

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Meeting to be held on Thursday 16 September 2021  
at 2pm via Microsoft Teams**

**A G E N D A**

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- 15. Any Other Business**
- 16. Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 9 December 2021, 2pm, MS Teams

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 May 2021  
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 Jeni Harden	School Representative (School of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Dr Katherine Inglis	School Representative (Literatures, Languages and Cultures), College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Fizzy Abou Jawad	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
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
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
Paula Webster	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling, Student Systems and Administration

**Apologies:**

Stuart Lamot	Edinburgh University Students' Association Representative
Professor Leigh Sparks	Deputy Principal, University of Stirling

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Convenor noted that Fizzy Abou Jawad had reached the end of her term as Vice President (Education) and thanked her for all her work as the student member of the Committee.

### 2. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 April 2021

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

### 3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### For Discussion

### 4. Curriculum Transformation

The Vice Principal Students discussed plans for the Curriculum Transformation (CT) Programme.

It was noted that an early priority for the CT Programme will be to develop a shared institutional vision for the Edinburgh Graduate. The purpose of this vision will be to describe the skills, values, knowledge and experiences the University aspires for its students which in turn will act as a key reference point of the future Edinburgh Curriculum.

Members discussed the potential tension between this standard Edinburgh Curriculum/Graduate and the unique, discipline specific, core content and skills. It was agreed that finding the right balance between these two educational outcomes would be vital to the success of the CT Programme.

Members also noted that the University has existing skills and experience in delivering complex joint degrees and interdisciplinary programmes (e.g. the medical intercalated degrees) which should be utilized by the CT team. The Convenor noted that there was also a role for SQAC as the quality assurance processes could provide the CT team with a rich source of data on current good practice and issues in need of further development across the diverse range of disciplines at the University.

The Vice Principal Students noted that this was a rare opportunity to input into the future shape of teaching and learning across the University. The programme will be long-term and critical to its success will be input from across schools and colleges as well as participation from colleagues within professional services to ensure all aspects of transformation are fully considered. More information can be found on the [Curriculum Transformation SharePoint site](#).

**Action: SQAC to receive regular progress updates from the Curriculum Transformation team.**

**5. Student Voice Policy**

The Committee considered the revised Student Voice Policy, reflecting the move away from centrally managed to locally managed course feedback.

It was noted that the Committee had approved the principles embedded in the Policy at the previous meeting and the revised Policy had been informed by those discussions. The Policy encourages Schools to develop approaches to feedback collection that are appropriate and proportionate. However, the Committee agreed that Schools would require practical support and guidance (particularly in relation to the term 'co-creation' and the use of student feedback as supporting evidence for academic promotions) to develop a new approach to course level feedback. It was noted that a Toolkit and supporting guidance would be developed during the summer in consultation with Schools and Colleges.

**Action: Student Systems to consult College Deans on the content of the Toolkit.**

The Committee **approved** the Policy.

**6. Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC): Guidance Update**

The Committee considered proposed changes to the recommended membership of Student-Staff Liaison Committees.

It was noted that the proposed changes would expand the recommended membership to include both Society Office Bearers and PLS Scheme Leaders. This in turn would increase the scale and scope of student feedback brought to SSLC meetings, enabling students and staff to work collaboratively to enhance the student experience, and ensuring the feedback loop was closed by sharing outcomes with as many students as possible.

The Committee **approved** the updated guidance.

**7. Annual Monitoring and Internal Periodic Review Themes 2019/20: University Level Actions Update**

The Committee noted an update on University level actions agreed in response to issues identified as areas for further development in School Annual Quality Reports 2019-20 and themes that emerged from teaching/postgraduate programme reviews held in 2019-20.

**8. Thematic Review: Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Students 2018-19 - Progress Update**

The Committee considered the progress update on actions remitted in response to the recommendations of the 2018-19 Thematic Review.

It was noted that in this year's annual quality reporting process will require Schools to specifically reflect on student progression and outcomes, focussing on the difference in attainment of groups of students.

**9. Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation Committee: Annual Report 2019/20**

The Committee considered the annual report of the SRUC Accreditation Committee.

The Committee commended SRUC on the quality of the report and noted that SRUC plans to apply for Taught and Research Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP). The SRUC Board has endorsed a phased approach to the application process and an application for TDAP will be submitting in August 2021.

**10. Operation of Senate Standing Committees**

**10.1 Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees**

The Committee noted the draft annual report to Senate from the Senate Standing Committees: Education Committee; Academic Policy and Regulations Committee; and Quality Assurance Committee. The report highlighted activities in 2020-21 and proposed priorities for 2021-22.

**10.2 Themes for 2021/22 Senate Meetings**

The Committee was invited to suggest themes for next year's Senate meetings. The following suggestions were noted: the Curriculum Transformation; staff welfare (both academic and professional services) as an integral part of Adaptation and Renewal plans. Members were invited to send any further suggestions to the Committee Secretary by Thursday 27 May 2021.

**10.3 Annual Review of Effectiveness of Senate Standing Committees**

The Committee noted the plans for the annual review of Senate Committees' effectiveness. Senate Committee members will be invited to respond to an online questionnaire during summer 2021 (managed by Academic Services). A report on responses will then be presented to Senate and the Senate Standing Committees in September / October 2021. If the review identifies required actions or enhancement opportunities, these will be taken forward by Academic Service (if directly related to the functioning and support of the Senate Committees) or referred to the appropriate body for consideration.

**For Information and Formal Business**

**11. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**12. Meeting Dates**

The Committee noted that a meeting would be conducted via email correspondence in August to enable the approval of items which do not require substantial discussion in order to provide feedback to schools in a timeous manner.

The Committee also noted the following meeting dates for 2021-22 (all meetings to take place between 2-4pm via MS Teams):

- **Thursday 16 September 2021**
- **Thursday 9 December 2021**
- **Thursday 24 February 2022**
- **Thursday 28 April 2022**
- **Thursday 19 May 2022**

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Notes of the electronic meeting conducted from  
Wednesday 18 to Monday 23 August 2021**

**1. Formal Business**

The electronic meeting was conducted via email correspondence to enable the Committee to approve items which do not require substantial discussion in order to provide feedback to schools in a timeous manner.

**2. For Approval**

**2.1 Internal Review Reports and Responses**

The Committee **approved** the following Internal Periodic Review Final Reports 2019/20, published on the Committee [wiki](#):

**Final report 2020/21:**

- Clinical Education (Postgraduate Taught)
- Maths (Postgraduate Research)

The Committee **confirmed** that it was content with progress on the following 14 week and year-on responses, published on the Committee [wiki](#):

**Year on responses 2019/20:**

- Business (Undergraduate)
- Centre for Open Learning (COL)
- Divinity (Undergraduate)
- Geosciences (Geography)
- Social and Political Science (Social Policy)
- Social and Political Science (Postgraduate Research)

**14 week response 2020/21:**

- Oral Health Sciences (Undergraduate)
- Philosophy, Psychology, and Language Sciences (Postgraduate)

Members noted that the traffic-light display and table formatting of the COL report was very helpful and clear to the reader.

**Action: Academic Services to notify the relevant Schools/Deaneries/Centres of the Committee's comments and decisions.**

**3. For Information**

**3.1 Third Party Credit Rating**

The [Third Party Credit Rating Policy](#) requires Board of Studies to report relevant course approval decisions to the Committee.

- In line with the Policy, the Centre for Open Learning (COL) recently approved a new LEAPS Transition Course. The documentation

submitted to the Board is available on the [wiki](#) for the Committee to view.

COL has worked with LEAPS to establish a MoA and align Quality Assurance Annual Reporting processes. Unless members have any objections, the next stage in the process will be for Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP) to generate an internal record of the new provision and record the provision within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Database.

Members noted the following:

- Terminology - 'In-person' is preferred to 'face to face'.
- LEAPS Poster criteria updated (section on use of images) - how are accessibility concerns addressed in this assessment. What provision is there for a blind or partially sighted student in the poster assessment envisaged here? Absence of images is an automatic 0 on this scale; poor choice of images ensures low marks. The Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy has been considered, so presumably alternative modes of assessment would be offered to students and there is a system for ensuring student learning adjustment schedules are implemented, no matter which LEAPS partner runs the assessment?

**Action: Committee Secretary to feedback comments to COL.**

**4. Date of Next Meeting:**

Thursday 16 September 2021 at 2pm via Microsoft Teams

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 2021

**School Annual Quality Reports  
Sub-Group**

**Description of paper**

1. This report updates the Committee on the Sub Group tasked with reviewing School annual quality reports.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Discuss the positive practice and themes for further development at University level and agree on recommended actions.

**Background and context**

3. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) decided to maintain the light touch, interim approach for the 2020-21 reporting cycle focusing on the impact of and learning from the Covid-19 pandemic. The same streamlined reporting template was used but Schools were asked to complete all three questions this year (updating on actions from the previous reporting cycle was optional for the 2019-20 reports).
4. This year Schools were informed that SQAC would be particularly interested in their reflections on student progression and outcomes (focussing on the difference in attainment of groups of students, rather than comparing against other years) and student feedback. To aide their reflection, student data was available at the Insights Hub and the Student Analytics, Insights & Modelling SharePoint with online training available at PowerBI help videos. The Student Systems team also produced new guidance on using data for annual reporting made available to Schools at the Analytics SharePoint.

**Discussion**

5. See attached paper.

**Resource implications**

6. Resource implications will be considered as part of any proposed actions.

**Risk management**

7. The paper does not require a risk assessment.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

8. This paper does not contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a regulatory requirement.

**Equality & diversity**

9. Equality and diversity will be considered as part of any proposed actions.

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

10. The Committee Secretary will inform the relevant areas of the Committee's decisions.

**Author**

Brian Connolly  
September 2021

**Presenter**

Brian Connolly

**Freedom of Information Open**

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**School Annual Quality Reports  
Sub-Group**

Meeting held on **Wednesday 1 September 2021**  
via **Microsoft Teams**

**Notes**

**Present:**

Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Brian Connolly	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Tara Gold	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
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 (CSE)
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)

**Apologies:**

Dr Claire Phillips	Dean of Quality, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)
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**1. Update on University Level Actions**

The Group received an update on University level actions in response to issues identified as areas for further development in School Annual Quality Reports 2019-20.

**2. Consideration of School Annual Quality Reports**

The Group noted that Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) decided to maintain the light touch, interim approach for the 2020-21 reporting cycle focusing

on the impact of and learning from the Covid-19 pandemic. The same [streamlined reporting template](#) was used but Schools were asked to complete all three questions this year (updating on actions from the previous reporting cycle was optional for the 2019-20 reports).

This year Schools were informed that SQAC would be particularly interested in their reflections on student progression and outcomes (focussing on the difference in attainment of groups of students, rather than comparing against other years) and student feedback. To aide their reflection, student data was available at the Insights Hub and the Student Analytics, Insights & Modelling SharePoint with online training available at PowerBI help videos. The Student Systems team also produced new guidance on using data for annual reporting made available to Schools at the Analytics SharePoint.

### 2.1 Positive practice for sharing across the University

The following themes of positive practice for sharing across the University were noted:

#### 2.1.1 Community Building

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 again a strong positive theme throughout the reports.

Examples include:

- **Moray House School of Education** – the appointment of key roles and a programme of social, wellness and academic community opportunities with a focus on student collaboration fostered community building and wellbeing.
- **Health in Social Science (HiSS)** - two student community leaders appointed to create opportunities.
- **History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA)** – postgraduate taught (PGT) informal online coffee mornings and staff meet and greets, sessions for PGT students interested in postgraduate research (PGR).
- **Literatures, Languages and Cultures (LLC)** - PGR coffee mornings, online writing groups, online town halls to complement Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs), co-created research seminars.
- **Clinical Sciences** - creating a dedicated space on Teams to bring together new students in an “academic-free” environment developed community.
- **Maths** – providing undergraduate (UG) students with the opportunity to intern for the Digital Creation Team fostered academic community among students.
- **Physics and Astronomy** - postgraduate students have been quite isolated. Research groups ran additional social activities and a convivial PhD student poster evening (online) was organised to encourage further student-student and student-academic contact.
- **Informatics** - a range of events planned to bring cohorts together both horizontally (i.e. same year group) and vertical (hons and non hons level).

## 2.1.2 Online/Hybrid Enhancements

In response to the pandemic, Schools/Deaneries developed new approaches to teaching & learning and administrative systems and procedures. They would like to maintain and carry these innovations into the post-pandemic world.

Examples include:

- **Centre for Open Learning (COL)** - online assessments and Board of Examiners have led to streamlined processes and improved engagement. General positive impacts of online delivery in relation to accessibility, deeper engagement, collaboration, communication, and virtual learning environment (VLE) uniformity.
- **Edinburgh College of Art (ECA)** - online assessment and feedback has enhanced marking processes, sharing and discussion of work with students, digital only dissertations, online vivas.
- **Divinity** – student support enhanced with virtual professional services and PT/academic support of students.
- **Economics** – online helpdesks (rather than office hours) and the Personal Tutor (PT) system informal feedback mechanism with rapid action.
- **Education** - the digital context has made many elements of learning and teaching much more efficient and effective (for example, on our professional programmes, meetings with partners and students on placement have been much easier to hold). Virtual meetings will continue in future years and there is a clear desire to reduce the number of on-campus meetings with digital alternatives or options.
- **HiSS** – using Microsoft (MS) Teams for online meetings between staff and students saved time and allowed greater collaboration.
- **HCA** – Online/Hybrid enhancements have enabled: synchronous and asynchronous activities and a trial of teaching collaborations across the world; accessibility of learning material and the use of LEARN for discussions (ease of contributing through digital tools valued by students); labs adaptability; dissertation advice to ensure resilience; supervision arrangements (satisfaction up to 95% and PRES up 22%).
- **The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (RDSVS)** – online vivas have been successful and should be rolled out post-Covid as this allows for international examiners to be appointed at no extra travel costs.
- **Biological Sciences** – online vivas worked well with students finding oral presentations online much less traumatic than in-person. Other online adaptations that have enhanced the student experience include online Q&A sessions (to facilitate remote assessments) and online external engagement (particularly the ease of attending external online talks and seminars) was of great benefit to Year 4 students as they heard many more excellent and relevant talks than would previously have been possible.
- **Physics and Astronomy** - live text chat feature during synchronous online lectures facilitated interaction in the class, and resulted in many more and interesting questions and points for clarification than from shouted-out / hands-up questions. We would like to somehow keep that even when we go

back to in-person lectures. Piazza has been used by a larger number of staff this year with an increase in the number of basic conceptual questions being asked by students due to the ability to anonymously post.

- **Physics and Astronomy** - considering keeping some remote (at home) experiments developed as this would help, for example, students with care responsibilities (where coming into the department several afternoons a week is more challenging) and for others too with special needs.
- **Chemistry** - introduction of an online assessment system for honours project marking worked well and confidence in the new system helped the submission deadlines for honours projects to be pushed back, giving students longer to complete reports in a heavily disrupted year. The system was also used for collating marks for other course modules (i.e. not just project reports).
- **Chemistry** - online MS Teams vivas were well received by both staff and students and none of the fears of technological failures or student dissatisfaction materialised. This mechanism of delivery would not have been attempted on such a scale without the Covid restrictions and can be viewed as a positive from the crisis.
- **Maths** - online submission and marking of continuously assessed work has been received overwhelmingly favourably by both staff and students and seems set to be retained in future. Similarly, the remote supervision of final-year projects and dissertations has been highly effective overall; hence, the option to schedule online supervisory meetings should be retained as a complement to in-person ones.

Given the successful implementation of online computing labs and online tools for collaborative coding over the past year, the School intends to retain – and, indeed, expand on – the usage of those in future.

- **Maths** - the School has substantially increased its provision of timetabled, synchronous lecture style activity for 2021-22: in fact, each course has by default had timetabled in as many live online session hours as there would have been lecture hours in a traditional, on-campus teaching model.
- **Maths** - given the relative success of our virtual MScBase/MathsBase support sessions in 2020-21, the School may consider retaining those in future years alongside its usual on-campus provision.
- **Informatics** – adoption of Learn Foundations (course template in LEARN) has allowed for consistency of navigation and information structure that makes students feel better able to find what they are looking for. It also allows COs to adopt good practices (such as a course timetable with links to all materials).
- **Data Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI)** - adding in an extra virtual Board of Examiners meeting in November has helped massively in getting students either progressed to dissertation or allowing them to graduate at the winter ceremonies.

### 2.1.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

There were a number of initiatives by Schools striving to promote an inclusive learning environment.

Examples include:

- **COL** – EDI embedded within COL cycle and Director of EDI appointed. Application processes scrutinised for accessibility.
- **ECA** - support for the newly established Decolonising the Curriculum working group and the development of an Action Plan (to be finalised in Sept 2021) and Statement (to be published Sept 2021). Identification of training gaps and organisation of Trans Awareness Training for key role holders. Initial preparatory work towards the submission of ECA's Athena Swan Award renewal.
- **HCA** - Athena SWAN silver, well attended events, appointment to posts, support and action network enabling students to overcome socioeconomic discrimination and disadvantage.
- **LLC** - online Widening Participation (WP) support, outreach activity, online events; decolonisation and inclusive pedagogy workshops, decolonisation working group; new appointments; diversification of curricula ongoing; flagging sensitive content and supporting students guidance; consideration in Board of Studies.
- **Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (PPLS)** - enhanced support for WP students 'support to succeed'.
- **Medical Education** - introduced two new groups (a short life working group Race Equality and Anti-Racism Group; and a longer term Inclusivity Group) which will set priorities and develop objectives that improve inclusivity and diversity within the programme.
- **Informatics** – newly constituted Student Welfare Group did work on addressing implicit sexism in the lab environments in terms of gender balance to foster inclusivity and a welcoming atmosphere.
- **Informatics** - Decolonising the Curriculum working group activity continues to make progress with all course organisers identifying (in early 2021) curriculum changes to reduce/eliminate problematic material (for AY21/22). This is something that we expect will have a positive impact on the attainment gap between black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) and other students.
- **Informatics** - initiating a new research project to investigate the causes of Informatics student attainment gaps and learn which interventions and support measures are working and how well. The study will be cohort-based, following students from first year to final year and graduation (or other exit route).
- **Maths** - the School will actively engage with ongoing University and College initiatives aimed at decolonising the taught science curriculum. Aspects may include involvement with the "Black Students in STEM" scholarship scheme; the systematic identification of BAME role models among staff and students; and the introduction and curation of relevant final-year student project and dissertation topics.

## **2.2. Areas for further development at University level**

The following themes for further development were noted:

### 2.2.1 Staff Welfare and Student Experience

There are ongoing concerns that the pandemic has exacerbated existing issues in relation to staffing and workload pressures, particularly as the University admitted an exceptionally large number of students in 2020-21. This year's reports raised concerns that these may now be impacting the student experience.

Examples include:

- **Business** - we have faced two years with significant increases in UG cohort sizes. To cope with the additional student numbers we have increased student group sizes and had to close some courses in semester 1 (these courses will now only be open to Business School or joint programme students). Thus over recruitment is impacting on student choice.
- **Education** - insufficient staffing/high workloads continues to have a detrimental impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- **HiSS** - staff/student ratios are challenging on some programmes, and ongoing impacts on pandemic; mitigation plans needed for staff changes.
- **HCA** - move to hybrid/learning and teaching has resulted in overwhelming workloads (staff/student ratios); challenge to build community/isolation; and digital fatigue.
- **Clinical Sciences** - continuing post-approval issues are a roadblock to recruitment. Programme expansion without appropriate staff resource imperils quality and the student experience, and is unsustainable. Need better support for academic and professional services staff involved in PGT teaching.
- **Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences (MGPHS)** - some course organisers, tutors, markers, supervisors and programme directors, had extra work pressures in their other professional roles due to Covid-19 and some had to withdraw or reduce their teaching input. This created additional pressures on staff who were also required to provide additional student support during this time and changes in teaching practice. This resulted in some programmes employing new staff without the usual time to induct and train them and had an impact on student feedback. The University must prioritize a continued focus on staff welfare, specifically by allowing the recruitment of staff to properly resource teaching.
- **Biological Sciences** - the greatest impact of the pandemic on academic and support staff was the significant increase in workload leading to increased stress and decreased mental health. Academic staff reported two to three times more teaching related work than normal. Support staff had significantly greater administrative burden, particularly in relation to the adoption of more online exams. This extra workload in a rapidly changing situation had a significant impact on staff stress levels and mental health well-being.
- **Informatics** - workload has increased very significantly over non-hybrid teaching years, owing to the demands of preparing new online teaching materials whilst simultaneously with providing on-campus learning opportunities. Since admin units are also under strain, many tasks are having to be done by lecturers to ensure fast turnaround (e.g. scheduling

and room booking for tutorials). The frequent switching in and out of on-campus activities by students (e.g. due to Covid-19 isolation requirements) also creates an admin overhead.

The Group noted that the recent Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) recommended the University 'implement an approach to facilitate institutional oversight and the effective planning and monitoring of student numbers, in order to ensure that appropriate and timely actions can be taken where increases in student numbers impact on arrangements for learning and teaching and student support.'

**Recommended action: Refer to the ELIR Response Oversight Group with a request for a response.**

### 2.2.2 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Increasingly Schools/Deaneries have engaged with student data and reflected on the gaps in attainment of different groups of students within their local area and across the University. Concerns were raised in a number of reports about the University's support of students with protected characteristics, particularly in relation to the impact of the pandemic. The issues have been widely discussed and schools/deaneries would now like support from the University to address the underlying causes.

Examples include:

- **Education** - the University must recognise the need to support students holistically, so that barriers to learning are removed.
- **Economics** – attainment differences in between student groups.
- **LLC** - significant attainment disparities between student groups.
- **PPLS** – disparities in attainments gaps, progression rates and outcomes.
- **Medical Education** – plan to report on differential attainment (MBChB) which will provide clear data on differential attainment to enable the programme team to develop informed actions to address issues identified. The necessary support for this should be provided.
- **Engineering** – guidance on data needed to support work to improve student experience, diversity and inclusion in our learning and teaching.
- **Maths** - the School will address the attainment gap between Scottish and other students. However, further systematic investigation is required, which may involve tracking the attainment of individual students.
- **Physics and Astronomy** - it would be useful to explore further the attainment gaps with more detailed data.
- **Informatics** - the data certainly shows concerning trends in attainment gaps across students of different backgrounds however, the data does not capture the cause of these trends.

The Group noted that this was also the focus of an ELIR recommended encouraging the University to 'consider how to address attainment gaps in student

performance through the oversight, coordination and monitoring at an institutional level of school-level actions’.

**Recommendation: Refer to the ELIR Response Oversight Group with a request for a response.**

### 2.2.3 Online/Hybrid Platforms

In response to the pandemic, Schools/Deaneries developed new approaches to teaching & learning and administrative systems and procedures. They would like to maintain and carry these innovations into the post-pandemic world and, to support this aspiration, there is a general desire for a strategic assessment of the University’s online learning platforms with the aim of improving functionality and suitability.

Examples include:

- **COL** - continue to explore possible solutions for improving non-credit VLE access.
- **HiSS** - access to a range of flexible platforms that allow stable remote delivery of teaching, so ongoing access to zoom, teams and collaborate or other secure platforms is needed. Going forward retain stable remote platforms and secure uploading facilities that are key in blended delivery. Access to secure, encrypted recording facilities that allows students to record (audio if not video) their clients session on NHS equipment but upload securely to University of Edinburgh equipment, in line with GDPR requirements for secure transmission of sensitive private information would be very useful.
- **Divinity** – need for contingency planning in future and strategic development of digital technology.
- **PPLS** – issues with functionality of online platforms (late move to alternatives).
- **Chemistry** - both Turnitin and the marking system within LEARN do not fulfil the needs of the School and require renovation/replacement. Gradescope has received a more favourable response, but has not yet been adopted on a permanent basis. A return to paper-based assessment is undesirable, but the School requires a suitable technological solution for 2021/22.
- **Engineering** – Remote vivas worked well for PGR students as have online virtual and remote laboratories, and take-home low powered electronics assignments.
- **Informatics** - many staff initially favoured Blackboard Collaborate as a platform for online synchronous activities, but it has been found that this suffers from some connectivity problems, especially for students in China. For this reason, some courses have (reluctantly) switched mid-semester to Microsoft Teams, which offers better connectivity but a less intuitive interface for their purposes. Making this switch for all online tutorials and other activities was again a huge additional burden for some courses.
- **Maths** - given our continuing reliance on a variety of digital tools for teaching and learning, we would encourage the University to consider appointing

Teaching Software Engineers to assist with the systematic integration and adaptation of those.

**Recommendation: Refer to Information Systems and the Curriculum Transformation team.**

**2.3** The Group also noted the importance of the following issues and recommends that SQAC request follow-up actions and monitor progress:

- **Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students** – a number of issues relating to PGR students were noted including the long term impact of Covid on both their research (e.g. lack of lab access adversely affecting their submission rates and funding) and their welfare (e.g. due to the isolation from their social and academic communities). Concerns were also raised regarding the level of PGR fees set by the University and the limits this set on the breadth and diversity of the PGR student community (e.g. deterring students from a non-traditional or widening participation background from considering research as a career step or option).

**Recommendation: SQAC to refer to Doctoral College.**

- **Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC)** - the new centralised ESC system continues to be an issue across a number of reports, exacerbated by the Covid mitigations last year. Concerns persist about the timing of the implementation of the ESC and the additional workload and stress this caused staff due to systems issues and response times, at a time when they were already under pressure. 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.

**Recommendation: SQAC to refer to the Deputy Secretary Student Experience.**

- **Student Support and Personal Tutor (PTSS) Review** – consideration must be given to how the new system will be resourced. The proposed evolved model of student support will require additional resources for Schools/Deaneries in order to recruit sufficient professional services staff for the new system. It is fundamentally important that the new system of student support is aligned and thoroughly linked to the ESC system.

The Group noted that the PT system was also the focus of an ELIR recommended.

**Recommendation: SQAC to refer to the Deputy Secretary Student Experience and the ELIR Response Oversight Group.**

- 2.4** The Group noted that a couple of Schools (Business and Law) seemed to have set themselves a very large number of actions for the coming year. **Action: Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval to discuss proposed actions with the Schools.**

**3. Reflection on the Process**

The Group was in agreement that the streamlined interim process had worked well again this year 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 Group noted that the reports represented a rich depository of good practice that should be shared across the University. It was agreed that the College Deans would nominate outstanding examples of innovative learning and teaching practice for Academic Services and the Institute for Academic Development to share at University level. It was also noted that the School and Programme Quality System (SPQS) had again worked very well and that a move to a fully online reporting process across all three Colleges would allow for more efficient analysis and utilization of the data held within the reports.

The Group agreed that a themed template 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 during the 2021-22 academic year.

**Brian Connolly**, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services  
September 2021

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 2021

### Internal Periodic Review Themes 2020-21

#### Description of paper

1. Identifies areas of good practice and further development arising from internal periodic reviews held in 2020/21, and proposes responsibility for action in response.
2. This paper does not contribute to the Strategy 2030 outcomes. It is a regulatory requirement.

#### Action requested / recommendation

3. For discussion and approval of proposals for responsibility for action in response.

#### Background and context

4. Six internal periodic reviews were held in 2020/21:
  - Clinical Education (postgraduate taught) *predominantly online provision*
  - Mathematics (postgraduate research)
  - Oral Health Sciences (undergraduate) *single programme review*
  - Moray House School of Education and Sport (postgraduate) [MHSES]
  - Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (postgraduate) [PPLS]
  - Social and Political Sciences (postgraduate taught) [SPS]
5. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, a lower than normal number of reviews took place. Typically, ~10 IPRs take place each year and cover a range of provision. Five reviews covered postgraduate provision and the remaining review covered one small undergraduate programme. Overall, there were 78 commendations, 63 recommendations and 40 suggestions across the six reviews.
6. Individual review reports are available at: <https://edin.ac/2Yn59qP>

#### Discussion

7. The following areas of good practice are drawn from commendations which are not review-specific, appear across a number of reviews, and/or align to a broader theme.
  - The dedicated support provided and commitment and leadership shown by both academic and professional services **staff**, including in challenging circumstances due to the pandemic, was recognised in 15 recommendations across all six reviews. Additionally, **student support** as a theme was recognised across five reviews, including four commendations relating to the Personal Tutor system and commitment to providing pastoral support. Examples include:
    - Academic staff for their commitment, expertise and their collegiality [Clinical Education]

- Vision, leadership and day-to-day management in developing and operating a large, vibrant graduate programme [Mathematics]
  - Outstanding work of the Programme Director for their collaborative leadership style in enhancing the learning and teaching culture [Oral Health Sciences]
  - The academic and professional services staff for their exceptional effort in the move to online provision and continuing to support students in their learning under challenging circumstances [SPS]
  - The Personal Tutor system the School has in place for Masters students [PPLS]
  - The Personal Tutor System which is working well within the School [MHSES]
- The consideration of **equality, diversity and inclusion** throughout many aspects, including recruitment, support for student-led initiatives, online activity to support widening participation and funding resulted in six commendations from four reviews. Examples include:
    - Activity in interleaving equality diversity and inclusivity in internationalisation and curriculum transformation plans [MHSES]
    - Consideration of equality and diversity in programmes [PPLS]
    - Commitment to widening participation and online widening participation activity [SPS]
- **Community building** activities, initiated by both staff and students, were commended four times across the same number of reviews. Examples include:
    - Success in creating and maintaining communities of online learning and practice, including a flexible and student-centred approach and attention to the diverse needs of students across career stage, specialism and geographical location [Clinical Education]
    - The Research Training Fair as an excellent initiative for building community and supporting students in preparation for their dissertation [SPS]
- Approaches to listening to the **student voice** were commended five times across four reviews. Examples include:
    - Use of student interns to encourage the student voice and engagement [MHSES]
    - Subject area for their approach in engaging with and listening to the student body [Oral Health Sciences]
    - For prioritising the student voice [SPS]

8. Areas for further development:

Area	Proposal for responsibility of action:
<b>Tutors and demonstrators (seven recommendations across three reviews).</b> Recommendations covered training, the	Align with ELIR recommendation work

provision of information, allocation of work, and support.	
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Please note: some overarching themes also received a high number of recommendations across reviews but those recommendations were review-specific and/or so varied that a strong theme for further development at University-level could not be extracted.

9. Academic Services will consider how areas of good practice can be shared across the University in 2021/22 in the context of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Resource implications**

10. There are no additional resource implications associated with this paper at this point.

### **Risk management**

11. Failure to respond to areas for further development would constitute an institutional risk.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

12. This paper does not contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a regulatory requirement.

### **Equality & diversity**

13. The paper itself does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. The Equality Impact Assessment for internal periodic review processes is published at: <https://edin.ac/2p3B7WZ>

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

14. Responsibility for action in response will be communicated to those allocated the role, along with example recommendations to provide context.
15. College Deans of Quality are asked to communicate the areas and the outcome of the discussion to relevant College committees.
16. Academic Services will communicate the areas and responsibility for action in response to Schools/subject areas which had provision reviewed in 2020/21.
17. Consideration will be given to how areas of good practice can be shared across the University in 2021/22 in the context of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
18. Areas for further development will also be reported to University Executive.

### **Author**

*Nichola Kett*  
3 September 2021

### **Presenter**

*Nichola Kett*

### **Freedom of Information Open**

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 2021

## **ELIR Response Action Plan**

### **Description of paper**

1. This paper provides an overview of the recent Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) outcome and recommendations and presents a high-level initial plan for progressing the recommendations.
2. The ELIR response and proposed Action Plan (Appendix 1) contribute to improving the quality of learning and teaching, the student experience and student satisfaction.

### **Action requested/Recommendation**

3. The Committee is invited to comment on the proposed approach for responding to the ELIR recommendations and the draft Action Plan.

### **Background and context**

4. Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) is the method used by the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) to review and assess the effectiveness of higher education institutions' approaches to securing academic standards and the quality of the student experience.
5. Our review was conducted in a series of online meetings with students and staff in February and March 2021. In advance of the review, we submitted a [Reflective Analysis](#) (and other documentation) approved by Court in September 2020.
6. QAA Scotland published the outcome of the review online in July 2021: [University of Edinburgh \(qaa.ac.uk\)](http://www.universityofedinburgh.ac.uk/qaa). A shorter "outcome report" provides the formal outcome of the review and an overview of the commendations and recommendations; the longer "technical report" provides further information on the background and findings from the review, providing context to the commendations and recommendations.

### **Discussion**

#### **7. Overall judgement**

- 7.1. Overall, we have been judged to have "effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience." This is a positive judgement and the best possible outcome for an ELIR, the other two outcomes: "limited effectiveness" or "not effective".

#### **8. Key findings**

- 8.1. Whilst the overall judgement is positive, and there are several commendations in the report, two key themes run throughout the findings.
- 8.2. Inconsistency in implementation of policy and practice; variability arising from our decentralised nature:
  - a. “Multiple instances where inconsistent implementation of policy and strategic approach across Schools contributed to variable student and staff experience.”
  - b. “The decentralised nature of the Schools and Colleges leads to considerable variability in the extent to which many University policies and strategic approaches are implemented...”.
- 8.3. Speed of change has been slow; projects have not delivered substantial change:
  - a. “The University has had longstanding concerns on certain aspects of the student experience, notably assessment and feedback and the personal tutor system....(however) the timeliness with which any appropriate measures are put in place is slow.”
  - b. “Many projects which have set out to address these (student experience) concerns over the last five to ten years have not delivered substantial change, more recent projects were paused due to the pandemic and most are now awaiting the outcome of Curriculum Transformation”

## 9. Key recommendations

- 9.1. We are required to establish a systematic approach to enable effective institutional oversight and evaluation of the implementation of policy and practice:
  - a. to increase the range and use of institutionally-determined baseline requirements to ensure consistency and accountability, and
  - b. take action when Schools deviate from institutional expectations.
- 9.2. develop an effective approach to the strategic leadership and management of change that will ensure more immediate and timely implementation of identified solutions to enhance the student experience.
  - a. Linked to this, we have been asked to make “demonstrable progress” over the next academic year in two key areas: Assessment and Feedback and Student Support;
  - b. and to take action to implement an effective approach for institutional oversight and management of student numbers.
- 9.3. The full set of recommendations and planned actions are set out in the attached table.

## 10. Managing our response

- 10.1. An ELIR Oversight Group has been established (comprising VP Students, Deputy Secretary Student Experience, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, Director of IAD, Director of Strategic Change, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services) which has had an initial meeting to discuss how we take forward the recommendations.
- 10.2. The attached table provides an initial draft of an ELIR Action Plan. The purpose of the action plan is to provide (at a high level) reassurance that there is a plan for progressing the ELIR recommendations and to invite input. Some of the recommendations can be taken forward through existing committees and work streams, whereas others require further discussion. There will be extensive consultation with appropriate stakeholders/groups/committees as we progress work on the recommendations.
- 10.3. The Action Plan will be supported by communications to keep the University community updated on progress.

## **11. Formal Year-on Response**

- 11.1. We are required to provide a follow-up report on actions taken or in progress to address the outcomes of the review to QAA Scotland one year after the publication of the ELIR reports (by 16 July 2022). Court is required to endorse the follow-up report.
- 11.2. The ELIR Action Plan and progress will feed into the year-on response.
- 11.3. An update on ELIR actions will be presented to the meeting of Senate on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 ahead of the year-on response.

## **12. Next ELIR in 5 Years**

- 12.1. Our next ELIR should be in 5 years; date to be confirmed. Even though we received an overall outcome of “effectiveness”, the tone and seriousness of the recommendations suggest that if we do not demonstrate significant change by the time of the next review (in 5 years), we could run the risk of a “limited effectiveness” judgement. For information: Glasgow School of Art recently received a judgement of “limited effectiveness” with some similar comments about inconsistency and change management.

## **Resource implications**

13. Oversight of the ELIR response and the Action Plan does not require any resource implications, but some of the recommended actions may have resource implications in staff time.

## **Risk Management**

14. The approach to responding to ELIR is designed to mitigate the risks associated with a poor outcome in the next review and is monitored as part of the University

Risk Register - Strategic Risk 5 “Continued or worsening of NSS or other measures of student experience”

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

15. Relates to SDG 4: Quality Education, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education. The overall focus of the recommendations is aimed at improving the quality of education and the student experience. There is a specific recommendation aimed at address equality and diversity in relation to student achievement and attainment gaps.

### **Equality & Diversity**

16. No new or revised policies are currently being proposed, but some of the recommendations and actions will give rise to new or revised policies and practices. Equality impact assessments will be carried out at the point when a new or revised policy or practice is proposed. Equality and diversity is a key focus of one of the main recommendations.

### **Next steps/implications**

17. Following discussion at University Executive (on 14 September) and Senate Quality Assurance Committee (16 September), and any proposed changes, a paper will go to Court on 6<sup>th</sup> October for feedback and then to Senate on 20<sup>th</sup> October for final approval. Senate will be asked to approve the action plan as its role includes: setting the academic regulatory framework; quality assurance and enhancement; and learning, teaching and curriculum development. Senate Quality Assurance Committee will play a formal role in monitoring progress against the recommendations and, together with the ELIR Oversight Group, will advise University Executive of progress and any concerns.

### **Consultation**

18. This is an initial plan of action and further consultation will follow with appropriate stakeholders/groups/committees in taking both the plan and specific actions forward.

### **Further information**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 19. <u>Author</u><br>Tina Harrison<br>Assistant Principal, Academic<br>Standards and Quality Assurance<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> September, 2021 | <u>Presenter</u><br>Tina Harrison<br>Assistant Principal, Academic<br>Standards and Quality Assurance |
|---|---|

### **Freedom of Information**

20. Open

## University of Edinburgh Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2021 – Action Plan

Theme	Recommendation	Priority	Owner	Planned actions
Strategy, growth and planning	<b>1. Oversight and planning for growth of student numbers</b> "... implement an approach to facilitate institutional oversight and the effective planning and monitoring of student numbers, in order to ensure that appropriate and timely actions can be taken where increases in student numbers impact on arrangements for learning and teaching and student support."	Establish approach/controls (within 1 year)  Size and shape (2 years)	Vice Principal Students	To be agreed. Currently no strategic oversight group in place. To be discussed further between Director of Planning, VP Students and Admissions to determine a way forward.
	<b>2. Strategic approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching</b> "... in view of the current transition between the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2017 and future plans, the University should provide institutional oversight, and ensure clarity for staff, on the strategic direction underpinning current learning and teaching developments."	Develop strategy within 1 year and implement from year 2 onwards	Vice Principal Students	Task Group of Senate Education Committee to develop a new Learning and Teaching Strategy
Change management	<b>3. Pace of change</b> "... develop an effective approach to the strategic leadership and management of change that will ensure more immediate and timely implementation of identified solutions in order to support staff and enhance the student experience."	Within next 2 years	Director of Strategic Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on positives from ART</li> <li>• Consult with internal experts</li> <li>• Articulate an approach</li> </ul>
Monitoring consistency of implementation of strategy, policy and practice	<b>4. Oversight and implementation of policy and practice</b> "... recognising the decentralised nature of university structures, the institution should establish a systematic approach to enable effective institutional oversight and evaluation of the implementation of policy and practice. As part of this, the University is asked to increase the range and use of institutionally determined baseline requirements to ensure consistency and accountability. The institution should ensure that mechanisms are put in place to adequately evaluate the consistency of implementation of strategic objectives across the institution and act when Schools deviate from institutional expectations.	Develop approach within next 12 months; implementation year 2 onwards	Vice Principal Students  Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance  Deputy Secretary Student Experience  Support from Director of Strategic Change (links to recommendation 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify priority areas of student experience (as associated policies and practices) for consistent implementation</li> <li>• Develop a set of associated indicators from which to measure and evaluate e and evaluation mechanisms</li> <li>• Establish clear approach for monitoring consistency of implementation, either via enhanced quality assurance processes or other.</li> <li>• Policy review as appropriate</li> </ul>
	<b>5. Training for postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach</b> "... ensure effective implementation of its policy for the training and support of postgraduates who teach and ensure all PGR students are trained before engaging in teaching activities."	Linked to above	Doctoral College leads	Example policy to inform approach to recommendation 4

## University of Edinburgh Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2021 – Action Plan

Theme	Recommendation	Priority	Owner	Planned actions
Student support	<p><b>6. Personal tutor scheme</b>            "...make significant progress in implementing plans to ensure an effective approach to offering personal student support. In doing so, and recognising the extended period of time that the University has been developing its approach to personal tutoring, it is asked to reflect on whether the current timescale for implementation of the institutional Student Support and Personal Tutor Plan in 2023-24, is sufficiently ambitious. The University should make demonstrable progress within the next academic year in respect of ensuring parity of experience for students and effective signposting to support services and delivery of an agreed and consistent baseline level of provision. As part of its approach, the University is asked to develop an effective mechanism to monitor consistency of implementation and allow it to evaluate the impact of these changes on the student experience."</p>	Within next 12 months with further implementation to follow on	Deputy Secretary Student Experience	Personal Tutor System 2021/22: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• School statements updated</li> <li>• Reinstate the Senior Tutor Network</li> <li>• Use pulse surveys to gather feedback</li> <li>• Approach to monitoring to be determined</li> <li>• Links to recommendation 4</li> <li>• Phased implementation of Student Support and Personal Tutor project outcomes</li> </ul>
Assessment and feedback	<p><b>7. Assessment and feedback</b>            "... over an extended period of time, the University has considered a broad evidence-base which has highlighted concerns about assessment and feedback and this remains an area of challenge for the institution. The University is asked to make demonstrable progress, within the next academic year, in prioritising the development of a holistic and strategic approach to the design and management of assessment and feedback. The University should also progress with proposals for the establishment of a common marking scheme to ensure comparability of student assessment processes across Schools."</p>	Within next 12 months, develop holistic strategy; implementation to follow on.	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment and Feedback working group already established as part of Curriculum Transformation and reporting into the Curriculum Transformation Board.</li> <li>• Taking forward short-term ELIR recommendations and feeding forward into ongoing Curriculum Transformation Programme</li> </ul>
Developing and promoting teaching excellence	<p><b>8. Recognition and support for academic staff development</b>            "... take action to remove barriers which exist that prevent some academic staff from fully engaging with its existing suite of development opportunities for the professionalisation of teaching."</p>	Within 2 years	Vice Principal Students  HR and new Provost  Director of IAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a strategy aligned to workload allocation models</li> <li>• Aligns with recommendation of the Teaching and Academic Careers Task Group –for Schools to develop and implement a Professional Development of Teaching Strategies</li> <li>• Implement School-level Professional Development of Teaching Strategies</li> </ul>

## University of Edinburgh Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2021 – Action Plan

Theme	Recommendation	Priority	Owner	Planned actions
	<p><b>9. Promotion of academic staff based on teaching</b>            "... progress with work to improve the recognition of teaching excellence across all aspects of the University. In particular, the University should ensure that recognition for teaching is embedded in annual review processes, that clarity of roles and titles is established, and that a clear progression pathway providing parity of recognition for education-focused academics is developed. In addition, the institution should ensure that it has the data available to be able to evidence and evaluate the progress made in all of these areas."</p>	Within 2 years	Vice Principal Students  HR and new Provost  Director of IAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline evaluation of current practice to inform future actions.</li> <li>• Titles have been harmonised for Grade 8 &amp; 9 staff</li> <li>• Improve data capture (among balanced role promotions) to evidence the impact of teaching excellence.</li> </ul>
<b>Attainment gaps</b>	<p><b>10. Attainment gap monitoring</b>            "...consider how to address attainment gaps in student performance through the oversight, coordination and monitoring at an institutional level of school-level actions."</p>	Develop approach within next 12 months; implementation from year 2.	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance with  University Lead, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDMARC data reviewed at Equality and Diversity Committee.</li> <li>• Aligns with Senate Quality Assurance Committee Data Task Group and outcomes of Thematic Reviews. Schools now reviewing EDI data and attainment gaps annually, monitoring via Senate Quality Assurance Committee</li> <li>• Identify actions and interventions to reduce attainment gaps, drawing on best practice internally and externally and support schools to implement.</li> <li>• Consult with relevant committees and groups</li> <li>• Pilot projects to test interventions to reduce attainment gaps as part of Enhancement Themes work funded by QAA Scotland.</li> </ul>

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 2021

**Students' Association**  
**Vice President Education Priorities 2021/22**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides an overview of the Students' Association Vice President Education's priorities for the academic year 2021/22.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. For information.

**Background and context**

3. In March 2021, Tara Gold was elected as the Students' Association's Vice President Education for the academic year 2021/22. This paper outlines her priorities for the year ahead, including key areas of work.

**Discussion**

4. Over the coming year, Tara will be focusing on the following priority areas:

**Strengthening the University's response to the pandemic**

Covid has had an incalculable impact on student's lives; their academics, mental health, and finances, all of which needs to be kept in mind as we return to campus. Marginalised students have been particularly adversely affected throughout the pandemic, necessitating increased consideration of their perspectives and needs. The shift to online learning has also presented an opportunity to improve the accessibility.

Tara will work to strengthen the University's Covid response by prioritising the centring of student voices in decision making and planning, advocating for measures to support students who have missed essential components of their degrees, and working to ensure progress on accessibility is not lost in the return to on-campus activity.

**Modernising Edinburgh's curriculum**

Events in recent years have increasingly highlighted the decreasing suitability of Edinburgh's curriculum for students. Furthermore, while the topic of decolonisation has been highlighted as an area of activity, the University is yet to enact

decolonisation efforts across its educational offering, which is central to the creation of an educational experience that reflects the University's values. *The Curriculum Transformation Project* represents an opportunity to reimagine the curriculum, to help it reflect the world we live in now and the unique challenges we face in it.

Through *The Curriculum Transformation Project*, Tara will prioritise supporting student engagement and involvement in the programme's work and outputs. Centrally, ensuring the perspectives of students from marginalised backgrounds are heard and supported is a priority in creating an inclusive and accessible curriculum. Tara will push for strong engagement of the project in decolonisation work, and the integration of modes of accountability on decolonial activity into its operation, to ensure alignment between values and educational delivery. Tara will also work to establish processes for future processes of curriculum transformation, creating more opportunities for student-staff collaboration so that learners have an active role in shaping the education they want and need. Another key focus will be integrating recognition of broader aspects of the university experience into the curriculum, such as internships, studying abroad, student activism and research.

### **Increasing transparency, responsibility, and accountability**

Tara will prioritise fostering more transparency, responsibility and accountability from the University and its structures to improve the student experience. Complex and opaque University processes create additional burdens on students, particularly when dealing with difficult circumstances, often exacerbating pre-existing inequities. Tara will work on improving the navigability of University structures for students, particularly student support services, advocating for better co-ordination between services and clearer student communications of available support and how to access it.

Tara will also work with stakeholders to make the University's structures more accountable on issues important which are important to students, such as sustainability and ethical partnerships, and will advocate for the strengthening of reporting procedures, support structures, and policy protections for marginalised students in academic spaces.

### **Risk management**

5. To be considered if specific actions arise from the paper.

### **Equality & diversity**

6. The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion remain at the heart of the Students' Association's work, and this paper reflects that. Equality and diversity implications will be considered if specific actions arise from the paper.

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

7. To be agreed if specific actions arise from the paper.

**Author**

Stuart Lamont

*Academic Policy Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association*

*03/09/21*

**Presenter**

Tara Gold

*Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association*

**Freedom of Information**

This paper is open.

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 2021

## Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy

### Description of paper

1. This paper updates the previous Student-Staff Liaison Committee Operational Guidance, and formalises this in to University policy. The paper does not contribute to the Strategy 2030 outcomes, however student engagement is one of the key elements of the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/en/quality-enhancement-framework/student-engagement>)

### Action requested / recommendation

2. For approval

### Background and context

3. Following the approval of the new Student Voice Policy by the Quality Assurance Committee on 20 May 2021, the link between the Student Voice Policy and SSLC operational guidance and principles was changed. This change necessitated formalisation of the SSLC Operational Guidance in to University policy, as the principles of SSLC's are no longer contained within the Student Voice Policy.

### Discussion

4. Please see attached paper. The updated policy incorporates elements of the previous SSLC Operational Guidance which had been updated in 2020/21 to reflect the fact that SSLC's can take place online. The updated policy also streamlines elements of the previous guidance and removes duplication. The principles of SSLC operation will now become University policy, and the advice on application of these principles are now contained beneath each principle.

### Resource implications

5. The paper proposes no change to existing practice, and therefore there are no new resource implications identified.

### Risk management

6. No risks identified.

### Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

7. The existence of SSLC's forms a key part of the Student Representation structure within the University and helps to facilitate feedback and discussion between students and staff. Therefore this helps to takes steps to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.

**Equality & diversity**

8. Equality Impact Assessment reviewed September 2021.

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

9. Relevant colleagues within Schools and Colleges will be informed of the changes to Student-Staff Liaison Committee policy.

**Author**

*Stuart Fitzpatrick  
9 September 2021*

**Presenter**

*Academic Services*

**Freedom of Information *Open***

# Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

## Purpose of Policy

To outline the requirements for Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) and provide accompanying guidance on implementing the requirements.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

The Policy applies to all students and staff involved in SSLCs.

**Contact Officer**    Stuart Fitzpatrick    Academic Policy Officer    Stuart.Fitzpatrick@ed.ac.uk

## Document control

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Approved:</b> 16.09.21	<b>Starts:</b> 16.09.21	<b>Equality impact assessment:</b> 11.09.15 Can you please have a look at this? Probably needs a new EqIA given change to SVP	<b>Amendments:</b>	<b>Next Review:</b> 2021/22
<b>Approving authority</b>	Senate Quality Assurance Committee				
<b>Section responsible for guidance maintenance &amp; review</b>	Academic Services				
<b>Related policies, procedures, guidelines &amp; regulations</b>	<a href="http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf">http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studentvoicepolicy.pdf">https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studentvoicepolicy.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/yourvoice">https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/yourvoice</a> <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/guidanceschoolcommsrep.pdf">https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/guidanceschoolcommsrep.pdf</a>				
<b>Guidance superseded by this guidance</b>	Student-Staff Liaison Committee Operational Guidance				
<b>Alternative format</b>	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> or telephone 0131 651 4490.				

# Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy

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## 1. Role

**SSLCs provide a formal mechanism for communication and discussion between academic and administrative staff and representatives of the student body, relating to all matters connected with improving the degree programmes (at all levels of study including Undergraduate (UG), Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Postgraduate Research (PGR)) and the student experience. In addition it provides a mechanism to escalate issues that are out with the remit of the SSLC to resolve, to School, College, University or Support Service for further action.**

### Guidance on application

Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) are meetings at which student representatives and staff supporting teaching and learning discuss the student experience which may include issues and activities in courses, programmes, and Schools.

As structures and systems vary between Schools, Institutes or Research Centres, the format of SSLCs may also be different to reflect this

## 2. Remit

**SSLCs should have a formal written remit which sets out the operation and governance of the SSLC, including where the SSLC sits in relation to other Committees in the School.**

**The remit should also detail the mechanism for escalating issues out with the remit of the programme or School and how actions are reported back to the SSLC.**

**Staff and student representatives are responsible for ensuring that students are made aware of how their feedback is acted upon after the SSLC meeting.**

**The remit should set out the mechanism by which students will be notified on actions taken and expected response timelines. Schools are strongly encouraged to respond to issues in a timely manner, ideally within the same semester as the SSLC.**

**The remit should be published on the School/Subject area/Research Centre/Institute website or equivalent and staff and students notified of its location.**

### Guidance on application

#### *Formal Remit*

Staff and student representatives are encouraged to review the remit annually to ensure that it reflects current learning, teaching and research matters in the School/Subject area. This could take place at an appropriate forum such as an SSLC meeting.

#### *Expectations*

SSLCs are one way in which students and staff should engage in discussions to improve the student experience at the University of Edinburgh, including the digital learning environment for students not studying on campus.

# Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy

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Following the launch of the UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Student Engagement (November 2018), the code states that ‘the provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience’. Furthermore, the Code states: ‘Higher education providers, in partnership with their student body, define, promote, monitor and evaluate the range of opportunities to enable all students to engage in quality assurance and enhancement processes’.

Student representatives are expected to gather representative student views to identify good practice and areas for development to enhance the degree programme and student experience.

Students are encouraged to share suggestions with staff so they can work in partnership to enhance the student experience and create a strong academic community within their area.

Staff and student representatives are responsible for ensuring that students are made aware of how their feedback is acted upon after the SSLC meeting.

Schools are strongly encouraged to respond to issues in a timely manner, ideally within the same semester as the SSLC. This could happen at another meeting or via another route. Schools should state what can or will be done as there may be situations where issues cannot be easily or quickly resolved. (See Section ‘Communication following the SSLC’)

Schools are expected to facilitate communication between student representatives and the students they represent. Schools should either share with student representatives the University student email address of the students they represent or facilitate alternative ways for representatives to contact all classmates e.g. via m-list.

Guidance is available for Schools which outlines the mechanisms by which Schools should share University student email addresses or facilitate alternative ways for student representatives to contact students in compliance with data protection guidelines.

Please refer to Guidance for Schools regarding communication between Student Representatives and students (<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/guidanceschoolcommsrep.pdf>) and the information from the University’s Records Management section regarding sharing of personal data (<https://www.ed.ac.uk/data-protection/data-protection-guidance/sharing-personal-data>)

Schools should either share with student representatives the University student email address of the students they represent or facilitate alternative ways for representatives to contact all classmates e.g. via m-list.

Schools should confirm with student representatives which mechanism will be used. Representatives should be encouraged to confirm with the student body which mechanism will be used for their programme.

Consideration should be given to new students attending SSLC meetings bearing in mind that returning students have already established a sense of community which can make gathering feedback from peers easier. New students may not have the same opportunities for in- person time to create a trusted community of practice.

Consideration should be given to ensure there is a space for development of a community of practice so that representatives are able to gather information from peers. This could be an area for the School and the Students’ Association to consider over the semester.

# Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy

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## 3. Membership

Meetings should be attended by:

- **Programme Representatives for the programmes being discussed;**
- **Staff responsible for the leadership and organisation of the programme;**
- **Professional services staff as appropriate and relevant to school structure.**

Online learner representatives and students should have the opportunity to participate during the meeting, or be invited to contribute beforehand if real time participation is not possible

### Guidance on application

The flexibility of digital forums may enable a larger number of student representatives to participate.

The relevant elected Undergraduate/Postgraduate school representative may attend SSLC meetings in their School as they see fit, and at a minimum be informed of the business conducted. Their contact details can be obtained at <https://edin.ac/3gODPZP> or by emailing [reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)

Where appropriate, Society Office Bearers of relevant academic societies and leaders of relevant Peer Learning and Support Schemes within the School or subject area may be invited to attend SSLC meetings; their details are available via [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/societies](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/societies) [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/peerlearningsupport](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/peerlearningsupport)

## 4. Frequency of Meetings

**At least one formal meeting should be held in each semester, which should be agreed upon in consultation with School staff and student representatives.**

**Schools must publish the date, time, and location of the meeting, inviting any additional items to be added to the agenda. It is suggested that this happens at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.**

### Guidance on application

The frequency of SSLC meetings may vary between Schools depending on their size and structure, as well as in terms of undergraduate and postgraduate provision.

SSLCs may operate at School, subject area or programme level depending on their structure.

At undergraduate level it may be more appropriate to meet once per semester whereas for postgraduate taught level it may be more appropriate to have additional meetings spread over the year.

Some subject areas and Schools may meet formally once a semester but may operate a more informal system throughout the year in terms of students having access to other meetings such as Director of Teaching meetings, School Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee meetings and meetings taking place at different levels (e.g. programme; subject area; school).

# Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy

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Schools are expected to operate whichever system is most appropriate to their structure.

## 5. Agenda Items

### The agenda must be made available in advance of the meeting

#### Guidance on application

Staff are expected to share information with students. This could include information such as themes arising from student surveys, themes from External Examiners reports, Part 3 External Examiner reports (Postgraduate Research), course and programme evaluation and review documentation, School Annual Quality Reports, and Internal Periodic Review reports. Student representatives and staff should collaborate to identify trends, areas for improvement and suggestions to enhance the student experience. Students' views should be sought on new programmes and courses as well as on changes to existing ones and the SSLC could provide a forum for this type of discussion. (see [Programme and Course Approval and Management policy](#))

#### *Suggested agenda items*

Agenda items can be suggested by students and staff. Although the exact format of meetings will vary between schools, this is an example of the basic format which many follow, in the order that they occur.

- Minutes of last meeting including update on actions
- Agenda items suggested by students
- Standing items: School, College or University wide issues and any updates from School Representatives
- School Annual Quality report
- Themes arising from Student Surveys, course enhancement questionnaires
- Themes from for mid-course feedback
- Internal Periodic Review preparation, where appropriate
- Internal Periodic Review reports and responses, where appropriate
- Themes from External Examiner summary reports
- Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation outcome reports, where appropriate
- Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR), where appropriate
- Staff communications
- Student Partnership Agreement: priorities and any local activities which may be of relevance
- Any other business (AOB)
- Date of Next Meeting

#### *External Examiner summary reports at SSLCs*

Schools must provide an opportunity for student representatives to view themes extracted from External Examiner reports and the School's summarised response to these themes (section 61 External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy).

Schools are encouraged to summarise points from External Examiner reports and group them into themes, together with the response from the School/Subject area/Programme, and highlight areas of good practice.

# Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy

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In some Schools, the School-level SSLC may not be the most appropriate forum for discussion of themes and responses as this will take place at department or programme level rather than as part of the School as a whole.

There may be instances where one External Examiner's report may be relevant to more than one SSLC, particularly for joint degrees. Therefore, each School is expected to decide which SSLC is most appropriate to their structure for the consideration of the summary reports.

Undergraduate External Examiner reports are received after the summer exam diet. For undergraduate students, the summary reports should be submitted to the first SSLC meeting of the academic year.

Postgraduate Taught External Examiner reports are received at the end of November and the summary reports will be submitted for consideration at SSLCs in the second semester.

It is expected that the summary reports and responses are emailed to SSLC members ahead of the meeting and in good time to allow members to prepare responses for discussion.

The consideration of summary reports is an opportunity to be involved in discussion of potential improvements to courses and programmes recommended by the External Examiners. During the SSLC meeting, students are expected to consider the themes and responses in the summary report and be encouraged to provide comments and suggestions.

There may be occasions when an External Examiner makes a suggestion or recommendation that is not possible/practicable for the University to implement. The response from the School to the External Examiner should demonstrate that the University has given full consideration to the comments made and indicate the reason that action cannot be taken forward.

Following consideration of the themes at the SSLC, it is expected that comments and suggestions are recorded in the SSLC meeting minutes.

Depending on recommendations, ongoing actions should be reported to future SSLC meetings, and ultimately through subsequent External Examiner reports.

(Section 60-61 [External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy](#))

Individual students and members of staff should not be named in the reports.

## 6. Meeting format

**Students are encouraged to chair meetings or co-chair with staff. Schools are further encouraged to select a member of staff to support the student chair.**

**All student representatives and students should have the opportunity to participate digitally during the meeting or input via other electronic means beforehand.**

### Guidance on application

SSLCs may be held in person, or digitally.

The following considerations should be noted for digital SSLCs:

# Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy

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- Only platforms supported by the University's Information Services should be used for digital SSLC meetings. These are listed at: <https://edin.ac/3fKUA6U>
- All other documentation and correspondence related to the SSLC should be managed using University email accounts.
- All information relating to the SSLC should be managed in accordance with data protection, freedom of information and records management legislation.
- Schools/Deaneries are encouraged to use the platform that students and staff are most familiar with.
- The functionality of the various tools should be considered, e.g. breakout rooms, sharing screens, capacity.
- Information Services [Online & Digital Events Service](#) provides information on which platform is most suitable for digital meetings.

*Guidance for those organising meetings:*

## For School/Subject area

- The meeting organiser will be encouraged to appoint a deputy chair to take over should the chair be unable to participate in a meeting.
- Consideration should be given to attendees' working environments (including any caring responsibilities and/or time zone issues) and how they can be supported to participate.
- The overall length of the meeting will be discussed and agreed with the School/Subject Area and student representatives. Ideally, meetings are limited to 50 minutes. If meetings last over an hour, a break of 10 minutes is scheduled, with the planned break communicated to participants in advance.
- Slides outlining solutions to common IT issues e.g. audio/video settings can be shown at the start of meetings to help participants.
- Participants are encouraged to arrive five minutes before the official start to ensure any issues can be addressed and the meeting can start promptly.
- It is helpful to agree how meetings with staff and students will be managed in terms of online meeting etiquette.
- In meetings with a higher number of participants, it may be helpful to identify another member of staff to support the meeting secretary to facilitate the meeting.
- Meetings should not be recorded unless appropriate prior agreement has been reached with all parties involved. It is appropriate to record specific sections of meetings (for example, a presentation) provided that meeting attendees have consented to this.
- Depending on the platform used, participants may need to be admitted to the meeting.
- Allow time for introductions and any technical issues at the beginning of each meeting.
- If a meeting looks likely to run over the time allocated, it is important to check with participants if they can continue for a period of extra time. Make this period of extra time clear and have a cut-off point.

## Technology considerations

- The meeting chair and secretary should test the platform being used for digital meetings in advance and become familiar with the main functions. Allow time for this.
- Consider how technology issues during a digital meeting will be dealt with.

*Guidance for those participating in SSLC digital meetings*

- Please access the meeting on time, ideally about 5 minutes before the official start time, to ensure any issues can be dealt with and the meeting can start promptly.

# Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy

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- The meeting will begin with an explanation on how it will be managed e.g. if participants should mute their microphones when not speaking, when the hand-raising feature should be used, and how the meeting will be chaired.
- As with in-person meetings, it is important that meetings keep to time and everyone has a chance to have their say.

Some Schools may wish to consider running an SSLC as an asynchronous event rather than a time bound live meeting. This may make the meeting more accessible for all if it could run over a slightly longer time period and students and staff could use chat functionality and collaborative document editing.

## *Chairing of meetings*

- Students are encouraged to chair meetings. This could be an elected school representative or another trained programme representative. Schools may wish for the chair person to be neutral (e.g. not a student on-programme, Programme Director or Course Organiser teaching on the programme which is being discussed). Schools are encouraged to assign a member of staff to support the student chair and facilitate the student's leadership role within the SSLC. Further information for students on preparing for and chairing meetings, is available on the Students' Association programme representative resource area (a closed area for programme representatives), and on the Students' Association website at: <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/yourvoice>

## *Student participation*

All student representatives are expected to be able to input into the agenda, to receive papers before meetings, and to receive minutes afterwards.

Meeting organisers are expected to consider the following when arranging the timing of meetings:

- the availability of students who have work commitments,
- time zone considerations,
- suitable notice prior to the meeting,
- ensuring in advance that students can access whichever platform is being used.

## *Communication following the SSLC*

Students and staff are not expected to give an immediate response at meetings to all issues or where they would want to consult further. Students may feel it necessary to consult with students in the cohort or with students in other parts of the School. Any action called for and agreed upon should be promptly reported back to students via student representatives.

Staff and student representatives are responsible for reporting back information to those they represent and taking ownership of any action points agreed at the meeting.

Schools are expected to appoint named academic and professional services staff contacts in each School for student representatives to discuss any additional issues as they arise or request additional meetings if required. Student representatives and the Students' Association ([reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)) should be kept informed of the contact details of these staff.

# Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy

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## 7. Minutes

**Schools must publish minutes and inform students and staff where these are located**

### Guidance on application

It is expected that minutes follow the same structure as the agenda outline. The person nominated to write the minute is expected to identify agreed action points and assign them to specific individuals, with a target completion date.

It is normally the responsibility of a member of staff to write the minute, and students would not be expected to carry out this task. However, where a student member volunteers or is nominated to write minutes, it is expected that they would be supported by a member of staff to ensure that actions are directed appropriately.

Schools must publish the minutes on the School/Subject area webpages or equivalent.

It is expected that minutes are made available as soon as possible after the meeting.

Minutes can be made available to Internal Periodic Review teams if there is a particular theme from the reflective report to be followed up.

Minutes may be reviewed by Senate Quality Assurance Committee and/or College Quality Committee in relation to themes emerging from the escalation of issues.

## 8. Equality

**Schools should determine appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that all student representatives have an opportunity to participate. It is suggested that Schools consider the use of digital forums/meetings where appropriate.**

### Resources

- Online and digital events service: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/desktop-personal/off-site-working/online-meetings>
- Advice and guidance on online and hybrid events: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/comms-and-collab/online-meetings-and-events/advice-and-guidance>
- Examples of online events and good practice : <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/comms-and-collab/online-meetings-and-events/user-stories>
- University supported Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs): <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/learning-technology/virtual-environments>
- sparqs sector resources: <https://www.sparqs.ac.uk/page.php?page=888>
- Strathclyde University Students' Union How to be an Effective Rep Online: <https://www.strathunion.com/pageassets/voice/studentreps/represources/How-to-be-an-Effective-Rep-Online.pdf>
- National Student Engagement Programme: Quick Guide on Hosting Online SSLCs <https://studentengagement.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Quick-Guide-on-Hosting-Online-Staff-Student-Committees.WEBpdf.pdf>

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 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 PT System Oversight Group was established in 2015 and tasked by Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) with the responsibility for quality assurance (QA) oversight of the PT system.
4. Membership of the Group is as follows: Assistant Principal, Academic Support (Convenor); College Deans of Students; College Deans of Quality; Students Association VP Education.
5. The primary responsibility of the Group has been to ensure that each School remains aligned to the University's commitment to a quality student experience across the PT system, as enshrined in the School Personal Tutoring Statement (SPTS).

### **Discussion**

6. This year Senior Tutors were asked to review their School/Deanery/Centre statement to ensure that it is still aligned to the University standard template and that any local information is current or refreshed if need be.
7. The SPTSs were uploaded to a SharePoint site for the Group to view and comment on. Members were asked to judge whether each statement was sufficiently aligned to the University's minimum requirements as set out in the template.
8. Once all members had a chance to comment a list of decisions was circulated to the Group, with each SPTS either approved or approved with amendments (based the Group's comments). When the Group was content with the decisions, each Senior Tutor was informed so that they could make arrangements to publish their SPTS on the School/Deanery/Centre website for the start of the academic year.

### **Resource implications**

9. To be considered by the Personal Tutor and Student Support (PTSS) Review.

### **Risk management**

10. 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**

11. Considered as part of the original Enhancing Student Support (ESS) project and to be considered by the current PTSS Review.

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

12. Academic Services communicates the decisions of the Group to the relevant Senior Tutor.

**Author**

**Brian Connolly**  
Academic Services

**Presenter**

**Brian Connolly**  
Academic Services

**Freedom of Information**

Open

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 2021

**Annual Review of Senate Committees Effectiveness**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides the results of and proposed actions in response to the review of the effectiveness of the Senate Standing Committees conducted in summer 2021.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. The Committee is invited to consider the results of the review and, while recognising the low response rate, to APPROVE the proposed actions in section 4 of the Appendix. These will aid continuous improvement of our approach to academic governance in 2021/22.
3. The results of the effectiveness review and agreed actions will be reported to the 20 October 2021 meeting of Senate.

**Background and context**

4. In summer 2021, Academic Services carried out a primarily self-reflective review of the effectiveness of the Senate Standing Committees. Members' input was requested across the themes of:
  - a. Remit
  - b. Composition
  - c. Support
  - d. Engagement
  - e. Impact of the Committees' work
5. Information on the Senate Standing Committees' remits and memberships can be found at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees>
6. The response rate was low across all three Committees (14 replies in total), but there are potentially some common themes in relation to remits, communication and equality, diversity and inclusion.
7. Committee Conveners discussed the results of the review at a meeting on 24 August 2021 and, with Committee Secretaries, have proposed relevant actions for the year ahead.

**Discussion**

8. The results of the review and proposed actions in response can be found in the Appendix.

**Resource implications**

9. The recommended actions will require coordination by Committee Secretaries in Academic Services as part of their established roles in supporting Conveners and the cycle of committee business.

**Risk management**

10. This activity supports the university's obligations under the 2017 Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

**Equality & diversity**

11. Conveners have noted the particular comments made by respondents in this area. It is recognised that the level of diversity in the composition of the Senate Committees is largely driven by the diversity of the College, School and Professional Services posts from which Committee members are drawn. Conveners will continue to monitor the composition of their respective Committees and work with colleagues to continually improve diversity.

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

12. Any amendments arising from the Senate Committees' discussions of this paper will be incorporated into the final version presented to Senate on 20 October 2021.

**Author**

*Director of Academic Services  
6 September 2021*

**Presenter**

*Committee Secretary*

**Freedom of Information - Open**

## Senate Committee Effectiveness Review 2020/1

### Analysis of feedback by Committee

#### 1. Senate Education Committee (SEC)

SEC currently has 23 members. 7 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire.

- **Committee Remit**

Respondents broadly agreed that the remit of the Committee is clear and the scope appropriate. However, it was suggested that:

- there would be benefit in separating out discussion relating to the student experience and wellbeing by establishing a separate committee for this.
- SEC's responsibility for Curriculum Transformation (CT) should be clarified.
- the extent to which SEC has ownership of learning and teaching strategy and governance in COVID and post-COVID planning should be clarified.

Respondents broadly agreed that the Committee has responded effectively to the challenges of changes in priority. However it was noted that:

- in relation to managing the move to hybrid learning during the pandemic, there would have been benefit in the Committee meeting more regularly to pick up work. The view was expressed that SEC or task / working groups of SEC could have taken on some of the work undertaken by Adaptation and Renewal (ART).

One respondent disagreed that the Committee makes effective use of task groups.

- **Governance and Impact**

All respondents understood how the Committee fits into the academic governance framework of the University, and considered there to be an effective flow of business between College Committees, the Senate Committees and Senate.

One respondent disagreed that there is a clear link between Committee business and the University's strategic priorities, and one respondent did not agree that the Committee makes the desired impact. In relation to impact it was noted that:

- this is lacking because there are not clear lines of communication for key outcomes and decisions. The respondent noted that the Senate Committees' Newsletter should not be relied upon to convey all important information.
- this would be increased if the Committee were to meet more frequently (although the respondent noted the potential workload challenges associated with this). For example, it was noted that the shift to hybrid learning had broadly been managed by groups outside of the Senate Committees' structure (ART). This left colleagues feeling that Senate and its Committees did not have sufficient oversight or opportunities to influence decision-making around hybrid learning.

- **Composition**

Respondents were satisfied that the composition and size of the Committee broadly enables it to operate effectively. However, it was suggested that:

- there may be benefit in reviewing the Committee's use of co-opted members. Co-option of members of Senate itself was suggested, particularly for task group or shorter-term work.
- the Committee is probably too large to be as agile as it would like, although it was recognised that it is important to have representation from across the institution, and that the University is large.

- **EDI**

The majority of respondents did not agree that the composition of the Committee is suitably representative of the diverse University population. It was suggested that:

- there would be benefit in having more student voices on the Committee.
- the lack of diversity is a difficult issue to tackle given that the majority of members are on the Committee because of their roles within Colleges / Schools / Support Services. The University needs to consider how lack of diversity can be addressed across the institution. Asking representatives of minority groups to sit on every University committee is not the answer to addressing EDI concerns.

One respondent disagreed that equality and diversity considerations are adequately addressed when discussing Committee business:

- EDI issues are too often addressed as 'tick box exercises' and not given proper consideration.

- **Role**

Respondents felt they had a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, and that members engage fully in Committee business.

Two respondents did not feel that they had received an effective induction when they joined the Committee.

- **Communications**

While the majority of respondents felt that the Committee communicates effectively with stakeholders and that they had a clear understanding of their role as a representative of their College or Group, around half of respondents did not have a clear understanding of their role in cascading information from the Committee. It was noted that:

- the Committee does not tend to discuss how and when information should be disseminated by members.
- while every effort is taken to communicate with stakeholders, not all parts of the University feel that they are adequately informed and as involved as they would wish to be. It is, however, difficult to know how to tackle this problem, and may be an inevitability in an institution of this size.

- **Support**

All respondents felt that the Committee was effectively supported by Academic Services; that the information provided to the Committee supports effective decision-making; and that Committee papers provide an appropriate level of detail. It was however noted that:

- even though papers are detailed, members do not always have a full understanding of the way in which decisions will be implemented. It is not possible to anticipate all potential aspects / problems.

## **2. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)**

SQAC currently has 13 members. 2 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire.

- **Committee Remit**

Respondents agreed that the remit of the Committee is clear, that it has adapted well to changes to priorities and uses its task groups effectively. However, it was suggested that:

- *The extent to which the Committee can escalate concerns discovered through the quality processes or act if responses received are inadequate, is unclear (eg. concerns about responses to thematic reviews). Furthermore, some key policy decisions relating to quality seem to lie outside the Committee's remit (eg. amendments to assessment regulations).*

- **Governance and Impact**

All respondents understood how the Committee fits into the academic governance framework of the University, and considered there to be an effective flow of business between College Committees, the Senate Committees and Senate.

One respondent disagreed that there is a clear link between Committee business and the University's strategic priorities, and one respondent did not agree that the Committee makes the desired impact. In relation to impact it was noted that:

- *Information flows smoothly between different governance levels vertically. But it is not clear that information flows horizontally to adjacent committees (eg Senate Education Committee) or that SQAC insights are taken into account when determining strategic priorities.*

- **Composition**

Respondents were satisfied that the composition and size of the Committee enables it to operate effectively.

- **EDI**

The respondents were split on whether the composition of the Committee is suitably representative of the diverse University population. The dissenting response suggested that:

- *We do not seem to be representative of the University population in terms of gender, ethnicity, nationality, or disability. We do consider E&D regularly, but this may be driven by the interests of current committee members. It's not clear that this would be sustained or that it is integral to the business of the committee.*

- **Role**

Respondents felt they had a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, and that members engage fully in Committee business.

- **Communications**

The respondents felt that they had a clear understanding of their role as a representative of their College or Group and had a clear understanding of their role in cascading information from the Committee. However, one respondent disagreed that the Committee communicates effectively with stakeholders, noting that:

- *Email communications to key stakeholders are always clear and well directed, but more widely SQAC still seems to be mysterious outside of a small group who*

*are involved in quality work. Communications through Teaching Matters and newsletters have improved the Committee's reach, but I doubt that many read the PDFs of committee minutes. There is much to be done to make it easier for stakeholders to learn about the Committee's work. Hopefully the digital maturity project will assist with this issue.*

- **Support**

All respondents felt that the Committee was effectively supported by Academic Services; that the information provided to the Committee supports effective decision-making; and that Committee papers provide an appropriate level of detail.

One response noted that:

- *Academic Services support for this committee has been outstanding, consistently.*

### **3. Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)**

APRC currently has 16 members. 5 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire.

- **Committee Remit, Governance and Impact**

All respondents strongly agree that the remit of the Committee is clear and appropriate.

All respondents strongly agree that the Committee has adapted effectively to challenges of changes in priority.

Two respondents disagree that the Committee uses task groups effectively. However it was noted:

- Whilst APRC has not had many task groups recently, this has been appropriate to needs.

All respondents understand how the Committee fits into the academic governance framework of the University, and consider there to be an effective flow of business between College Committees, the Senate Committees and Senate.

All respondents agree there is a clear link between Committee business and the University's strategic priorities, and that the Committee makes the desired impact based on its remit and priorities.

- **Composition**

All respondents are satisfied that the composition and size of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit and to operate effectively. It was noted:

- APRC covers some highly complex regulatory areas of practice. There are some highly experienced and knowledgeable colleagues on the committee as well as less experienced colleagues. Many of the issues dealt with on APRC require good knowledge of regulations and we rely on the diversity of the membership to cover the expertise necessary.

- **EDI**

All respondents agree that the composition of the Committee is suitably representative of the diverse University population, and that they are satisfied that equality and diversity considerations are adequately addressed when discussing Committee business. However it was noted:

- Representation for EDI can always be improved and should be reviewed regularly. The current committee is pretty good but there is always room for improvement.
- As with many University committees, APRC could welcome more colleagues from BME backgrounds, and with other protected characteristics.

- **Role**

All respondents feel they have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, and that members engage fully in Committee business.

One respondent does not feel that they received an effective induction when they joined the Committee. It was noted:

- Some issues brought to APRC are highly specialist and it might be helpful for there to be some checks that all terminology or current practice is understood by committee members before debate. However, often colleagues are invited to present their papers and this can add clarity, or the chair (or another committee member) explains terms.

- **Communications**

All respondents are satisfied that the Committee communicates effectively with stakeholders, and they have a clear understanding of their role on the Committee as a representative of their area.

All respondents feel they have a clear understanding of their role in cascading information from the Committee. It was noted:

- It was unclear how widely colleagues at the University understand the remit of APRC and other senate committees. The newsletters summarising business covered by the committees is a very helpful contribution to sharing more about the work of the committees and thereby making it easier for colleagues to understand what we do.

- **Support**

All respondents feel that the Committee is effectively supported by Academic Services; that the information provided to the Committee supports effective decision-making; and that Committee papers provide an appropriate level of detail. It was however noted that:

- Sometimes implementation plans are a little thin.
- The volume of papers is usually quite big for this committee, but it is understood why.

**4. Suggested Actions in light of responses (combined)**

A combined analysis of the answers to the review questions suggests the following recommended actions:

<b>Area Under Review</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Remit</b>	1. Student Experience to be included as a standing item on SEC agendas in 2021/22.	Secretary to SEC	New academic year
	2. Curriculum Transformation to be included as a standing item on SEC agendas in 2021/22.	Secretary to SEC	New academic year
	3. SQAC and SEC to consider triggers for escalation and relationship with University Executive	Conveners' Forum	Next meeting
<b>Composition</b>	4. Senate to receive discussion paper on this topic at a later date.	Academic Services to take forward with the Senate Convener.	TBC
<b>Governance &amp; Impact</b>	5. Each Committee to discuss more explicitly at the time how decisions taken will be implemented / communicated / impact evaluated.	Conveners / Secretaries	Every meeting
	6. Authors of papers to be encouraged to make better use of the 'Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed' section of the paper template.	Conveners / Secretaries / paper authors	Every meeting
	7. Each committee to consider more effective use of short-life working / tasks groups	Conveners / Secretaries	Ongoing
<b>EDI</b>	8. Each committee to ensure proactive consideration of EDI for all papers, discussion and decision-making.	Conveners / Secretaries	Every meeting
	9. Senate to receive a discussion paper on 'composition', including EDI, at a later date.	Academic Services to take forward with the Senate Convener.	TBC

<b>Role</b>	10. Each Committee to consider effective induction for members and implement revised approaches as required	Conveners / Secretaries	Start of new academic year and for any member appointed mid-year
<b>Communications</b>	11. Each committee to be more explicit at each meeting about the way in which decisions will be communicated.	Conveners / Secretaries	Every meeting

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 2021

**Terms of Reference,  
Senate Committees Members' Guidance,  
and Committee Priorities 2021/22**

**Description of paper:**

1. This paper notes the Committee's Terms of Reference, Senate Committees Members' Guidance and outlines the planned priorities for 2021-22.

**Action requested / recommendation:**

2. For information.

**Background and context:**

3. Presented to the Committee annually for information and reference.

**Discussion:**

4. It is noted that the Committee's priorities for 2021/22 may need to be revisited depending on the progress of the Covid-19 pandemic.
5. Key areas of activity which will affect the cycles of business of all three Senate Committees will include the evolving approach to Curriculum Transformation, response to the ELIR outcomes, and the quality of academic experience for students and learners at all levels.

**Resource implications:**

6. Resource implications would be considered as part of any proposed actions in relation to the Committee priorities.

**Risk management:**

7. Risks will be considered as part of any proposed actions in relation to the Committee priorities.

**Equality & diversity:**

8. Equality and diversity will be integral to the Committee's work.

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

9. Committee Secretary will feedback comments to relevant areas.

**Author**

**Brian Connolly**, Academic Policy  
Officer, Academic Services  
September 2021

**Presenter**

**Brian Connolly**, Academic Policy  
Officer, Academic Services

**Freedom of Information:** Open

**Terms of Reference,  
Senate Committees Members' Guidance,  
and Committee Priorities 2021/22**

The **Terms of Reference** can be found at the following link:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/quality-assurance/terms-reference>

**Senate Committees Members' Guidance** can be found at the following link:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/committeemembersguidance2021.pdf>

The Committee identified the following **priorities** for 2021/22 which were approved by Senate in June 2021:

Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and oversee the implementation of a plan of action in response to the 2021 Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the recommendations from the Digital Maturity report and consider how quality processes and the data that they produce can support the Curriculum Transformation programme.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to examine data and methodological options for the systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with quality assurance and enhancement-related aspects of the Scottish Funding Council review of coherent provision and sustainability.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the recommendations from the review of Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs).</li> </ul>

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 2021

**Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council  
on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2020/21**

**Description of paper**

1. The University is required on an annual basis to provide the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) with a report on its activities to effectively manage quality assurance and deliver on enhancement. This annual report requires approval by Court.
2. This paper does not contribute to the Strategy 2030 outcomes. It is a regulatory requirement.

**Action requested / recommendation**

3. Approval of the contents of the report.

**Background and context**

4. The University's annual report to the SFC on its institutional-led review and enhancement activity is produced in accordance with guidance prepared by the SFC. The exact format is at the discretion of the institution.
5. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee is asked to note:
  - This year's annual report includes the outcomes of the annual monitoring, review and reporting process for 2019/20 as the timescale for reporting was extended.
  - Information on the impact on the internal periodic review schedule is included.

**Discussion**

6. The report is relevant to the Committee's responsibility for the quality assurance framework and is attached.

**Resource implications**

7. There are no specific resource implications associated with the report.

**Risk management**

8. The provision of a high quality student experience is a high level risk on the University's Strategic Risk Register, and is overseen by the Risk Management Committee reporting to Audit & Risk Committee and Court. Additionally, failure in effectiveness of the quality assurance framework, including aligning review activity with external expectations and taking action on findings, constitutes an institutional risk.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

9. This paper does not contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a regulatory requirement.

**Equality & diversity**

10. Quality assurance policies and processes are subject to Equality Impact Assessment.

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

11. The report will be transmitted simultaneously to eSenate (21-29 September 2021) for comment and noting and to University Court on 6 October 2021 for approval. Any comments from eSenate will be provided to Court members. Once approved, the report will be submitted to SFC by Academic Services.

**Author**

*Brian Connolly, Professor Tina Harrison,  
Susan Hunter and Nichola Kett  
9 September 2021*

**Presenter**

*Nichola Kett*

**Freedom of Information *Open***



## The University of Edinburgh

### Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2020/21

**Summary of the institutional-led review outcomes from the preceding academic year (AY) including main themes, recommendations and/or commendations**

The University carries out regular reviews of its subject areas and Schools as one of the main ways in which it assures itself of the quality of its academic provision and the student experience. The reviews are carried out on a six-yearly cycle and take the form of internal periodic reviews (IPRs).

#### IPRs – 2020/21<sup>1</sup>

- Clinical Education (postgraduate taught)
- Mathematics (postgraduate research)
- Moray House School of Education and Sport (postgraduate)+
- Oral Health Sciences (undergraduate)
- Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (postgraduate)+
- Social and Political Science (postgraduate taught)+

+ IPRs which were due to take place in semester 2 2019/20 and were postponed to 2020/21 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Due to the knock-on effects of postponing these IPRs and the Enhancement-led Institutional Review being postponed from autumn 2020 to spring 2021, permission was sought and granted to reschedule the following IPRs from 2020/21 to 2021/22:

- Biological Sciences (taught)
- Health in Social Science (all)
- History Classics and Archaeology (undergraduate)
- Informatics (taught)
- Law (all)

Additionally, permission was sought and granted to reschedule the following IPRs from 2021/22 to 2022/23:

- Divinity (postgraduate)
- GeoSciences (postgraduate taught)
- Edinburgh College of Art (undergraduate)
- Mathematics (taught)
- Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (undergraduate)

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<sup>1</sup> Reports available at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review/reports>

For rescheduled IPRs, all provision will continue to be reviewed through annual monitoring, with School annual reports being considered by Colleges to inform their annual reports and a Sub Group which provides a report to Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC). These existing processes will continue with any issues requiring attention being acted upon in the meantime.

All IPRs took place online in 2020/21 and supporting guidance<sup>2</sup>, informed by benchmarking with other Scottish higher education institutions, was developed. It is planned that all IPRs will take place online in 2021/22 and the supporting guidance will continue to be developed as the online process is reflected upon.

SQAC receives an annual report in September each year on areas of good practice and for further development from IPRs and remits actions as necessary<sup>3</sup>. A progress report on actions is then considered by SQAC at an appropriate point. The areas of good practice and for further development from 2020/21 reviews are:

#### *Areas of good practice*

- The dedicated support provided and commitment and leadership shown by both academic and professional services **staff**, including in challenging circumstances due to the pandemic, was recognised in 15 recommendations across all six reviews. Additionally, **student support** as a theme was recognised across five reviews, including four commendations relating to the Personal Tutor system and commitment to providing pastoral support. Examples include:
  - Academic staff for their commitment, expertise and their collegiality [Clinical Education]
  - Vision, leadership and day-to-day management in developing and operating a large, vibrant graduate programme [Mathematics]
  - Outstanding work of the Programme Director for their collaborative leadership style in enhancing the learning and teaching culture [Oral Health Sciences]
  - The academic and professional services staff for their exceptional effort in the move to online provision and continuing to support students in their learning under challenging circumstances [Social and Political Sciences]
  - The Personal Tutor system the School has in place for Masters students [Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences]
  - The Personal Tutor System which is working well within the School [Moray House School of Education and Sport]
- The consideration of **equality, diversity and inclusion** throughout many aspects, including recruitment, support for student-led initiatives, online activity to support widening participation and funding resulted in six commendations from four reviews. Examples include:
  - Activity in interleaving equality diversity and inclusivity in internationalisation and curriculum transformation plans [Moray House School of Education and Sport]
  - Consideration of equality and diversity in programmes [Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences]
  - Commitment to widening participation and online widening participation activity [Social and Political Sciences]
- **Community building** activities, initiated by both staff and students, were commended four times across the same number of reviews. Examples include:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ipr-digitalmeetings.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Example from last year [sqac-agendapapers-20200909.pdf \(ed.ac.uk\)](#) (Paper E)

- Success in creating and maintaining communities of online learning and practice, including a flexible and student-centred approach and attention to the diverse needs of students across career stage, specialism and geographical location [Clinical Education]
- The Research Training Fair as an excellent initiative for building community and supporting students in preparation for their dissertation [Social and Political Sciences]
- Approaches to listening to the **student voice** were commended five times across four reviews. Examples include:
  - Use of student interns to encourage the student voice and engagement [Moray House School of Education and Sport]
  - Subject area for their approach in engaging with and listening to the student body [Oral Health Sciences]
  - For prioritising the student voice [Social and Political Sciences]

*Areas for further development (identified in multiple reviews)*

- **Tutors and demonstrators (seven recommendations across three reviews).** Recommendations covered training, the provision of information, allocation of work, and support.

Beyond reviews taking place online, no significant changes were made to the IPR process in 2020/21.

#### **Annual monitoring, review and reporting – 2019/20 and 2020/21<sup>4</sup>**

A Sub Group of SQAC reviews School annual quality reports and submits a report to SQAC on the outcomes, identifying areas of good practice and for further development and remitting actions as necessary<sup>5</sup>. Responses to the additional School-, College- and University-level actions arising from the review of School annual quality reports are then made available to SQAC.

#### **2019/20<sup>6</sup>**

At its meeting in May 2020, SQAC agreed to suspend the normal annual monitoring, review and reporting processes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, a light-touch, interim process was approved with the aim of complementing ongoing academic contingency work. Streamlined reports focussed on the impact of and learning from the pandemic and allowed for optional updates on actions identified from last year's reporting cycle and reflection on other aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience (including industrial action). Deadlines for the submission of School annual quality reports were extended from August to November and thus outcomes are included in this year's annual report to SFC.

*Themes of positive practice for sharing at University level:*

Examples of good practice were identified in every School annual quality report. The following themes reflect the areas where there was a critical mass of good practice examples.

- **Student and staff welfare: sense of community, support provided to students by staff, and local level communication.** Examples include:
  - Increased social and pastoral support processes, additional personal tutor sessions, regular Collaborate sessions and regular signposting to mental health and wellbeing services within the University [Molecular, Genetics and Population Health Sciences].

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting>

<sup>5</sup> Example from last year [sqac-agendapapers-20201217-web.pdf \(ed.ac.uk\)](#) (Paper B)

<sup>6</sup> [sqac-agendapapers-20201217-web.pdf \(ed.ac.uk\)](#) (Papers B and C)

- The introduction of a monthly student review meeting involving key academic and professional staff to improve awareness of individual students experiencing difficulties [Economics].
- Retained high student engagement through frequent contact resulting in students feeling supported, cohort and peer support networks being built and maintained, and early detection of issues [Biological Sciences].
- **Teaching and learning: positive innovations as a result of the transition to hybrid teaching and partnership approach to curriculum adaptation.** Examples include:
  - A coordinated and comprehensive response to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically the Adapt, Support, Implement, Deliver project which supported the transition to hybrid teaching through co-creation with students [Mathematics].
  - Existing online postgraduate taught programmes provided resources to support undergraduate hybrid teaching in semester 2 [Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (RDSVS)].
  - Curriculum Renewal in Engineering Workshops were held over summer and these led to the development of the new first and second year structure and courses [Engineering].
- **Assessment: adaptations to and diversification of assessment methods were well received by students and staff.** Examples include:
  - Innovative approaches to assessment, including video presentations [Education].
  - Consultation with students on how they would be assessed, leading to a greater sense of student ownership of their education [Biological Sciences].
  - The use of different assessment methods has prompted a rethink on future examination policy and an anticipated move away from sit down examinations [Chemistry and Literature, Languages and Cultures].
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion: Schools strove to promote an inclusive learning environment during the pandemic.** Examples include:
  - An active Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee and support for postgraduate research students to develop their own race equality campaign, ConveRACEions [Health in Social Sciences].
  - A range of initiatives to support and enhance the experience of students from widening participation backgrounds [Physics and Astronomy and GeoSciences]
  - Workshops run by the Decolonising the Curriculum working group help staff to think through how to ensure inclusiveness and avoid racial bias in the content and delivery of their courses [Informatics].
  - Informal networks for students and staff who are parents or carers and for LGBTQ+ staff and postgraduates [Physics and Astronomy].
  - The introduction of two new groups, a short life Race Equality and Anti-Racism Working Group and a longer term Inclusivity Group which will set priorities and develop objectives that improve inclusivity and diversity within the programme [Edinburgh Medical School].
- **Administration: the rapid development of new and innovative administrative systems and procedures, including the move to online Boards of Examiners and PhD vivas.** Example include:
  - The successful move to online Boards of Examiners meetings, identified as an innovation that could be used in future years [Law].
  - Online vivas enabling the appointment of international examiners due to the removal of travel requirements [RDSVS and Mathematics].

- The use of SharePoint for to support Board of Examiners through an asynchronous approach [Literature, Languages and Cultures].

*Areas for further development at the University level:*

- **Staff Welfare.** Schools expressed concern that the pandemic had exacerbated existing staffing and workload pressures. While academic and professional services staff demonstrated superb commitment, resilience and dedication, the need for additional wellbeing and mental health support for staff was raised by schools. The move to online teaching, hybrid modes of simultaneous online and on-campus teaching and the impact of increasing student numbers were highlighted as areas of pressure.
- **Communication.** A theme that emerged across 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.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion.** Schools highlighted the impact of the pandemic on students with protected characteristics, caring responsibilities, and students from widening participation backgrounds
- **Extensions and Special Circumstances.** Schools reported that the implementation of the Extensions and Special Circumstance (ESC) system had been very challenging, causing additional workload for staff at a time when they were already under pressure.
- **Online learning platforms.** Schools highlighted issues with the online learning platforms that the University had in place at the start of the pandemic, in part reflecting the rapid shift to digital delivery, and reported a desire for a strategic assessment of digital learning platforms to ensure they are fit for purpose going forward.
- **On-campus space and resources.** Access to the University's on-campus space and resources continued to be a theme across School reports. Concerns were raised in terms of the consistency of 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. Loss of access to specialised discipline-specific spaces and physical library resources because of the pandemic had a particular impact on the student experience. In addition, Schools noted the impact of expanding student numbers on an estate already under strain, and timetabling challenges including delays and lack of suitable rooms.
- **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.

SQAC agreed that positive lessons from the adaptation of the annual monitoring, review and reporting processes should be built on for future cycles. In particular, the streamlining of reports while maintaining a good level of information on quality assurance issues and activities and the merits of a themed template would be explored.

## **2020/21**

In April 2021, SQAC approved amendments to the reporting templates to support the continued suspension of normal annual monitoring, review and reporting processes due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the interim process to review and reflect on 2020/21. The light-touch process continued, focussing on the impact and learning from the Covid-19 pandemic as well as including updates on actions identified from previous years' reporting cycles and a reflection on other aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience.

*Themes of positive practice for sharing at University level:*

Examples of good practice were identified in every School annual quality report. The following themes reflect the areas where there was a critical mass of good practice examples.

- **Community Building: the sense of community evoked by the pandemic and support that academic and professional service staff provided for their students and each other.** Examples include:
  - Postgraduate research coffee mornings, online writing groups, online town halls to complement Student-Staff Liaison Committees and co-created research seminars [Literatures, Languages and Cultures].
  - Creating a dedicated space on Teams to bring together new students in an “academic-free” environment developed community [Clinical Sciences].
  - Research groups ran additional social activities and a convivial PhD student poster evening (online) was organised to encourage further student-student and student-academic contact [Physics and Astronomy].
  
- **Online/Hybrid Enhancements: in response to the pandemic, Schools/Deaneries developed new approaches to teaching & learning and administrative systems and procedures.** Examples include:
  - Enhancements have enabled: synchronous and asynchronous activities and a trial of teaching collaborations across the world; accessibility of learning material and the use of LEARN for discussions (ease of contributing through digital tools valued by students); labs adaptability; dissertation advice to ensure resilience; supervision arrangements [History, Classics and Archaeology].
  - Online vivas have been successful and should be rolled out post-Covid as this allows for international examiners to be appointed at no extra travel costs [The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies].
  - Online submission and marking of continuously assessed work has been received overwhelmingly favourably by both staff and students; the remote supervision of final-year projects and dissertations has been highly effective overall; and successful implementation of online computing labs and online tools for collaborative coding [Mathematics].
  
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI): there were a number of initiatives by Schools striving to promote an inclusive learning environment.** Examples include:
  - Online Widening Participation (WP) support; outreach activity; online events; decolonisation and inclusive pedagogy workshops; decolonisation working group; new appointments; diversification of curricula ongoing; flagging sensitive content and supporting students guidance; consideration in Board of Studies [Literatures, Languages and Cultures].
  - Introduced two new groups (a short life working group Race Equality and Anti-Racism Group; and a longer term Inclusivity Group) which will set priorities and develop objectives that improve inclusivity and diversity within the programme [Medical Education].
  - Initiating a new research project to investigate the causes of Informatics student attainment gaps and learn which interventions and support measures are working and how well. The study will be cohort-based, following students from first year to final year and graduation (or other exit route) [Informatics].

*Areas for further development at the University level:*

- **Staff Welfare and Student Experience.** There are ongoing concerns that the pandemic has exacerbated existing issues in relation to staffing and workload pressures. This year's reports raised concerns that these may now be impacting the student experience.
- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.** Increasingly Schools/Deaneries have engaged with student data and reflected on the gaps in attainment of different groups of students within their local area and across the University. Concerns were raised in a number of reports about the University's support of students with protected characteristics, particularly in relation to the impact of the pandemic. The issues have been widely discussed and schools/deaneries would now like support from the University to address the underlying causes.
- **Online/Hybrid Platforms.** In response to the pandemic, Schools/Deaneries developed new approaches to teaching & learning and administrative systems and procedures. They would like to maintain and carry these innovations into the post-pandemic world and, to support this aspiration, there is a general desire for a strategic assessment of the University's online learning platforms with the aim of improving functionality and suitability.

The Sub Group also noted the importance of the following issues and recommends that SQAC request follow-up actions and monitor progress:

- Issues relating to postgraduate research students, including the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on research and welfare.
- The implementation of the Extensions and Special Circumstances system, exacerbated by Covid-19 mitigations.
- Resourcing of the evolved model of support which will be implemented in response to the Student Support and Personal Tutor review.

The Sub Group again agreed that the streamlined process had worked well and that positive lessons from the adaptation be built on.

### **Sharing Good Practice from Institution-led Review and Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting**

The reports identifying themes of positive practice for sharing and areas for further development at University level and a paper outlining examples of good practice from annual monitoring, review and reporting processes are passed to the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to identify content for Teaching Matters<sup>7</sup> and the Learning and Teaching Conference. Examples of Teaching Matters blog posts that have been identified through quality processes are tagged<sup>8</sup>. Good practice is also shared at College-level<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, an area of the University's quality website has been developed to share good practice and resources<sup>10</sup>. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to hold the usual University-level event to share good practice but Academic Services and IAD are exploring opportunities to share good practice in 2021/22.

## **Ways in which support services were reviewed**

### **Student Support Services Annual Review (SSSAR) – reporting on 2019/20**

Student-facing support services are reviewed annually by a sub-committee of SQAC. The sub-committee submits a report on the outcomes of the review process to SQAC annually in late November/early December<sup>11</sup>. For reporting on 2019/20, the process was streamlined to focus on impacts of industrial action and the Covid-19 pandemic. Services were invited to submit their

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/teaching-matters>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/quality-enhancement-report-examples/>

<sup>9</sup> For example [CMVM Good Practice Showcase 2021\\_Recording - Media Hopper Create](#)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice>

<sup>11</sup> [sqac-agendapapers-20201217-web.pdf \(ed.ac.uk\)](#) (Paper M)

reports from the end of August 2020 for a mid-November deadline to a new SharePoint site, which facilitated sharing of experience and good practice

Each service receives individual feedback on their report, including commendations and areas of good practice. No sub-committee meetings were held but each service report was reviewed by the external and the Students' Association members. Common themes arising from service reports were:

- Staff response to challenges: staff commitment, flexibility and creativity provided an impressive response to the pandemic.
- Working across boundaries: increased collaborative working with other teams, services, Colleges and Schools.
- Digital processes for enhancement: digital processes provided improvements and streamlining.

The streamlined approach to reporting will continue for reporting on 2020/21 but peer review of reports will be reintroduced and it is hoped an online event to share good practice and discuss themes will be held.

### **Student Support Thematic Review**

Thematic reviews focus on the quality of the student experience in relation to a particular theme or aspect of student support which can span both student support services and academic areas. They are reserved for significant issues requiring in-depth exploration that often cannot be achieved via IPRs or SSSAR. Topics are influenced by the outcomes of SSSAR and discussion with the Students' Association. As planned, no thematic review was carried during 2020/21, however, SQAC considered updates on actions from the thematic review of black and minority ethnic (BME) students' experiences of support at the University. Relevant actions from this review and the Mature Students and Parents and Carers review are being progressed by the SQAC Data Task Group which has been established to examine data and methodological options for the systematic monitoring of data in relation to the student journey (ie retention, progression, attainment data) with the aim of ensuring that all groups of students have an equitable experience during their time at the University. Additionally, the University established a taskforce led by the Convenor of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee to drive forward the recommendations from the thematic review of BME students' experiences of support at the University.

### **Role and nature of student engagement in institution-led review**

The Students' Association and the University work in partnership to ensure that students are central to academic governance, decision-making and quality assurance and enhancement.

IPR and thematic reviews both include student members on review teams. The student member of a review team will typically convene one or more meetings during the review. Membership of a review team is included in the student's Higher Education Achievement Record. In addition to having student members on review teams, engagement of students from review areas as a part of IPRs is regarded as essential. Briefing material aimed at students outlines ways in which they can engage with reviews and actions taken in response. Parallel briefings guide Schools on how to engage their students with reviews. The remits for all IPRs include items proposed by students in the review area.

The ELIR commended the University's commitment to working in partnership with students and support for student involvement in IPRs.

### **Contextual information and key messages from analysis of data**

The results of the 2021 National Student Survey (NSS) show a decline across the whole sector; satisfaction fell for every question and overall satisfaction fell by 7 percentage points. Overall satisfaction at Edinburgh decreased at a lesser rate (down by 6.5 percentage points) but our overall position is below the sector average (71% compared to 79%). Satisfaction with Assessment and Feedback remains a challenge for the University. Across the sector satisfaction fell by four percentage points. Satisfaction at Edinburgh fell by six percentage points. Both the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) perform consistently better than the NSS and our position is broadly in line with the rest of the Russell Group, although results have been affected by Covid. Action to address the persistent low scores for assessment and feedback (particularly for NSS) was the subject of a recommendation in the University's ELIR 2021 which is being taken forward by a task group over academic year 2021/22 to develop a strategic and holistic approach to assessment and feedback. The results of both the NSS and the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) have been discussed in some depth by the Senior Leadership Team (August 2021), University Executive (at its away day in August 2021) and the Academic Strategy Group.

In April each year, SQAC considers a report on degree classification outcomes. Any subject areas judged to have diverged substantially from either the University average or comparators in their discipline are then asked to specifically reflect on the issue, and any proposed remediation, in their School annual quality report. This approach ensures systematic University oversight whilst also encouraging Schools to engage with the specific data on attainment, reflect on the issues and context, and then seek appropriate local solutions.

In December 2020, SQAC 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. Some Schools had 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 had widened. Attainment gaps are also being addressed in response to an ELIR recommendation.

Additionally, in April 2021, SQAC considered a suite of papers analysing data on student outcomes and progression for the year 2019/20.<sup>12</sup> SQAC noted that nearly all Russell Group members had seen an increase in the proportion of first class degrees awarded and most had seen a smaller increase in the proportion of high classification degrees awarded. However, the increase in first class awards at Edinburgh was greater than the Russell Group average and placed Edinburgh in the top third of the Russell Group for firsts awarded this year. Attainment gaps were noted for BAME, Scottish domiciled and disabled students.

Due to the effects of the pandemic, SQAC agreed that 2019/20 should be regarded as a statistical outlier as trend data for the year would be difficult to interpret reliably and did not identify specific subject areas where patterns in degree classification outcomes diverged substantially from either the institution average or disciplinary comparators. SQAC agreed that comparisons could be made between different student groups within the academic year 2019/20, and Schools were asked to reflect on student progression and outcomes data, and in particular the differences in attainment in their annual quality reports. This also aligned with the outcomes of the Online Remote Examinations and Assessment (OREA) Task Group which was established in summer 2020 to make recommendations in light of the hybrid approach and the move to almost entirely online assessment.<sup>13</sup> SQAC also agreed that further analysis was required to understand what has driven

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20210422.pdf> (Papers B-F)

<sup>13</sup> [Online Remote Examinations and Assessment | The University of Edinburgh](#)

these differential levels of attainment in relation to equality and diversity and consideration given to how the University can move from reflection on data to action on the issues identified.

Analysis of progression data showed that the University markedly outperformed the Scottish sector average and the UK sector averages for the relevant HESA Performance Indicators (non-continuation and projected outcomes), and also outperformed the HESA benchmark for the percentage projected to exit without an award or transfer. Despite these favourable rates of retention the University is not complacent; research into retention trends and associated factors has been carried out with further analysis planned.

An analysis of 2019/20 undergraduate<sup>14</sup> and taught postgraduate<sup>15</sup> external examiners' reports shows that there continues to be a high number of commendations and a low number of issues across the University. The main theme commended in undergraduate reports across all three Colleges was the assessment process, with the sub-theme of good practice and innovation (in the programme development theme) most commented on. The main theme commended in taught postgraduate reports was also the assessment process. Many commendations were course or programme specific, however the most often occurring type of commendation related to the range, quality and diversity of teaching, learning and assessment. A small number of issues raised by external examiners related to the (often timely) provision of information to examiners. No University-level action was required. External Examiners' feedback on our response to Covid-19 pandemic was overwhelmingly positive, and they recognised the huge additional effort by colleagues under difficult circumstances. They commented positively on adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment, thought that digital Boards of Examiners had operated well and felt that they had been kept well informed of changes and adjustments.

We remain committed to widening access and our students from SIMD20 areas represent 9.3% of this past year's full-time Scottish-domiciled undergraduate intake (2020 entry). We have seen large increases in Scottish students who have been flagged within our contextual admissions process and a positive increase in acceptances from students from SIMD20 backgrounds in the 2021 admissions cycle (students who will enter the University in 2022 or 2023). We have also been pleased to notice an increase in applications and acceptances from care-experienced students which we expect to be reflected in an increased number of care experienced students starting with us this September.

## Summary

The previous year's IPRs and annual monitoring, review and reporting processes have identified good practice examples and it is important that these are shared across the University. Areas for further development have also been identified, and these will be considered and acted upon accordingly.

The University's approach to improving the learning, teaching and the student experience can be summarised in the ongoing and planned work outlined below, the pace and scale of which is being balanced according to the ELIR recommendations and priorities and the ongoing effects of and pressures of the pandemic.

## Actions Undertaken and Planned

### *Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)*

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<sup>14</sup> [sqac-agendapapers-20201217-web.pdf \(ed.ac.uk\)](#) (Paper I)

<sup>15</sup> [sqac-agendapapers-20210422.pdf \(ed.ac.uk\)](#) (Paper I)

The University's ELIR took place in spring 2021 and the final reports were published in July<sup>16</sup>. The Review Team commended:

- Our commitment to working in close partnership with our students;
- The work of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) in supporting staff development and sharing good practice;
- The promotion and expansion of Peer Support/Peer-Assisted Learning Schemes; and
- Our support for student involvement in Internal Periodic Reviews.

The Review Team also made a number of recommendations:

- Establish effective institutional oversight and evaluation of the implementation of policy and practice, including increasing the range and use of baseline requirements;
- Develop an effective approach to the strategic leadership and management of change to ensure timely implementation of solutions;
- Make significant progress in implementing plans to ensure an effective approach to offering personal student support and demonstrable progress within the next academic year on parity of experience for students;
- Make demonstrable progress within the next academic year in developing our approach to the design and management of assessment and feedback, including progressing proposals for the establishment of a common marking scheme;
- Provide institutional oversight on the strategic direction underpinning current learning and teaching developments;
- Implement an approach to facilitate institutional oversight and the effective planning and monitoring of students numbers;
- Consider how to address attainment gaps in student performance;
- Ensure effective implementation of the policy for the training and support of postgraduates who teach;
- Take action to remove barriers that prevent some academic staff from fully engaging with development opportunities for the professionalisation of teaching; and
- Progress with work to improve the recognition of teaching excellence.

An ELIR Response Action Plan has been developed and is being discussed with University Executive and Court. A number of the recommendations align with existing work we are already taking forward (such as Curriculum Transformation). Work has already started to progress the recommendations on assessment and feedback and personal tutor/student support, given the priority placed on these.

### ***Strategy and Strategic Projects***

#### Curriculum Transformation Programme

The University has committed to undertaking a major Curriculum Transformation Programme. The programme, that began with a soft launch in April 2021, is a major long-term initiative for the University, closely aligned with the University Strategy 2030. The programme will move through several distinct phases over the next 4 to 5 years. Over academic year 2021/22 the focus will be on creating a vision for the Edinburgh Graduate and Edinburgh Curriculum. The focus will then move towards developing and refining key elements of the curriculum, and the infrastructure and support it needs.

#### Adaptation and Renewal Team (ART)

Following the successful short-term response to the Covid-19 pandemic in semester 2, 2020, an ART, led by the Principal, was established to oversee the work needed to respond to the short, medium

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<sup>16</sup> [University of Edinburgh \(qaa.ac.uk\)](http://qaa.ac.uk)

and longer-term challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. ART has now been replaced by a Covid-Planning group as we prepare for learning and teaching into 2021/22.

### ***Equality, Diversity and Inclusion***

An Executive level University wide lead for equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) has been appointed. This visibly and firmly restates our commitment to leadership in this area and to mainstreaming EDI across the University. A University level ED&I Committee contributes to strategic development, action planning and the promotion of best practice for and beyond protected groups. The Executive level lead is also leading the taskforce to drive forward the recommendations from the thematic Review of BME students' experiences of support at the University, and will be involved in considering our actions to address attainment gaps more broadly as part of the ELIR response.

### ***Student Voice***

The Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) priority themes agreed in 2019/20 – community, student voice, and social justice – remained relevant in 2020/21. As planned, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic no funded projects took place, although the SPA and the themes remained as a key reference point for the student experience. To reflect the maturation of the SPA and to ensure close alignment and integration with core student engagement activities, the management of the SPA will move to the Institute for Academic Development for 2021/22. This move was discussed with and is supported by the Student's Association.

A fundamental review of the operation and purpose of Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs), alongside other student voice mechanisms including mid-course feedback, took place throughout 2020. As a result of this review, reflecting a move from centrally managed CEQs to locally managed course level feedback, the Student Voice Policy was revised to require each course to offer at least one opportunity for students to provide feedback<sup>17</sup>. Resources to support this transition, including a toolkit and good practice examples, are being developed.

At institution-level, and maintaining institutional oversight, monthly pulse surveys were introduced in 2020/21 for all students. The short survey provided a quick barometer check of student satisfaction and flagged any issues students were experiencing with hybrid teaching and learning in close to real time to enable issues to be resolved. The surveys asked a small additional number of topical questions to get early feedback on issues like students' experiences of online exams and this was used in planning delivery of teaching and learning for 2021/22. Pulse surveys will continue to run throughout academic year 2021/22 as we emerge from the pandemic. Longer-term, a more holistic student survey will be developed to enable longitudinal data to be gathered, linked to key performance indicators.

The University continues to operate a Programme Representative system, delivered in partnership with the Students' Association, supporting approximately 1500 student representatives. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020/21, in-person training was replaced by a two-part online training, consisting of an asynchronous self-study module and a live, interactive training session delivered by the Students' Association's Representation and Democracy Team. Over 72% of Representatives completed Programme Rep Training, with 1012 completing the asynchronous self-study module and 1041 completing the live, interactive training session. As restrictions remain in place, this model will continue in 2021/22. Also in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Students' Association created an Academic Representation Forum on the Microsoft Teams platform, connecting School and Programme Representatives from across the University, allowing them to share and escalate feedback, and access support from the Association. The Forum saw a high level of engagement with

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<sup>17</sup> [studentvoicepolicy.pdf \(ed.ac.uk\)](#)

over 1420 Reps accessing it throughout the year, with over 90% being active users. Again, this will continue to be delivered in 2021/22.

Over the past year, the Students' Association has continued to expand its training and support offer for student representatives, including delivering additional sessions and resources on gathering feedback, building online communities, and utilising data. In 2021/22, student representatives will be able to access these training opportunities and resources in a single digital hub, hosted on Microsoft Teams, enabling them to make the most of the offer available.

### ***Widening Access***

We recognise the challenges that the last few years have brought for students and have done all we can to mitigate for that within our admissions processes. We had a dedicated helpline for students on results day. We are experiencing a significant increase in admissions in September 2021 and have been working hard to ensure that students from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds are supported through this process through our policy of contextual admissions or widening access offers<sup>18</sup>.

To ensure that students are well supported we have continued and increased our digital outreach programmes with schools and colleges this year as well as the support we provide directly to applicants and offer holders (through weekly online sessions as well as one-to-ones and drop in sessions). This year also sees us open a new educational centre in Craigmillar, Edinburgh, which strengthens our commitment to our local communities and provides additional support for those students who need it most<sup>19</sup>.

### **Indication of institution-led reviews for the forthcoming cycle**

Please see Appendix 1. Please note that specific timings may be subject to change to reflect schedules in Schools.

### **List of subject areas/programmes reviewed by other bodies**

In 2020/21 12 professional bodies carried out reviews resulting in all programmes being successfully accredited/reaccredited (Appendix 2).

**9 September 2021**

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<sup>18</sup> [Widening access offers | The University of Edinburgh](#)

<sup>19</sup> [New centres to widen educational opportunities | The University of Edinburgh](#)

## Appendix 1 - Internal Periodic Review forward schedule

<b>2021/22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biological Sciences (Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision) <b>rescheduled from 2020/21</b></li> <li>• Biological Sciences (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Data Science, Technology and Innovation (Postgraduate Taught Provision)</li> <li>• Health in Social Science (including Nursing Undergraduate provision, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Provision) <b>rescheduled from 2020/21</b></li> <li>• History, Classics and Archaeology (all undergraduate provision) <b>rescheduled from 2020/21</b></li> <li>• Informatics (Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision) <b>rescheduled from 2020/21</b></li> <li>• Law (Undergraduate provision, Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision) <b>rescheduled from 2020/21</b></li> <li>• The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (Postgraduate Taught Provision)</li> <li>• The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (Undergraduate provision)</li> </ul>
<b>2022/23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business (Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Divinity (Postgraduate Taught &amp; Postgraduate Research Provision) <b>rescheduled from 2021/22</b></li> <li>• GeoSciences (Postgraduate Taught Provision) <b>rescheduled from 2021/22</b></li> <li>• Ecological and Environmental Sciences (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Economics (Undergraduate provision, Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Edinburgh College of Art (all undergraduate provision) <sup>20</sup> <b>rescheduled from 2021/22</b></li> <li>• History, Classics and Archaeology (Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Literatures, Languages and Cultures (all undergraduate provision) <sup>21</sup></li> <li>• Mathematics (Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision) <b>rescheduled from 2021/22</b></li> <li>• Moray House School of Education and Sport (all undergraduate provision) <sup>22</sup></li> <li>• Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (all undergraduate provision)<sup>23</sup> <b>rescheduled from 2021/22</b></li> <li>• Physics and Astronomy (Postgraduate Research provision)</li> </ul>
<b>2023/24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biomedical Sciences (Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision, inc Zhejiang)</li> <li>• Chemistry (Postgraduate Research provision)</li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> To include Architecture, Music, Art, Design, History of Art

<sup>21</sup> To include Asian Studies, Celtic & Scottish Studies, English Literature, European Languages and Cultures, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies.

<sup>22</sup> To include Applied Sports Science, Childhood Practice, Community Education, Physical Education, Primary Education with Gaelic, Sport and Recreation Management.

<sup>23</sup> To include Psychology, Linguistics and English Language, Philosophy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical Sciences (Postgraduate Taught Provision)</li> <li>• Engineering (Postgraduate Research provision)</li> <li>• Medicine (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences (Postgraduate Taught Provision)</li> <li>• Physics and Astronomy (Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Social and Political Science (all undergraduate provision) <sup>24</sup></li> </ul>
<b>2024/25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth Sciences (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Edinburgh College of Art (Postgraduate Taught &amp; Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Engineering (Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• GeoSciences (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (Postgraduate Research provision)</li> </ul>
<b>2025/26</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business School (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Centre for Open Learning (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Chemistry (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Divinity (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Geography (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Informatics (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Literatures, Languages and Cultures (Postgraduate Taught &amp; Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Social and Political Science (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> </ul>
<b>2026/27</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical Education (Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Mathematics (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Moray House School of Education and Sport (Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Oral Health Sciences (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• School of Social and Political Science (Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> </ul>

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<sup>24</sup> To include Politics & International Relations, Social Anthropology, Sociology & Sustainable Development, Social Policy, Social Work (which will include the Master of Social Work programme)

## Appendix 2 – Degree Programmes Accredited in 2020/21

Degree Programme Title	Name of Accrediting Body
Business School Accreditation (All Programmes)	EQUIS
LLB (Hons) Law and Accountancy	Association of International Accountants (AIA)
MA (Hons) Accounting and Business	Association of International Accountants (AIA)
MA (Hons) Accounting and Finance	Association of International Accountants (AIA)
MA (Hons) Economics and Accounting	Association of International Accountants (AIA)
LLB (Hons) Law and Accountancy	Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland (ICAS)
MA (Hons) Accounting and Business	Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland (ICAS)
MA (Hons) Accounting and Finance	Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland (ICAS)
MA (Hons) Economics and Accounting	Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland (ICAS)
Primary Care Ophthalmology (Online Distance Learning)(ICL) (MSc) - 6 years	Royal College of Nursing (RCN)
Primary Care Ophthalmology (Online Distance Learning)(ICL) (MSc) - 6 years	The British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS)
Patient Safety and Human Factors (MSc)	Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors
MA (Hons) Physical Education	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Primary Education	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Art and Design)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Biology)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Chemistry)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Chinese)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Design and Technology)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Drama)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (English)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (French)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Geography)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (German)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (History)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Maths)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Music)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Physical Education)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
PGDE Secondary Education (Physics)	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)

BEng (Hons) Civil Engineering	Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)
BEng (Hons) Structural and Fire Safety Engineering	Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)
BEng (Hons) Structural Engineering with Architecture	Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)
MEng (Hons) Civil Engineering	Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)
MEng (Hons) Structural and Fire Safety Engineering	Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)
MEng (Hons) Structural Engineering with Architecture	Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)
MSc Structural and Fire Safety Engineering - 1 Year	Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)
BEng (Hons) Civil Engineering	Institute of Highway Engineers (IHE)
BEng (Hons) Structural and Fire Safety Engineering	Institute of Highway Engineers (IHE)
BEng (Hons) Structural Engineering with Architecture	Institute of Highway Engineers (IHE)
MEng (Hons) Civil Engineering	Institute of Highway Engineers (IHE)
MEng (Hons) Structural and Fire Safety Engineering	Institute of Highway Engineers (IHE)
MEng (Hons) Structural Engineering with Architecture	Institute of Highway Engineers (IHE)
MSc Structural and Fire Safety Engineering - 1 Year	Institute of Highway Engineers (IHE)
BEng (Hons) Civil Engineering	Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
BEng (Hons) Structural and Fire Safety Engineering	Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
BEng (Hons) Structural Engineering with Architecture	Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
MEng (Hons) Civil Engineering	Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
MEng (Hons) Structural and Fire Safety Engineering	Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
MEng (Hons) Structural Engineering with Architecture	Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
MSc Structural and Fire Safety Engineering - 1 Year	Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
BEng (Hons) Civil Engineering	Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE)
BEng (Hons) Structural and Fire Safety Engineering	Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE)
BEng (Hons) Structural Engineering with Architecture	Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE)
MEng (Hons) Civil Engineering	Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE)
MEng (Hons) Structural and Fire Safety Engineering	Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE)
MEng (Hons) Structural Engineering with Architecture	Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE)
MSc Structural and Fire Safety Engineering - 1 Year	Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE)
PgCert Advanced Professional Studies (Mental Health Officer Award) - 1 Year	Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

### Delayed Accreditations

The following programmes were due to have their accreditations reviewed by the Law Society of Scotland in 2020/21, but the reviews were delayed by one year due to COVID-19:

Law (LLB Ord)
LLB (Hons) Law
LLB (Hons) Law and Accountancy
LLB (Hons) Law and Business
LLB (Hons) Law and Celtic
LLB (Hons) Law and Economics
LLB (Hons) Law and French
LLB (Hons) Law and German
LLB (Hons) Law and History
LLB (Hons) Law and International Relations
LLB (Hons) Law and Politics
LLB (Hons) Law and Social Anthropology
LLB (Hons) Law and Social Policy
LLB (Hons) Law and Sociology
LLB (Hons) Law and Spanish
LLB (Ord) Law (Graduate Entry)

### Removed Accreditations

The following programmes are no longer accredited by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) as RACS is no longer operating as an accrediting body:

ChM in General Surgery (Online Learning) - 2 Years
MSc Surgical Sciences (Online Learning) - 3 Years
MSc Clinical Education (Online Learning) - 3 Years
PgCert Clinical Education (Online Learning) - 1 Year
PgDip Clinical Education (Online Learning) - 2 Years

## **Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2020/21**

### Statement of assurance

On behalf of the governing body of the University of Edinburgh, I confirm that we have considered the institution's arrangements for the management of academic standards and the quality of the learning experience for AY 2020/21, including the scope and impact of these. I further confirm that we are satisfied that the institution has effective arrangements to maintain standards and to assure and enhance the quality of its provision. We can therefore provide assurance to the Council that the academic standards and the quality of the learning provision at this institution continue to meet the requirements set by the Council.

.....  
Janet Legrand QC (Hon)  
Senior Lay Member of the University Court

.....  
Date

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 2021

**Enhancement Themes:  
End of Year 1 Report**

**Description of paper**

1. Presents the University's end of year one report on Enhancement Theme activity.
2. This paper does not contribute to the Strategy 2030 outcomes. It is a regulatory requirement.

**Action requested / recommendation**

3. The Committee is asked to note the end of year one report (attached).

**Background and context**

4. The Enhancement Themes are a programme of activity involving the whole higher education sector in Scotland. Staff and students collaborate on one or more topics to improve strategy, policy and practice. The current Theme (2020 to 2023) is Resilient Learning Communities. Engaging with the Enhancement Themes is part of the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework.

**Discussion**

5. Activity has focussed around:
  - Gathering examples of community building in the hybrid context and sharing examples;
  - Supporting new activity; and
  - Appointing PhD Interns to support Theme work.

**Resource implications**

6. There are no resource implications identified in the report.

**Risk management**

7. The report does not identify any risks. Risks are considered as part of individual activities/projects.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

8. This paper does not contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a regulatory requirement.

**Equality & diversity**

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

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

10. Enhancement Themes activity is communicated through a variety of mechanisms, including websites, SharePoint sites, emails, network meetings, and Teaching Matters.

**Author**

*Nichola Kett*  
*8 September 2021*

**Presenter**

*Nichola Kett*

**Freedom of Information**

Open



## End of Year 1 Report for: University of Edinburgh

The key purposes of this report are to:-

- provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Theme activity that has taken place over the year
- help share information across the sector on the benefits and challenges around Theme engagement.

Please report under the headings below. The report should be about 6 to 8 sides of A4 in length.

### **Institutional team**

Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.

Two PhD Interns joined the Institutional Team from May to July 2021.

### **Evaluation of activities/outcomes**

To make evaluation processes more accessible and user friendly, we have attempted to simplify (not minimise) the evaluation reporting process into 7 key questions (see below). Prior to completing these, it would be useful to refer to the QAAS website resource: [A Guide to Basic Evaluation in HE](#) (specifically, Section 8, Summary overview on page 23, and the Evaluation Checklist – Appendix A, on pages 28-29).

Please report each activity/intervention against the following questions in the Evaluation part of the template.

N. B. You may have already realised some of your objectives and/or these might be ongoing, so please delineate each question according to whether activities or interventions have been completed already in this reporting year or are in process.

(Easiest way is to delete **either/or** options highlighted in **red** in questions below):

## Evaluation

Please complete the following 7 questions for each activity or intervention (N.B. Just cut and paste the table below as many times as necessary)

Title of project/activity
<b>Gather examples of community building in the hybrid context and share examples</b>
1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
<p>An exercise to gather and reflect on good practice examples of community building activities from across the University and Students' Association. This activity links to the appointment of PhD Interns to support Theme work (see below).</p> <p>We are aware that there are a vast number of activities taking place across the University and the Students' Association to support community building. The report of the Sub Group of Senate Quality Assurance Committee that reviews School annual quality reports (December 2020) noted: "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." Additionally, community is one of the University's six Induction Guiding Principles which aim to improve and underpin induction activities and programmes that welcome new and returning students at any point after a break in studies.</p> <p>The University's Teaching Matters blog contains many examples of community building activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Academic community</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community</a></li> </ul>
2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enable sharing of good practice examples of community building activities.</li> <li>• To learn what activities make a positive impact in order to inform policy and/or practice.</li> </ul>
3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in good practice examples being shared and action taken as a result.</li> <li>• For activities which make a positive impact on community building to have informed policy and/or practice.</li> <li>• Ultimately, an increase in the effectiveness of community building activities.</li> </ul>
4. How will we know? (How is the change measured)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in good practice examples being shared e.g. in network meetings and through Teaching Matters and examples of where action has been taken as a result of this.</li> <li>• Changes to policy and/or practice have been implemented.</li> <li>• Ultimately, through student feedback.</li> </ul>
5. Who is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)
The Institutional Team have oversight of Enhancement Themes activities.
6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)
Not at this stage.
7. Any things you need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)
Not at this stage.

Title of project/activity
<b>Support new activity</b>
1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
The School of Health in Social Sciences is appointing a student in June and July 2021 to work on a project to improve the experience for students with disabilities. The project will focus on improving website information and engaging with current students to identify what can be done to improve their experience.
2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
The School identified this as an area of development. It also aligns with the Senate Quality Assurance priority to: Examine data and methodological options for the systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data.
3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)
Outputs of the project will be implemented that improve the experience for students with disabilities in the School.
4. How will we know? (How is the change measured)
The completion of the project will be one outcome. How the impact of outputs implemented as a result of the project will be measured is still to be established.
5. Who is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)
The project is being managed in the School, however, the outcomes of the project will be considered by the Institutional Team to establish how they can be shared and if there are outcomes that can inform policy and/or practice.
6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)
Not at this early stage as the project is set to complete by the end of July.
7. Any things you need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)
Not at this early stage as the project is set to complete by the end of July.

Title of project/activity
<b>Appoint a PhD Intern to support Theme work</b>
1. What change has been made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
Two PhD Interns are in post from May to July 2021. One PhD Intern is focussing on building communities and the other PhD Intern is focussing on building postgraduate research communities.  Themes emerging at this stage of the internships are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication/dissemination</li> <li>• Using existing structures and ensuring a level of synergy</li> <li>• Sense of belonging/resilience</li> <li>• Different communities</li> <li>• Student-led and staff-supported activities</li> </ul>
2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)

The PhD Interns were appointed to provide resource to support gathering examples of good practice in community building and a reflection on these. They were also appointed to support student engagement with our Theme work.

3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)

In the first instance, the outputs of the internships are expected to be reports with immediate and longer-term recommendations. Additionally, it is anticipated that there will be outputs in the form of Teaching Matters blog content. The Institutional Team will consider these reports and how we can action the recommendations and subsequently the differences that will hopefully occur.

4. How will we know? (How is the change measured)

This will depend on the recommendations in the PhD Interns' reports and also how the Institutional Team determine how to action these. The PhD Interns are aware of the evaluation guidance and have been involved in the drafting of this report.

5. Who is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)

The internships have been managed by colleagues in Academic Services and the Institute for Academic Development. The Institutional Team will be involved in actioning recommendations from the reports.

6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)

We will reflect at the end of the internships, with input from those in the roles, on how this approach has supported our work on the Theme and if we should apply the same approach in future years.

7. Any things you need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)

This will be determined by the reflection outlined above.

## Dissemination of work

Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector? Please provide examples.

If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.

Building community was a sub-theme of the Learning and Teaching Conference in June 2021 where 13 sessions and four posters were presented. The Institutional Team reviewed proposals and shaped the conference programme [Learning and Teaching Conference 2021 – Curriculum as a site for transformation | 15 – 17 June \(ed.ac.uk\)](#)

The PhD Interns have been focussing on communication and dissemination as part of their work and we anticipate recommendations in these areas.

The March 2021 Directors of Teaching Network discussed sense of belonging in terms of planning for 2021/22 and our work on the Enhancement Theme was outlined.

Plans and reports are submitted to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

The University's Teaching Matters blog contains many examples of community building activities:

- [Academic community](#)
- [Community](#)

## Collaboration with your institution

How have you collaborated with other institutions? This could be informally by growing networks or contacts, or more formally for example, through collaborative clusters or sector work. If you have been collaborating with others, briefly explain what this has involved and what have been the benefits and challenges.

### Re-imagining Resilience for Taught Postgraduate Students

Dr Donna Murray is leading this Enhancement Theme cluster which is a collaboration between the University, the University of St Andrews, Heriot-Watt University, and the University of the West of Scotland. The cluster has met four times with each meeting format decided by one of the partners. To date the group have explored many different ways of interacting including: exploring polemic pieces; hearing from student panels; group discussions; and thinking about the 'ghosts' of academic life.

The work has also been presented at a Theme Leaders' Group meeting, and a blog has been written for the THE Campus website.

Some of the obvious challenges have involved working at home, and differing levels of confidence with using online tools such as Teams. Exploring 'messy problems' like resilience can also be intimidating online as you lack the feedback you would have in a physical meeting. By giving each partner university complete freedom to host the meeting as they wish we have gone some way towards creating a very free and active discussion space. It has also had the benefit of introducing us all to new ideas, and to different ways of working.

### Decolonising the Curriculum in the time of Pandemic

A member of staff from the Institute for Academic Development has been involved in the collaborative cluster and is connecting this with the University's Race Equality and Anti-Racist Sub-Committee [Decolonising the Curriculum – Sharing Ideas: The Podcast Series – Teaching Matters blog \(ed.ac.uk\)](#) Additionally, a student from the University is an Intern on this cluster.

### Benefits and Challenges

The Theme Leaders' Group staff member has distributed information on collaborative clusters and sector-wide projects. There are real benefits in terms of synergies to working at sector level on such activities, however, given the challenges experienced by students and staff due to the pandemic, time to engage and digital fatigue will have contributed to engagement levels. In a large institution, it is also a challenge to find out who has been involved in these activities.

## Supporting staff and student engagement

How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.

Student and staff involvement with the Theme itself has primarily been through the Institutional Team. However, we have supported staff and student engagement with Theme activities (not necessarily badged as such) through mechanisms such as the Learning and Teaching Conference and the Directors of Teaching Network.

Student engagement in the Enhancement Themes is being considered by the PhD Interns, including how we communicate about the Themes to different stakeholders and work with different teams to raise awareness about the Themes.

A number of other students have been or will be employed across the University to support work related to the Theme. We will endeavour to ensure that the outputs from these posts are informing our work on the Theme in future years.

## Processes

What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?

How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?

This first year of Theme work has focussed on scoping as planned. The outputs of the PhD internships will shape our work in future years. We will consider if our approach of a small Institutional Team remains appropriate going forward, including how we continue to engage with other University activities, networks and groups accordingly, including the Curriculum Transformation Programme. We will also reflect on the use of PhD internships to support Theme work as outlined above.

Plans and reports are submitted to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee. We will also explore other mechanisms for sharing the headlines of our year 1 work in order to engage students and staff with our work on the Theme.

<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Nichola Kett with contributions from the Institutional Team</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>30 June 2021</b>

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

16 September 2021

**Internal Periodic Review**

**Description of paper**

1. Final reports from Internal Periodic Review (IPR) 2020/21, a year-on response from IPR 2019/20.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. The Committee is invited to approve the final reports, confirm that it is content with progress in the year-on response, and note the exemplars of positive change.

**Background and context**

3. The following final reports and year-on response are published on the Committee wiki (<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SQAC/Thursday+16+September+2021>):
  - Moray House School of Education and Sport (postgraduate provision) Final Report 2020-21;
  - Maths (PGR) Final Report 2020-21;
  - School of Informatics (PGR) Year-on response.

**Discussion**

4. See wiki.

**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 IPR process.

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

8. Comments will be reported back to the School/Subject Area. The final report and year-on response will be published on the Academic Services website.

**Author**

Brian Connolly  
Academic Policy Officer

**Presenter**

Academic Services

**Freedom of Information - Open**