisfied with their	August 2020 (identification of 'hot spots')	The issue of course availability, at both UG and PGT levels, is a perennial challenge across the whole University. In this respect ECA is no different, and the School acknowledges	<b>Date of completion: Summer 2020 (+ ongoing)</b>

<p>learning experiences. However, some PGT students raised concerns that they have been forced to take undergraduate-level courses as part of their programme due to their preferred postgraduate choices being taken by undergraduate students. This has greatly reduced their ability to specialise in their preferred areas of study. PGT students who are converting from a different subject at undergraduate level state that they sometimes need to rely heavily on the help of their classmates to master skills required for their programme, and PGT students with an undergraduate background in the same subject they are studying at Masters level sometimes experience strong overlap between material covered at undergraduate level and material covered within the first few months of their PGT programme. The panel <b>recommends</b> that these issues are taken into account in the</p>	<p>August 2020 and beyond (Boards of Studies policy around course capping)</p> <p>August 2021 (measures implemented to alleviate the most perennial course capping issues)</p> <p>August 2021 (phase out of shared lower level UG-PGT teaching)</p>	<p>that students can be left frustrated if they are unable to access their preferred optional course(s). There are two common causes for such issues: (i) timetabling clashes; (ii) capping of course sizes. In terms of the former, there is already work ongoing to seek compatible timetabling of the most common course options at various levels. However, solving the timetabling issue requires an institution-wide approach, which is ongoing and to which ECA will continue to contribute.</p> <p>In terms of the issue of course capping, the studio-, workshop-, and seminar- based nature of many courses at ECA makes this a particularly challenging issue. Course proposers will continue to be challenged to develop curriculum that is scalable, through Boards of Studies policy. The most direct solutions involve the development of new pedagogical approaches (which we note as common practice in other areas of the University), and/or designing courses in such a way as to make it practically feasible to teach them more than once per year. All such measures will, in time, contribute to the kind of cultural shift needed to encourage more scalable new curricula. In terms of the curricula that is currently offered, the ECA PG/T Director will work during 2019-20 to identify the key 'hot spots' where course capping is a perennial issue, and work with Subject Area Heads and wider colleagues to seek solutions.</p> <p>ECA acknowledges that there are a number of issues with the practice of shared UG/PGT teaching. The School would contend, however, that in the case of shared SCQF Level 10/11 teaching (i.e. final year Hons/Masters-level courses that share a degree of contact time, but with separate course codes, learning outcomes, and assessment), there are sensible arguments to continue such practices that align with both pedagogical and resource-usage priorities (as long as there is clear and justifiable differentiation between the Level 10/11 course versions, and as long as students are clearly informed).</p> <p>In the small minority of cases where a degree of shared teaching takes place between lower-level UG and Masters-</p>	<p>During the Covid-19 pandemic, ECA has moved to a singular, integrated UG+PGT Board of Studies (BoS) framework. The most like scenario is that this will continue in perpetuity.</p> <p>One key advantage of such a singular BoS structure, particularly for a School as large as ECA, is that all proposed UG and PGT courses are seen by the same set of Board members, and hence issues of parity, distinctiveness, strategy, alignment, and general learning design can be appraised with appropriately forensic detail and consideration.</p> <p>In light of the PPR recommendation 4.3, the integrated ECA BoS is presently reviewing its entire BoS workflow/pipeline, and the specific issue of Hons/PGT versions of a given course is going to be looked at very carefully (work on this commenced prior to the disruption caused by Covid-19 in March 2020, but was temporarily placed on hold for obvious reasons). The intention will be to develop a clearly articulated strategy, workflow, documentation, and set of expectations, which will lead to a more strategic and sustainable course offering.</p> <p>As noted in the 1-year response to the main Recommendation 4.0, a more strategically-defined vision for ECA's PGT offering is continuing to emerge. Plans that in some cases have been considered over a long period of time have inevitably been accelerated as ECA looks to deal with, and learn from, lessons learned from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
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	<p>recommended Postgraduate Strategy, with a clear articulation of the ethos and distinctiveness of PGT study within ECA.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> PGT Programme Directors and Boards of Studies (ECA PGT Director)</p>		<p>level, ECA agrees that such practices may not always be conducive to optimal student experience (though there may have originally been understandable reasons to develop such practices that relate to limited spaces/resources). To address this, ECA has taken, and is continuing to take, steps to develop new curricula and teaching strategies in the affected areas that will eliminate such practices entirely from 2021/22. ECA will also no longer permit the design of new courses that involve such a model of shared teaching.</p> <p>(See also the response to Recommendation 4.7, below.)</p>	
4.4	<p>Despite the generally positive experiences reported by online students, the review team are concerned by the lack of pedagogical consideration of the specific needs of online learners on the online MSc Digital and Media Design programme, given student's reported experiences of the way in which material is structured and presented to online learners. The panel <b>recommends</b> that as part of a wider postgraduate strategy for ECA, further attention should be paid to curriculum delivery methods and student support for online students, with an evidence-based approach towards the design of online learning experiences</p>	<p>May 2020 (engagement of DMD students with External Examiner)</p> <p>August 2020 (initial MSc DMD programme review and recommendations + findings of ECA online learning working group – see also Recommendation 4.5 below)</p>	<p>Ongoing development of the Digital Media Design Programme is informed by a Principal's Teaching Award Scheme project ("CollaboratED: Collaborative Learning in a Shared Studio Environment for Digital Media Design Students") in which the Programme Director and colleagues are explicitly investigating improved support for online learners. This involves analysis of a number of types of data about students' experiences and learning needs. Over the next year, resulting insights will be used to develop and nuance the processes used in individual courses. It needs to be borne in mind that most courses in this programme are based very firmly on design projects and fundamentally active learning, including through collaborative group work.</p> <p>That said, in light of this recommendation a review of the MSc Digital Media Design (DMD) programme will be conducted with the Programme Director and wider academic team. Examples of University of Edinburgh best practice will be drawn upon, further internal expertise will be engaged (e.g. ECA Learning Technology team), and the potential for wider UoE support for programme development will also be explored (e.g. drawing on expertise within the IAD). Student engagement with the review will also be sought.</p> <p>In the current academic year (2019-20) we will also work to ensure that online students are given the same opportunities to speak directly to External Examiners as those on campus. Whilst our online students are already</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: ongoing</b></p> <p>In light of the Covid-19 pandemic over the past year, ECA's 14-week and the 1-year responses to Recommendation 4.4 must be considered in a rather different light to that of late 2019/early 2020.</p> <p>Whilst ECA fully agrees that all programmes should be periodically reviewed, and pedagogical methods considered in a broad and research-informed way in terms of their ongoing appropriateness, the urgency of doing this for the specific programmes identified has necessarily been deprioritised for the time being.</p> <p>A key factor in play here must be the recognition that since September 2020, essentially the whole University (other than those programmes already solely online) has adopted a hybrid teaching approach that is remarkable similar to that highlighted as problematic in the ECA PPR. Such an approach considers the online/digital and on-campus cohorts as essentially constituting a singular "hybrid" cohort, which is precisely the model employed by the DDM/DMD programme pairing (a not-dissimilar approach is also being taken wholesale across EFl).</p> <p>As such, ECA does not feel that it is in a position to radically overhaul this at the present time. Rather, we continue to reflect upon the ways that School-wide hybrid teaching has impacted upon our pedagogical</p>

	<p>that scaffold student learning (through strategies such as chunking and active learning). This should include more opportunities for online students to interact with course material, rather than the current focus of relying on virtual access to on-campus sessions for online learners.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> Programme Directors for Online PGT Programmes</p>		<p>able to engage in such discussions, we will further emphasise the importance of this communication channel as a useful conduit for direct, actionable course and programme feedback.</p>	<p>and practical teaching models (in ways that are both positive and negative), and we will prioritise a considered and forward-looking approach that seeks to take the best of both worlds in the years to come.</p>
4.5	<p>The panel <b>recommends</b> that consideration should be given to the purpose and future of online learning as a whole within ECA as part of a wider ECA postgraduate strategy.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> ECA PGT &amp; ECA PGR Directors and Board of Studies</p>	<p>August 2020 (findings of ECA online learning working group)</p> <p>2021-2 for PGR Distance Learning model</p> <p>2022-3 for PGT Programmes (if any new)</p>	<p>ECA is aware that the costs in developing and delivering quality, new online learning programmes is significant. Elements of online learning already take place across ECA via LEARN and other platforms, and ECA has engaged in MOOC development on a number of fronts, but a fully integrated online programme requires considerable resource, and clearly defined and understood strategic objectives.</p> <p>To this end, online learning has been identified as a key issue by the ECA Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group (RASG), including the question of PGR online learning. A working group, initially reporting to ECA RASG, has recently (September 2019) been established, Chaired by the ECA Director of Technology Strategy, and with membership including the ECA Directors of L&amp;T (UG, PGT, PGR), and the ECA Director of Communications and Engagement. It will consult with the Centre for Digital Education and the Near Future Teaching project, building upon best practice at Edinburgh and at external institutions, as well as drawing on findings from research into market trends and demand. However, the group will prioritise high quality digital education first and foremost, along with its alignment to broader ECA research strands</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: ongoing</b></p> <p>In relation to the potential development of an online-based PGR programme, ECA notes that this issue has been discussed on multiple occasions within the CAHSS PG Education Committee, and there is further work ongoing at CAHSS-level and UoE-level in this regard. Within ECA, paperwork to propose models for both online and distance PGR programmes are being worked on at present, and will be presented to the ECA PGR Committee later in a/y 2020-21 (acknowledgement of and information about this was recently provided to CAHSS PG Education Committee). ECA is also playing a central role in the development of the UNA Europa PGR collaborative doctorate, which (at least initially) will be delivered via online channels.</p>

			<p>and strengths. The initial focus of this working group will be centred on PGT and PGR programmes (see also below).</p> <p>During academic year 2019-20, the ECA PGR Director will circulate a policy paper on Distance Learning PhD models, with a view to introducing such a programme for 2021-2. There appears to be genuine demand for distance learning, and a recent paper at CAHSS PG Education Committee has established the wider University context.</p>	
4.6	<p>The panel <b>recommends</b> that the recommended ECA-wide postgraduate strategy should include strategic consideration of skills development and employability for its postgraduate students.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> ECA PGT &amp; ECA PGR Directors and Board of Studies</p>	<p>November 2019 (new programme-level early approval processes)</p> <p>August 2021 (sharing of good practice from accredited programmes at specifically-focussed PGT/PGR Committees)</p>	<p>ECA was pleased that the panel recognised the good practice in this area already embedded into curriculum practice across the School. Our reading of this recommendation is that there is some unevenness in provision across the School, and more might be done to share good practice and highlight what is done more explicitly. This is especially relevant given that a significant number of ECAs UG and PGT programmes benefit from external (professional) accreditation. We will look to find ways to foreground such good practice, including at relevant PGT and PGR Committees.</p> <p>Issues of skills development and employability have been central to a number of recent new programme designs (examples being the newly launched undergraduate BMus Music and BSc Acoustics and Music Technology degrees) and this good practice will be shared with colleagues looking to develop new curricula.</p> <p>To this end, a specific implementation of this Recommendation can be seen in newly defined ECA-level processes and guidance for new (and majorly changed) programmes. ECA has recently (October 2019) introduced a new School-stage early development process for such programmes (i.e. in advance of the initial CAHSS/College-level “Early Notification” stage) that will require proposers to provide a range of narrative commentaries that relate to skills development, employability, and a range of other key areas. By drawing attention to these important issues at the earliest possible stages, the intention is to embed them deeply within the cultural norms and expectations of colleagues across the School.</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: November 2020.</b></p> <p>The key recommendation here, when considered in the context of ECA’s 14-week response, is essentially that ECA could more strongly promote the sharing of good practice in relation to skills development and employability, since there are already a number of very strong examples of good practice across the School. As noted in the 14-week response (and the 1-year response to 4.0, 4.3, and 4.8), a stronger emphasis on these issues has already been baked-in to the new degree programme proposal process, which applies to both UG and PGT programmes.</p> <p>In addition, it should be noted that as of December 2020, ECA is now operating with a singular/joint UG+PGT School-level learning and teaching committee, the <i>ECA Education Committee (EEC)</i>. An important rationale for the formation of this was to support better and clearer sharing of good practice in relation to curriculum development and review at all levels (which of course includes issues of skills development and employability).</p> <p>A small cross-ECA working group has recently been convened to look at the issue of graduate skills development and employability, which has come about in part due to issues stemming from necessary changes to the format and conceptualisation of the ECA Graduate Shows caused by impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The group will be looking at ways to foster sharing of good practice, feeding in to the ongoing discussions within EEC mentioned above.</p>

				<p>In relation to PGR programmes, the issue of skills development and employability has been discussed on multiple occasions over the past year within ECA PGR Committee meetings. The feeling within this Committee is that certain aspects of this recommendation, such as CV development and interview skills, are already very well covered by the IAD. These are supplemented by ECA’s Research Successes Forum (for staff and PGR students) and its PGR-focused Survive and Thrive workshops.</p>
4.7	<p>The panel <b>recommends</b> that in creating an ECA-wide Postgraduate Strategy, there should be a strong emphasis on the clear delineation between undergraduate and postgraduate level teaching. The strategy should specify which PGT programmes are intended as conversion courses programmes (programmes for students with no undergraduate background in a specific subject area) and which as specialisations (programmes allowing students with an undergraduate background in a specific subject area to further specialise within this area), and this information should be made clear to potential applicants.</p>	<p>August 2020 (initial findings of engagement project)</p> <p>August 2021 (enhanced external programme-level communications)</p>	<p>This Recommendation ties in quite closely with that of 4.3, addressed above. Noted here is ECA’s response to the issue of “conversion” vs “specialisation” programmes.</p> <p>ECA feels that the specific Recommendation that all PGT programmes should be clearly categorised and marketed as either “conversion” or “specialisation” is particularly challenging, for a number of reasons that pertain to both ECA, and many other Schools across the University. A key issue is that whilst some programmes may indeed be so categorisable, many of ECA’s PGT programmes fall somewhere between the two broadly named categories. In many cases, a certain level and type of background is often essential, but the whole point of the programme is to bring together a range of people from a range of backgrounds for a shared, co-beneficial educational experience. This issue is clearly of great contemporary relevance, in the context of increasingly cross-University curricula, and the burgeoning of EFI. ECA is concerned that simply categorising all PGT programmes into one of two such categories carries with it the risk to appearing to “undersell” what such “conversion” programmes actually represent.</p> <p>That said, ECA does recognise that there is always room to improve the clarity and quality of external marketing and communications information, so that prospective students have the clearest, most representative view of what is on offer, and why. To this end a new engagement/recruitment project has recently begun (started April 2019), led by the ECA Director of</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: ongoing</b></p> <p>As noted in the 14-week response, ECA does not fully agree that a strict delineation between “conversion” and “specialisation” programmes is necessary nor appropriate.</p> <p>However, we strongly agree that improved clarity of communication to prospective students about the nature of each of our programmes is important, and is something that we should improve across the board.</p> <p>We also agree that it is important to have clearly articulated course descriptors for UG and PGT courses, and especially so where there is a degree of shared teaching between, say, SCQF Level 10 and 11 “versions” of a course (see also Recommendation 4.3 response).</p>

	<p><b>Who:</b> PGT Programme Directors and Board of Studies (ECA PGT Director)</p>		<p>Communications and Engagement. This project will look closely at the external information, both in terms of content and communications processes, provided about all our PGT (and UG + PGR) programmes. ECA will look to improve the clarity and quality of this programme-level information, to better inform prospective students about the unique opportunities and student experience to be gained from enrolling here.</p>	
4.8	<p>The panel <b>recommends</b> that an admissions and recruitment strategy should form part of the recommended wider ECA postgraduate strategy.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> ECA Recruitment &amp; Admissions Strategy Group</p>	<p>November 2019 (RASG process)</p> <p>December 2019 (first round of RASG-level review)</p>	<p>ECA has worked throughout summer 2019 to clarify and extend the remit of the Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group (RASG), which is Chaired by the ECA Principal. RASG will now play a key role in reviewing new (and majorly changed) programmes at the earliest possible/sensible stage. Part of this will require RASG to appraise programme proposals against agreed Subject Area and ECA-level strategic plans. This new process will result in every such programme proposal being either (i) supported, in which case School-level funds will be released to help the proposers gain actionable market insight and other data; (ii) asked to review and resubmit, taking into account specific recommendations; (ii) rejected outright. Key to the operation of this new process is a shift in cultural expectation that any/all such programmes might be approved. Rather, ECA will take a more active role in shaping the strategic development of programmes that meet the School's wider goals.</p> <p>In addition, the ECA Director of L&amp;T (PG/T) and ECA Head of Student Administration and Support Service (SASS) have been working closely with the CAHSS PG Admission Office (PGAO) to develop new processes for managing PG admissions applications. These processes build upon successful previous work in this area, including pilot processes for a number of programmes carried out during academic year 2018/19. The overall strategic objective is to reduce the amount of administrative processing work undertaken by academic staff, freeing them up to spend more time on applicant conversion and other activities.</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: December 2019</b></p> <p>As noted in the 14-week response and elsewhere in the 1-year response, a new process has now been implemented across ECA, wherein proposals for new programmes (whether UG or PGT) have to go through a pre-proposal "pitching" stage, overseen through ECA Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group (RASG).</p> <p>An admissions pilot process also continues within a number of our PGT programmes, through close partnership with the CAHSS PG Admissions Office. This has particular complexity for ECA and CAHSS, given the portfolio component involved in the student application process for many of our PGT programmes.</p> <p>In addition, ECA has recently appointed a fixed-term role, 'ECA Portfolio Champion' (Zoe Patterson, from the ECA Design Subject Area), to work closely with Fraser Muir and key stakeholders as CAHSS and UoE look to replace the digital platform involved in portfolio submissions for admissions processes.</p> <p>ECA also developed a brand new support process for PGT (and PGR) Programme Directors involved in making student recruitment decisions (as 'selector') during the yearly admissions cycle, wherein a detailed set of information around target recruitment numbers, together with associated target offer-making numbers based upon analysis of historic data, was provided to each academic Programme team. Together with periodic auditing of the latest data during the admissions cycle (provided via John Tullis</p>

				in the CAHSS PGO) and regular check-ins with Subject Area L&T teams, ECA secured a record number of applications and offers made during the 2019-20 admissions cycle (i.e. for entry in September 2020) – this despite the suspension of nearly 50% of ECA’s PGT programmes due to the impact of Covid-19. A review of these suspended programmes is ongoing, as part of a wider appraisal of our PGT admissions strategy (see also Recommendation 4.0).
5	<p>The panel also <b>recommends</b> that ECA identify and implement ways to better integrate research students into the research culture, noting that the lack of transparency and consistency of some existing processes, such as desk and funding allocation, is hindering students’ engagement with their studies.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> ECA PGR Director</p>	<p>August 2020 for key issues, longer term for study space for practice-based students</p>	<p>Transparency in funding and in relation to allocation priorities for study spaces is fundamental to good student experience. Since the PPR, we have created an additional PGR study space in Alison House. However, study space is a finite resource and so it is very important that students are engaged in defining priorities and principles for usage. We will establish this year a PGR Spaces Group (student committee), reporting to the PGR SSLC. Students will therefore become the decision makers in relation to study space usage and protocols. The bigger challenge relates to practice-based spaces in ECA. The capital development plans for ECA will unlock some further provision here (see also Recommendation 2), but that is longer term. Discussion about opportunities for innovation including PGR spaces at EFI are ongoing. We have also since the PPR revised and improved the guidance and forms for the Postgraduate Research Expenses fund applications.</p> <p>(For wider issues of integration in research culture, see response to Recommendation 4.)</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: December 2020</b></p> <p>This point is partly responded to above – see 4.2.</p> <p>A PGR Spaces Group was constituted through the ECA PGR Committee in a/y 2019-20, but due to the pandemic this group has been inactive. Estates issues will be revisited when full and safe return to the campus is possible. See also Recommendation 6.</p>
6	<p>The panel <b>recommends</b> that ECA review all postgraduate taught and research student spaces to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spaces are of sufficient quality, consistent, available and appropriate to student need;</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing work already in embedding more student-led decision making practices (i.e. in session 2019/20)</p> <p>2022-2023, and beyond, for more</p>	<p>ECA is committed to improving all student spaces and have done and are doing so in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECA is now (re-) establishing an ECA Space Strategy Group (first meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2019), chaired by the ECA Principal, where allocation of space, PG space issues, proposals and decisions will be high on the agenda, with oversight to address this PPR recommendation.</li> <li>Review of PG spaces is already part of the consultation, design and proposed provision that will be implemented through ECA’s major estate development. Significant improvements in the</li> </ul>	<p><b>Date of completion: December 2020 + ongoing</b></p> <p>Since the 14-week response ECA has invested in improvements to many of our PG spaces and facilities accessed by PG students as part of wider programme of continual review and targeted investment overseen by the Space Strategy Group (SSG). Our SSG and Planning &amp; Resources Committee memberships now also includes student representatives/conveners, too. While planned progress would have been accelerated over the last year, the impact of Covid has necessarily re-prioritised our (and UoE Estates) estates and SSG focus / energy and the limited and unpredictable</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spaces are fairly distributed according to need;</li> <li>• The process of space allocation is made clear to students and is consistently applied;</li> <li>• All students have access to the space required to complete their studies.</li> </ul> <p><i>Who: ECA Principal &amp; ECA Director of Professional Services</i></p>	<p>significant estates issues</p>	<p>quality, fair distribution, and allocation of PG space will be delivered at key stages of completion over the next 3 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the meantime, ECA will continue to assess and take the opportunity to improve PG space provision as we decant and re-cant our spaces and buildings through the major development phases. An early example of this is that we have already decanted some Design programme PG studios from the Fire Station to better spaces in the NE Studio Building (NESB) and have already agreed, with input from staff and students, to move these studios one final time when we decant the NESB to their long term desired home in Evolution House.</li> <li>• We have already undertaken a review and completed in May 2019 the re-allocation of staff and PGR spaces at Alison House to ensure adequate PGR provision.</li> <li>• PGR SSLC is setting up a PGR Spaces Group (see also Recommendation 5) specifically to manage the main cross-ECA shared PGR space on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Evolution House, and the newly-configured PGR spaces in Alison House in a consistent way. This Group will act as a pilot to inform future development of consistently applied and appropriate allocation of PGR space as we progress through the estate development and short term allocations of PG space meantime.</li> <li>• The ECA Space Strategy Group, noted above, will in 2019-20 look into whether and how PGT and PGR student cohorts might be allowed to expand their space usage during the summer period, when demand from UG cohorts is lower. This consideration will need to take into account the wider needs of academic researchers and practitioners.</li> </ul>	<p>access to campus for extended periods has slowed down our programme of ongoing upgrades and (re)-prioritisation. Nonetheless SSG has approved another range of project works which we hope to agree with UoE Estates to be carried out over the next 4-6 months. Throughout the last year we have made scores of bookable studio, desk and study space a priority for our PG students, making as much space as possible available when restriction levels have permitted this and prioritising PGR and PGT critical needs access as restrictions have tightened.</p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in many estates projects across the University being put on hold for what appears now to be a minimum of two-five years. ECA was significantly affected by this as we were anticipating breaking ground this year with our own estates project, on which much of our strategy last year had been based. Our developing plans to address PG provision in a more transformational, coordinated manner have therefore been hampered. Nonetheless as part of ECA's recent Annual Plan and Vision refresh we have re-iterated our commitment to invest in and make progress with key aspects of the development including PG and student spaces and facilities.</p>
7	<p>The panel <b>recommends</b> consolidating emerging initiatives to develop a more distinctive and confident culture of</p>	<p>August 2021 (but ongoing as a project)</p>	<p>This relates to Recommendation 4.2 above, and the comments made there apply equally well here.</p> <p>Furthermore, ECA agrees and accepts that more needs to be done to develop confidence in the practice-based</p>	<p>As noted in relation to 4.1, practice-based research is a major focus in relation to PGR research and culture within ECA. In a/y 2020-21, all new PGR students in Art and Design are working on practice-based projects, which has accelerated discussion about the</p>

	<p>practice-based research within ECA.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> ECA Principal, ECA PGR Director and Subject Area PGR Leads</p>		<p>research-community (among staff as well as students), and certainly REF2020 is fostering an understanding of practice-based research for staff that needs to cross-fertilise similar understanding within the PGR community. This is the key area for consolidation, but it is also true that PGR students model the notion of practice-based research in new and developing ways. Therefore, as part of our strategy to foster staff-student research exchanges across ECA, this will be a particular thematic focus over the next academic year. (It should be noted that the new Principal of ECA comes from a practice-based background.)</p>	<p>best ways in which to foster and support such research.</p> <p>As the 14-week response noted, ECA’s REF2021 submission, including its environment statement, reveal the extent to which practice-based research is centrally embedded within the School. Ensuring the distinctiveness and scale of this is visible to staff and PGR students is an ongoing activity.</p>
8	<p>The panel <b>recommends</b> that ECA School management consider increasing resources within the PGO office to allow the issues to be addressed.</p> <p><b>Who:</b> ECA Director of Professional Services and ECA Senior Management Team</p>	<p>October 2019 (for foundations of the UG/PG admin support merger to be complete)</p> <p>2021-2022 for fully formed new SASS service</p>	<p>We have already undertaken a major review looking at both UG and PG support and the feasibility of a single teaching organisation, the outcome of which is to bring the UTGO and PGO together as one Student Administration and Support Service (SASS). This includes UG, PGT, PGR, and Student Support. We are in the process of implementing this major change to structure, service, ways of working and processes. Resource considerations have been assessed, and will continue to be assessed and addressed where necessary, throughout. The changes include new opportunities for development and progression within the wider team (a number of which have already resulted in internal progressions) as well as some adjustment to remits aligned to grade appropriate responsibilities and redistribution of workload and resource which, combined with the efficiency gains of rationalisation, will improve capacity and resilience across the new service. We are taking a phased approach to implementing, reviewing and bedding in these major changes, aiming toward a more fully formed long term structure and service by 2021/22.</p> <p>Two additional and major factors that will have significant bearing on our plans and future response to this recommendation will be changes to staffing, resource, location of services and work coming out of the Service Excellence Programme’s Student Administration and Support strand (see <a href="https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/ServiceExcellenceProgramme/SitePages/Student-Administration-and-Support-Plans-and-Priorities.aspx">https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/ServiceExcellenceProgramme/SitePages/Student-Administration-and-Support-Plans-and-Priorities.aspx</a>, web link)</p>	<p><b>Date of completion: Early 2020 (formation of SASS) + ongoing (as outlined below)</b></p> <p>ECA Student Administration and Support Service (SASS) development was fast tracked out of necessity early in 2020 as most staff in ECA moved to working from home (due to Covid-19). There have been substantial operational challenges during 2020 in relation to covid-related changes to supporting staff, students and provision of services.</p> <p>Most of the planned work to align ways of working across the previous UGTO/PGO (teaching admin offices) has been temporarily deprioritised. The new SASS service has also been impacted by high levels of staff absences and delays to recruitment, made further problematic by the recent UoE-level recruitment freeze. The School has not yet seen the promised positive changes as a result of SEP projects (now drawn under ART), and overall the sense is that <u>more work</u> is currently with the School, compared with previously. Likewise, the UoE-wide Student Support and PT review, which had promised a range of positive gains on the administration side, is paused.</p> <p>The school remains committed to the possibilities of bringing together UG, PGT and PGR teams to share practice and realise benefits and efficiencies of alignment. A fixed term (12 month) post is supported in the School plan to assist SASS with development</p>

			and the aligned major review of future student support and personal tutoring (see <a href="#">SharePoint site</a> , web link) and expected changes which will be implemented over the course of the next 3 years.	and implementation of more aligned services across these areas.  Progress has also been made in regard to facilitating better engagement between PGR and Research across ECA and University, as manifest in ECA's recent Annual Plan and Vision refresh. Work is ongoing to define where responsibilities lie and what training, support and additional investment may be needed and where.
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	This 14-week report will be shared and discussed further at upcoming UG/PGT/PGR Committee meetings (all of which involve student representation). It will also be circulated within the PGR student committees, and will appear as an agenda item on an upcoming meeting.  Update (17 February 2021): The updates provided in the 1-year responses above will be shared with the ECA Education Committee, and the ECA Planning and Resources Committee (both of which include student representation). Content from this report will also be shared with student representatives on the ECA-wide staff-student liaison committee (ECA SSLC).		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review	Please see the 1-year responses itemised against each Recommendation, above – there are many examples of positive change throughout (as well as notes to highlight ongoing challenges).		

# The University of Edinburgh's Centre for Open Learning

## Internal Periodic Review - 14-week response report

### Guidance for completion of Internal Review 14 week and year on responses

1. Schools/Subject Areas should use the template for 14 week/year on responses.
2. The 14 week/Year on report should list all the recommendations from the final review report.
3. The School/Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action.
4. Any urgent recommendation should be highlighted along with a deadline for response.
5. Please report on the progress towards the completion of each recommendation. An explanation of how the recommendation will be taken forward and the expected date for follow-up or completion should be recorded.

**Internal Periodic Review of:** The Centre for Open Learning

**Date of review:** February 2020, Report Published September 2020 [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/final\\_report\\_-\\_centre\\_for\\_open\\_learning.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/final_report_-_centre_for_open_learning.pdf)

**Date of 14-week response:** 14/10/2020

**Date of year on response:** -

Rec. no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
<b>Complete, have consulted with all parties</b>		<b>In progress</b>		<b>Not in progress/stalled</b>
<b>1</b> Remitted to the University Senate Education Committee (Philippa Ward)	The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the University's Senate Education Committee create opportunities for the Centre for Open Learning to fully embed its activities and broad range of expertise in language teaching, adult education and widening access into the fabric of the institution. The Committee should ensure that COL has a voice in institutional discussions about key projects and planning and help raise its profile within the University, ensuring that the excellent progress made by the Centre's own marketing team can be developed to help it grow sustainably.	April 2021	<p><i>1.2 University Senate Education Committee</i></p> <p>Progress has been made since the IPR process was completed and COL now has a Vision and Mission that has been consulted and agreed upon. The pivot to remote delivery played to COL's strengths in some way and we have enjoyed being an integral part of the ART Transitions courses and picking up opportunities for growth. To some extent this will be ongoing but there is much to be pleased about here in recent months but external support from the wider University remains crucial and we would like to discuss this further.</p> <p><i>Senate Education Committee. Recommendation 1 from the IPR of COL was remitted to the Committee and was considered at its meeting on 10 September 2020. The minute of the meeting is as follows:</i></p> <p>1.1 Internal Periodic Review of Centre for Open Learning – Recommendation Remitted to Senate Education Committee</p> <p>The Committee considered the recommendation from the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) of the Centre for Open Learning (COL) that COL should be given opportunities to fully embed its activities and broad range of expertise in language teaching, adult education and widening access in the fabric of the institution.</p>	

			<p>The Assistant Principal Digital Education noted that the Edinburgh Futures Institute was keen to work with COL to consider access routes to PGT programmes in particular.</p> <p>The Committee recognised that COL was represented on the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences' (CAHSS) Undergraduate Education Committee and therefore had access to Senate Education Committee through that route. It was also noted that the Dean of Learning and Teaching for the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) sat on the CAHSS UG Education Committee and that there was therefore a link between COL and CSE. As such, Education Committee agreed that the correct structures were in place to allow COL to contribute to University-level discussions around Education, but recognised the need to remain mindful of COL's contribution, particularly during forthcoming discussions around curriculum transformation.</p>	
<p><b>2</b> Jointly remitted to Student Systems and Administration (Lisa Dawson) and Information Services (Jennifer Milne)</p>	<p>The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that Student Systems and Administration, Information Services and other key University stakeholders continue to work with the Centre's Senior Management Team to find a viable solution for better integrating the Centre and its students into the University's systems. This should facilitate the collection of essential data on student admissions, retention and progression, helping to support the Centre's plans for growth. Where students cannot be integrated into the University's existing systems, it is <b>recommended</b> that the Centre receives the required support and funding to develop existing systems for handling admissions and on-programme tracking of students across all provision.</p>	<p>Sep 2021</p>	<p><i>2.1.1 Student Systems and Administration and Information Services</i> This project is underway, and we hope to have a more substantial sign of progress at our next update. That said our Systems Analysis Project is in collaboration with the College CIO, Registrar, and our in-house professional services colleagues. From an academic point of view, we are trying to move to more centralised points of data collection that had previously been the norm (another benefit to restructure) and have been emphasising the importance of the quality of that data and how it can better inform our decision making.</p>	
<p><b>3</b> Remitted to the COL Senior Management Team</p>	<p>The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the Centre engage staff at all levels in the development of its strategic vision for the future, particularly when developing the theme of community and identity. Staff should be consulted through staff forums and workshops, with additional events set up to engage students in these themes.</p>	<p>Oct 2020</p>	<p><i>2.7.1 COL Senior Management Team</i> In early Sep 2020, Phase 2 of our GASP project was launched which focuses on teaching colleagues, citizenship roles, governance and decision making and introducing our first COL-wide WAM. At every point, we have involved staff (and where appropriate, students) in the feedback and consultation process for this. Our Vision and Mission will be launched to all COL staff in November 2020 with our Action Plan 2021-2023; both are complete as a result of consultation with staff and students. The newly established COL SMT came into effect from August</p>	

			1 <sup>st</sup> 2020 and so we now have a much more representative group with which to write our Action Plans and set our strategic direction. Staff feedback tells us that there is an improved sense of community, particularly between academic and professional services teams. This has been marked green, but that said, we will continue to work with the wider institution to ensure that our vision and mission are understood both in terms of our identity and purpose, and how they might engage with us.	
<b>4</b> Remitted to the COL Senior Management Team	The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the Centre set up a short-life working group to outline the existing challenges with estates and buildings (including those relating to accessibility) and explore the various options for development through an evidenced report. This will help to identify specific areas that require escalation, while also helping to establish a structured dialogue between staff and students about community and identity in the Centre.	Apr 2021	<i>2.8.3 COL Senior Management Team</i> The impact of Covid has meant that we have been unable to prioritise this, but it remains an action which we hope to resolve.	
<b>5</b> Remitted to Estates (Gary Jebb)	The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the University Estates department support the Centre to establish greater ownership of its learning and teaching spaces. Estates should support the School to develop the space in	Apr 2021	Given the current Covid-19 pandemic, the Estates Development plan has been superseded by the requirement to ensure the estate provides safe learning environments in line with Scottish Government guidance. Estates will continue to support the department as appropriate in line with current University priorities.	
<b>6</b> Jointly remitted to the COL Senior Management Team and Timetabling Unit (Scott Rosie)	It is <b>recommended</b> that the Timetabling Unit continue work with the Centre for Open Learning to ensure that classrooms assigned are suitable for the teaching needs of each class. The room booking system should also be reviewed and enhanced to ensure that it does not disadvantage the Centre when assigning rooms shared with other Schools.	Apr 2021	<i>2.8.2 Timetabling Unit; COL Senior Management Team</i> Continual improvements are ongoing, we now have a COL Priority Room Allocation Model (PRAM) in place. We still need to address with the support of senior management, our Pre-sessional room allocation (mainly relating to the availability of lecture theatres and large teaching spaces). COL continually runs into issues during our summer teaching period where (normally) we would be unsuccessful in competing for rooms with the Festival and external bookings. COL had been hoping to bring the timetabling team into the review of Pre-sessional provision so this can be solved in partnership and we hope that this can still be the case but had been adjusted due to Covid pivots and increased pressures on staff time.	
<b>7</b> Remitted to Learning Technology Support (Neil Bruce)	The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that Learning Technology Support (LTS) develop an out-of-hours support model with clear routes for escalating immediate and longer term technology support issues, which is available to staff teaching evening classes in the Centre.	Feb 2021	<i>2.8.4 Learning Technology Support (LTS)</i> Again, there has been no rationale for pursuing this beyond the efforts made to ensure that our online provision is accessible for students and staff in light of Covid restrictions. We would like to suggest that longer term, this it remitted to our Digital Services Manager Magdalena Getler who would be expected to lead this for COL.	

<p><b>8</b> Remitted to the College Offices (Dr Sabine Rolle, Professor Neil Turner &amp; Professor Judy Hardy)</p>	<p>In recognition of the type of language support the Centre offers students from a wide range of backgrounds, it is <b>recommended</b> that the three College Offices find ways to facilitate deeper collaboration between the Centre and individual Schools, particularly in the areas of ELE and Languages for All.</p>		<p><i>1.3 College Offices</i> To my (J Hoy) knowledge we haven't had an update on this one given the significant shift to online delivery and Covid response. We keep discovering more and more advantages to there being a central governance process for all part-time or non-traditional provision and would like to see if COL could take a leadership role here in the future. <i>The CAHSS College Office plan to arrange a preliminary meeting with the Centre for Open Learning Senior Management Team to explore the detail of the recommendation and discuss how deeper collaboration may be achieved. The College will also invite the respective Deans of Learning and Teaching from Colleges of Science and Engineering and Medicine and Veterinary Medicine to that meeting and explore ways of progressing the recommendation at an institutional level.</i></p>	
<p><b>9</b> Jointly remitted to Head of Centre, Director of Professional Services and College Registrars (Dr Bruce Nelson, Liz Elliott and Catherine Elliott).</p>	<p>The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the Head of the Centre, the Director of Professional Services and College Registrars in each of the three Colleges explore the options for developing a revised funding model for English Language Education pre-sessional and in-sessional support to ensure future plans for growth can be carried out sustainably in the face of increasing demand.</p>	<p>Sep 2021</p>	<p><i>1.3 Head of Centre, Director of Professional Services; College Registrars</i> Our Director of English Language Education presented a paper to the UoE Exec but failed to secure an outcome. COL continues to resource and subsidise English Language in-sessional provision across the institution. Our Director of Professional Services is picking this up with the CAHSS Director of Finance.</p>	
<p><b>10</b> Jointly remitted to Director of Learning and Teaching (c/o Hannah Jones) and Institute for Academic Development (Dr Jon Turner</p>	<p>The Review Team <b>recommends</b> the Centre develop a more structured collaborative working relationship with the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to ensure language and skills support for students, can be developed and delivered with optimal efficiency drawing on the wide pool of expertise in both areas.</p>	<p>Feb 2021</p>	<p><i>2.3.2 Director of Learning and Teaching; Institute for Academic Development</i> <i>The below comment is from Hannah Jones, Director of English Language Education, COL.</i> There are numerous IAD/ELE collaborations, including the ALL Transitions course that was offered through ART. We would appreciate a more structured approach to our collaborative work, including as a first step, a kind of pulling together of everything that we do across IAD and COL to see where there may be overlap, duplication and gaps. This could lead to much clearer communications from both areas, avoiding confusion on the part of students, who might reasonably think that a lot of what we do is the same, or (maybe worse) that IAD's work is for home students and COL's work is for international students, the review recommendation gives a push to make it actually happen.  I'd suggest we go back to the start with the meeting suggested by Jon Turner, attended by the COL SMT. This might help us to establish an overall strategy for collaboration.</p>	

			Taking this forward though is probably best done by Heads of Subject Area, at least that would be my perspective from ELE.	
<b>11</b> Jointly remitted to COL Senior Management Team and Institute for Academic Development (Dr Jon Turner).	The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the Centre develops an internal CPD framework for academic staff using the existing Edinburgh Teaching Award. This should incorporate a mentoring support model and should be facilitated with the help of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD).	Apr 2021	<i>2.7.3 Senior Management Team; Institute for Academic Development</i> CPD opportunities are much more prevalent that they had been in previous years, budget reductions as a result of Covid-19 have meant that our already lean budget planning can no longer include the commitment to CPD we had intended to provide to staff (across professional services and academic contracts). I (JHoy) worry that our comparatively tight budget management within COL leaves us little room for manoeuvre if we are asked to reduce once or even twice as has been the case, often hitting the types of activity that present an opportunity for staff collaboration and community building. A new CPD Policy will be approved in the coming months. Whilst we intend to introduce this, COL has no governance or systems in place as regards academic promotion and so we seek advice from other parts of the institution in terms of how we can embed this.	
<b>12</b> Jointly remitted to School Teaching Office and Director of Professional Services.	It is <b>recommended</b> that the Centre review the rationale and deadlines for the course registration process across Short Courses and Languages for All. The Centre should continue to streamline the process where possible, communicating deadlines and reasons for closure in advance of course registration closing, supported by a clear and consistent policy.	Oct 2020	<i>2.1.3 School Teaching Office; Director of Professional Services</i> Whilst the decision that was queried during the Review was the result of consultation with staff, there is good reason why our deadlines have to be adhered to, but these are not always visible to staff despite our efforts. The current approach to deadlines for booking was approved by the COL Executive Committee with the papers available to all staff. The rationale focuses on customer service, to avoid giving customers too short notice of cancellations - and also to provide sufficient notice to staff if their course is running or not. Beyond that, there is a workload (linked to integrated systems point above) between someone booking and course start date that shouldn't be underestimated, and more importantly there are accessibility issues which we don't find out about until the student enrolls (sometimes later) which means we need time to put in place adjustments/suitable rooms. The deadline used to be 2 weeks; we did reduce to 1. We can and should review, but we would need to resolve issues above relating to data and systems first. We agree we can publish the rationale more thoroughly and address the communications issue and so will continue to review our systems and processes, mindful of the people involved in them.	
Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	The nature of our provision means that the students who were involved in this process will have moved on to other modes of study. That said, we intend to communicate this through our Marketing and Comms team so we celebrate the commendations and highlight where we will make improvements. We continue to plan our SSLC meetings and we expect to proportionately increase student representation in our Governance and decision-making structures which is a key part of the Second phase of our Governance and Academic Structure Project, now underway.			
Commendations	It's not been asked for but I (Jenny Hoy) felt it was important to formally note what our response to the 11 commendations within this process were, particularly at the time of writing, when staff morale is low given the contexts within which we're all working.			

	<p>COL found the IPR process constructive and affirming, particularly given the enormous amount of change that the Centre has been undergoing in recent years and subsequently in response to Covid. We have fabulously committed staff who regularly go the extra mile to support colleagues and our students, and so we were particularly glad to see this reflected in the IPR. The commendations have been shared with the wider COL staff with our gratitude. The IPR and its results were discussed in team meetings and our COL Executive Committee, and a summary of the process and the final report were shared in an all staff newsletter. Having the IPR feedback has been enormously helpful in providing a reminder of the 'external' investment in our collective success, particularly given our wish to be understood and valued across the University but there is much work still to be done here. For completion, the 12 minor notes included in the final report are all either complete or being addressed in our substantial Governance and Academic Structure Project.</p>	
<p><b>For Year on response only</b></p>	<p>Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review</p>	<p>N/A</p>

**Internal Periodic Review of:** Politics and International Relations

**Date of review:** 3 and 4 February 2020

**Date of 14 week response:** 3 February 2021 (due 25 November 2020)

**Date of year on response:** Due 19 August 2021

The Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. 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 no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	<p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School consider the following measures to improve the working conditions and support offered to Tutors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a more robust training programme which includes topics such as facilitating tutorials, a formal mechanism to allow tutors to feedback on courses to enhance course content, enhanced marking guidance.</li> <li>- a Tutor Convenor role at School level to act as the key contact for the tutors with responsibility for academic development as well as a point of contact for HR and Administrative matters.</li> <li>- formal 'Guidance and Feedback' hours for tutors to include payment to enable tutors and students to discuss questions after tutorials and answer student emails.</li> </ul> <p>The review team recognise there are implications around ensuring feedback hours are used for that purpose rather than as a pastoral support for students, which tutors are not trained to provide. In addition, recognition of the challenges around allocation of office space to carry out these feedback hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a review of contracts to ensure they adequately reflect appropriate time for marking and to consider any additional remuneration</li> </ul>	End of <b>Sem 2, 2020/21</b>	<p>As with all of these recommendations, plans for reviewing the working conditions and support offered to tutors have been affected by COVID-19. A new role was created in the SPS Directorate of a <b>Director of Student Development</b> who assists with the training and support of tutors; advises course organisers and heads of subject on their line-management of tutors; and reviews and develops tutor training and development (amongst other duties). Key measures taken include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing an updated (paid) training programme for all GH tutors to prepare for the transition to online learning (10 hours)</li> <li>• Revising tutor activities and pay rates to reflect the shift to online/hybrid learning, which has included (for example) extending the marking time for shorter essays, as flagged by tutors. We also adopted a model where we pay tutors by number of students as opposed to number of groups. This allows for better flexibility if numbers unexpectedly increase within a tutorial group.</li> </ul> <p>GH tutors have been consulted in the development of the above, and their feedback has been integrated into these processes and outcomes. There is a regular Q&amp;A with tutors, and Tutor Teams channels are also being created for tutors to share best practice, ask questions, and receive information and guidance.</p>	Sem 1 2020/21, with some recommendations on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic

	<p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that a dedicated space is considered to enable tutors to do marking, to meet with students and to meet as a group to facilitate opportunities to share practice.</p> <p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that tutors are involved in the review process if this has not already been agreed.</p> <p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that the conclusions from the internal periodic review feed into the School review</p>		<p>Additionally, guidance has been included in Course Organiser handbooks on their responsibilities to tutors on their courses.</p> <p>Recommendations with regards to dedicated office space have been <b>put on hold</b> during the pandemic – with the default position of working from home, as well as wider and continuing estate constraints flagged in the report, as the University has indefinitely paused almost all estate development. At time of writing, 27/28 George Square has been reopened to accommodate PhD students – and our Building Review Team (BRT) did include PhD students, and the office allocation process has been discussed in consultation with the PG rep.</p>	
2	<p>The review team <b>recommends</b> the School review their assessment and feedback procedures and consider ways to streamline these procedures to ensure timely return of materials to students and to reduce the administrative burden associated with assessment. Such changes might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-using more efficient online software so that staff can directly access and mark course assessments once these have been submitted by the students. Alternative mechanisms such as Turnitin or systems developed by other Schools such as Physics and Astronomy could be considered.</li> <li>-a review of the moderation processes used for course work in the School with a view of making these processes less burdensome. For Honours modules marked by a single member of staff the School could consider returning course work before moderation to ensure timely feedback.</li> </ul>	End of academic year, 2021/22	<p>We welcome these recommendations. However, given significant workloads and wider circumstances this year for academic and professional services staff, we are putting on hold as many School initiatives as we can this academic year to focus on digital/hybrid teaching, and will return to review the question of online software in 2021/22. We are considering a pilot of Turnitin in 21/22, which is being discussed at our next School Infrastructure and Technology Strategy Group. Proposals to streamline and harmonize moderation processes are currently being considered in the SPS PG and UG Education Committees.</p>	
3	<p>Students suggested a number of ideas to improve community building and enhance communications. The review team <b>recommends</b> that the Subject Area and School consider these suggestions.</p> <p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that the Subject Area consider seeking opportunities such as the Course Choice Options sessions for community building.</p> <p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School consider ways in which current study and teaching</p>	End of academic year, 2021/22	<p>We will hold virtual course choice options fairs for PIR students in Semester 2 2020/21 to prepare for the coming academic year. We are also reviewing our course allocation process to better communicate to students how courses are allocated, and which courses are in high demand, as we face considerable numbers pressure given a higher student intake in 2020/21 that will have knock-on effects for Honours provision. In this regard, we have initiated discussions with the School teaching office staff which aim to better match course supply and student demand and clarify the processes and rationale for course</p>	

	spaces can be improved to enhance the student experience and consider where any unused spaces could be used as social spaces for students to come together. The Student User group should be involved in these discussions if not already invited to do so.		choice, including a 'traffic light' system for indicating which courses are in high, low and medium demand.  As above, we will revisit recommendations about study/teaching spaces in 2021/22 onwards, should conditions allow, given the default position of working from home, and wider and continuing estates constraints. Our current study and community spaces (e.g. the café) in our main building CMB are not open due to COVID restrictions. Students can currently book a study space on campus through the University's SeatED booking system.	
4	The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School and Subject Area review communications to ensure that all students are aware of the location of the SSO office and the mechanisms to book appointments and rooms confidentially		In 2020/21, meetings with SSOs are online by default due to COVID (though some SSOs were available at specific times in CMB for anyone who is unable to meet online when restrictions allowed).  The role of the SSO is set out in programme handbooks, with contact details and a statement about confidentiality, and is highlighted in induction meetings with Students, Course Organisers, Programme Directors and Personal Tutors. The school has also introduced systematic use of a functional email address for the SSO team, students can contact this address or their SSOs directly to request a meeting.	Completed
5	The review team <b>strongly recommends</b> that the School considers additional resources for Student Support in terms of office space and placement and additional Student Support Officer staffing resources as well as additional staffing resource to support the PIR SASO	On-going	Within student support, we have upgraded the staffing of the SSO team with the addition of a dedicated Head of Student Support and Enhancement to lead and line manage the team and have added a student support assistant to support routine day to day enquiries. Improved team working processes also better allow staff to cover for each other, allowing resources to focus on areas of most need. The School has included the hiring of an additional SSO as a business critical need in its plans for 21/22.  Situated behind the reception desk, the student support office is visible to all those entering the building (in times when the building is staffed and open), with the student support assistant based at the reception desk.  The workload of the administrative team of Subject Academic Support Officers (SASO) is looked at holistically with the team assisting and covering for each other as needed.	

6	<p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that the Timetabling Unit consider the allocation of teaching rooms across campus to reduce transition time between classes. This could have a positive impact on community building between students and staff by enabling and encouraging after-class conversations.</p> <p>The review team also <b>recommends</b> that the University Estates' Space Management Group are mindful of the factors noted above and the impact that the pressures on the School estate is having on the student and staff experience.</p>	End of academic year, 2021/22	<p>Recommendation 6 fits with the StEAP student travel-time project which was shaped by Scott Rosie and initiated earlier in the year. The project was due to report its findings and recommendations by the end of the calendar year. It will be delayed due to COVID challenges. Critically for the issue raised, the main focus will be in the challenges in the Central area, where travel-time constraints don't officially exist from a timetabling perspective (compared, say, to the issues experienced in moving between King's Building and the Central area). As this review notes, correctly, these issues have impact for many students. Key in this includes consideration of EDI issues (mobility factors across Central campus etc). The report, when available, will be supported and managed through the Central Area Programme Board and Space Strategy Group.</p> <p>It may also be worth reflecting that, given the necessity to deliver lectures online in 20/21, this mode of lecture delivery may become somewhat more common, in which case many travel-time issues would be mitigated. It is worth noting that some Schools (e.g. Mathematics) are considering this formally in their planning around AY2122 - a School who service large cohorts of students who have travel time issues.</p>	
7	<p>Whilst the review team acknowledges the pedagogical rationale for this approach, it <b>recommends</b> that the School and Subject Area consider their approach to lecture recording for equality and diversity reasons.</p>	End of academic year 2021/22	<p>All lectures have moved online in 2020/21 and are recorded for students. Some continued aspects of hybrid delivery will likely remain on the agenda for some courses in 2021/2 as well. The wider pedagogical issues are ones we will need to return to once the pandemic has been resolved.</p>	Sem 1, 2020/21
8	<p>It is <b>recommended</b> that the School and Subject Area review communication channels to enable collaboration in areas that are School wide issues to ensure that practice and enhancements are consistent.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Communication channels have been moved digitally in 2020/21, and have been improved by, for example, the creation of Teams groups to respond to issues quickly. In teaching, the subject area is represented through regular meetings of School leadership and HoSAs; as well as the School Undergraduate Teaching Committee and Board of Studies, with representatives from each subject area, as well as the Learning &amp; Teaching Directorate. From Jan 2021 for three years, PIR will make a significant contribution to School teaching leadership roles – with PIR staff taking up positions of Deputy Director of Learning and Teaching ; Director of Undergraduate Programmes and Director of Postgraduate Taught Programmes.</p>	

9	The review team <b>recommends</b> that the Subject Area continue to diversify their curriculum and build on the good work that has been done to decolonise and expand course offerings and course reading lists.	Ongoing	This work is ongoing and is a core principle of our pre-honours curriculum reform (first course delivery in 2021/2), which aims to embed intersectionality and inclusion at the heart of our teaching practice. Our new courses are being designed over the academic year 2020/21 – led by our Senior Teaching Fellows in consultation with the PIR Teaching Committee - with the aim to mainstream considerations of power and (in)equality throughout the substantive material; and to diversify reading lists.	
10	The review team <b>recommends</b> the Subject Area reviews the format and content of the fundamentals course.	End of academic year 2021/22	The Fundamentals course was put on hold in 2020/21 due to COVID-19. It will be reviewed from 2021/22 as part of our wider Politics and International Relations curriculum reforms, which will focus on further embedding skills training and career development within our pre-honours courses.	
11	The review team <b>recommends</b> that the coursework extension policy is reviewed to consider and reflect on the negative impact the process is having on feedback timelines and staff workload/ time management across the board.	1 year	<p>The coursework extension policy was reviewed in 2019/20 to incorporate the incoming Extensions and Special Circumstances Services (ESC), which launched in September 2020. This service reviews and approve/reject course work extension requests made by students through an online system. A holistic review of the policy has been agreed from January 2021, as intuitional statistics will become available through the service to support a policy review. This will be undertaken by Academic Services and the ESC Service.</p> <p>The new service standardises extensions, as students are only be able to apply for a maximum number of days. It is the school and Course Organiser who decide if an extension is available and, if so, the timeframe (up to seven days). No late applications will be accepted but special circumstances can be applied for if the criteria is met.</p>	20/21
12	The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School consider ways in which additional financial assistance and support could be provided, e.g. provision of space. In addition, access to relevant Learn pages to be granted to the leaders.	5-10 years	<p>Any recommendations with regards to the provision of space have been <b>put on hold</b> during the pandemic – with the default position of working from home, as well as wider and continuing estate constraints flagged in the report, as the University has indefinitely paused almost all estate development.</p> <p>In PIR, we have set up access for course organisers across relevant Learn pages, to ensure that we can share best practice, especially as we make the transition to online/hybrid</p>	

			learning. This has been particularly effective and helpful at pre-Honours level, where we have significant numbers pressure.	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	The outcomes of the review and the recommendations were shared and discussed with student representatives through our Staff-Student Liaison committee held in November 2020.		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review			