

The University of Edinburgh

**Internal Periodic Review
The School of Economics**

All provision

27th & 28th October 2022

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Executive summary

This report comprises the outcomes from the internal review of undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision within the School of Economics.

The review team found that the School has effective management of the quality of the student learning experience, academic standards, and enhancement and good practice.

The report provides commendations on the School's provision, recommendations for enhancement that the School will be asked to report progress on to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and suggestions on how to support developments.

Key commendations

The review team commended the staff within the School for their commitment to continued curriculum enhancement, teaching excellence, proactive practice, and student support, despite a lack of resource. The review team also commended the students within the School for engagement with the review process and, more widely, for leading on peer support and community building initiatives.

Key recommendations

The top three recommendations identified by the review team for the School to prioritise were:

- **Recruitment and Resourcing [2.7.1]**
It is **recommended** that steps are taken to ensure the School achieve adequate staff resource to maintain and develop teaching excellence, and that the timings within the economics job market are accounted for during periods of recruitment.
- **Feedback [2.1.2]**
It is **recommended** that the School review the methods of providing feedback to ensure consistency across courses and programmes.
- **Assessment/Undergraduate Programme Design [2.1.3]**
The review team **recommended** that the School undertake a holistic programme review of learning outcomes, and the mapping of assessment to those outcomes; formative vs summative assessment; and consistency of assessment across programmes and courses.

Commendations, recommendations and suggestions

Commendations

Key strengths and areas of positive practice for sharing more widely across the institution.

No	Commendation	Section in report
1.	The review team commend the continued emphasis on innovation and curriculum enhancement within the School.	2.1.1

2.	The review team commend the senior management for continuing to strive for innovation, and for their ambition for the quality of their programmes, despite limited academic staff resource.	2.1.1
3.	The review team commend the work of the teaching staff within the School and their focus on enhancing the student experience.	2.1.2
4.	The review team commend the daily helpdesk put in place to support undergraduate students at Honours level.	2.1.7
5.	The review team commend the staff within the School for their engagement with the new Student Support model and for the work they have undertaken, as early adopters of this model, to ensure successful implementation. The review team noted, in particular, Lorna Devlin for dedication to ensuring the successful implementation of the new student support system.	2.3.1
6.	The review team commend the professional services staff for their proactive and encouraging approach to developing support and services to students. The review team noted Jon Beer (Manager of Student Administration) for his leadership and direction of the UG and PG Office professional services teams.	2.3.2
7.	The review team commend the summer school programme for promoting excellence in academic standards and student attainment within the MSc programmes.	2.3.6
8.	The review team commend student society Econocar for organising student-led activities, and EconPALS for academic peer support which promotes a sense of student community within the School.	2.4.6
9.	The review team commend the recent Networking for Success event, held within the School.	2.6.8
10.	The review team commend the use of the student study Hub space within 40 George Square.	2.8.1
11.	The review team commend the creation, and planned direction, of the SharePoint virtual student Hub space.	2.8.3

Recommendations

Areas for development and enhancement – progress to be reported.

Priority	Recommendation	Section in report	Responsibility of
1.	Recruitment: The review team recommend that the School employ ten additional academic staff members to address the current student:staff ratio which is currently below the sector-wide ratio for Economics.	2.7.1	School/College
2.	Recruitment: The review team recommend that the timings of the economics job market are accounted for within the planning/recruitment policy, to ensure that the School can hire quality academics for long-term posts.	2.7.1	School/College
3.	Assessment & Feedback: The review team recommend that the School review methods of providing feedback to ensure consistency across courses and programmes.	2.2.3	School

	The review team have a number of suggestions as to how the School could approach feedback to make the process more efficient and close the feedback loop (see 'Suggestions' table).		
4.	Tutor training: The review team recommend that the School develop their approach to tutor training in order to best support colleagues in their development. The review team have a number of suggestions in relation to this (see 'Suggestions' table).	2.7.5	School
5.	Undergraduate Programme Enhancement: The review team recommend that the School undertake a holistic programme review of learning outcomes and the mapping of assessment to outcomes; formative vs summative assessment; and synergy of assessment and learning outcomes across programmes and courses.	2.1.2	School
6.	Graduate Attributes: Connected to a holistic programme enhancement review, the review team recommend that the School continue to embed graduate attributes/ employability skills in programme design and increase awareness of these attributes and skills amongst students.	2.6.4	School
7.	Graduate Attributes: The review team recommend that the phrase 'graduate attributes' is reviewed by the University with a view to creating a term that is more meaningful to students.	2.6.2	University (Curriculum Transformation Project/Jon Turner)
8.	Student Voice: The review team recommend that the School continue to develop its relationship with the Student Voice and enhances the mechanisms for communication between staff and students.	2.4.5	School
9.	Resource: The review team recommend that the University invest in an online course enrolment system to alleviate pressure on staff resource and to improve the student experience.	2.7.2.3	University (Student Systems)
10.	Resource: The review team recommend that the University extend the scale of the student study Hub space, given the number of students, level of demand and intensive use of the current Hub provision.	2.8.1	College (CAHSS)

Suggestions

For noting – progress reporting is not required.

No	Suggestion	Section in report
1.	The review team suggest that the school continue to employ ECR to address the staffing gap.	2.7.3
2.	The review team suggest that the School appoint a Head of Teaching and Learning (in addition to current QAA lead), with regard to undertaking the recommended review into programme mapping.	2.1.2
3.	The review team suggest that altering the style of feedback provided might reduce the burden of supplying bespoke, detailed feedback to each student for all assessments.	2.2.5
4.	The review team suggest that exam questions are reviewed carefully to ensure that past paper questions are not being reused too often.	2.2.6
5.	The review team suggest that the School use the Economics Network to deliver a session on assessment and feedback.	2.2.8
6.	The review team suggest that cohort leads should be visibly involved in the teaching to become more known and approachable.	2.3.4
7.	The review team suggest that employability skills are signposted to students within their courses and assignments.	2.6.4
8.	The review team suggest that the School works with both timetabling and other Schools in the University to identify courses which present schedule challenges for students enrolled on courses outside of their School.	2.8.6
9.	The review team suggest that the School review the assessments within the optional courses available to students on the PhD with Integrated Study to establish if it would be possible/practicable create more research-relevant assessment types for those on the PhD.	2.1.7
10.	The review team suggest that greater flexibility is employed when determining which year PhD students can undertake an hour-long presentation, or a 15-minute ideas session, within the Student Seminar series.	2.3.7
11.	The current PhD student allowance, for related trips, conferences, &c., is £500 p.a. The review team suggest that students be allowed to accumulate these amounts so that more funds can be assigned to the later years where these events hold greater value for students.	2.3.8
12.	The review team suggest that postgraduate research student have the option of a mock interview in their last year of study.	2.6.7
13.	The review team suggest that the issue around PhD tutor access to course information, relating to timely creation of staff email accounts, is addressed ahead of the next session.	2.7.7
14.	The review team suggest the introduction of tutorial observation for PhD tutors, and that PhD tutors are offered the option of becoming involved in aspects of course management.	2.7.8
15.	The review team suggest that letters of commendation could be introduced as a means of rewarding PhD tutors for excellence in teaching.	2.7.8

Section A – Introduction

Scope of review

Range of provision considered by the review (see Appendix 1).

The Internal Periodic Review of the School of Economics in 2022/23 consisted of:

- The University’s remit for internal review (see Appendix 2)
- The subject specific remit items for the review:
 - Assessment and feedback
 - Embedding graduate attributes in the curriculum
- The Reflective Report and additional material provided in advance of the review
- The meeting of the review team including consideration of further material (see Appendix 3)
- The final report produced by the review team
- Action by the School and others to whom recommendations were remitted following the review

Review Team Members

Convener	Dr Elaine Haycock-Stuart School Director of Quality School of Health in Social Science
External Member	Professor Dimitra Petropoulou Deputy Head of Department (Education) Undergraduate Programme Director Department of Economics London School of Economics and Political Science
External Member	Professor Peter Smith Professor of Economics and Finance Department of Economics and Related Studies University of York
UG Student Member	Eleanor Niven School of History, Classics and Archaeology
PG Student Member	Rosa Santibañez Nuñez Edinburgh College of Art
Review Team Administrator	Sarah Wyse Academic Administration Officer College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Review Team Administrator	Sinéad Docherty Academic Policy Officer Academic Services

The School

The School of Economics sits within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) and is one of twelve Schools in this College.

Physical location and summary of facilities

The main location of the School of Economics is Buccleuch Place, situated in the main campus of the University.

Date of previous review

7th & 8th March 2017

Reflective Report

Author: Director of Quality Assurance and former DUGS

Consultation: Head of School, Director of Undergraduate Studies (Strategy), Director of Undergraduate Studies (Honours Co-ordinator), Director of Undergraduate Studies (Pre-Honours Co-ordinator), Director of Postgraduate Taught, Director of Postgraduate Research, Resource Committee Co-ordinator, Senior Tutor, Director of Quality Assurance, EDI Director, Tutor Mentor, Exam Board Convener (UG), Director of Professional Services, Manager of Student Administration, Manager of Wellbeing and Advice.

Remit items discussed and agreed at Undergraduate Teaching Committee, Staff Student Liaison Committees and with (previous) Director of Undergraduate Studies, and current Director of Postgraduate Taught and Director of Postgraduate Research and current and previous Head of School.

Section B – Main report

1 Strategic overview

1.1 The School of Economics is situated within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The School offers 9 single and joint Honours programmes at undergraduate level, and 4 taught postgraduate programmes. The School cited a competitive PGR programme as one of its key strategic aims, and since 2017 has developed a 4-year PhD programme, including 1 year of integrated study, which is designed to be competitive on an international stage. Seven professors have held the Head of School position since 2017, with the current Head of School in place since the beginning of academic year 2022/23.

1.2 The School was involved in the pilot of the new Student Support model, and now UG Economics students in first, second and third year, and MSc students, are supported by the new model and working with Student Advisors rather than Personal Tutors. All students in the School will have the new model from September 2023.

1.3 The School of Economics was subject to recruitment constraints throughout the pandemic, and the resulting staff shortage has been exacerbated by the increase in student numbers (which is reflected across the University) in recent years. This rise in student numbers (50% increase in the School of Economics since 2017) has increased the pressure on all staff and services within the School, and will continue to do so. The increase also places pressure on the estate and resources available to the School. The combination of understaffing and high numbers of students underpin many of the challenges that became apparent during this review.

1.4 The ratio of students to academic staff is stretched in the School of Economics, with the average in years 2012-2020 at 22:1 (students to member of academic staff). The College average across these years was 16:1. This places pressure on various areas within the School, affecting class sizes, the portfolio of courses, the workload of staff and time and attention spent on students. The School also highlighted that the large intake of students in years 20/21 and 21/22 will need dissertation supervisors once they reach their final year, and the academic staff do not currently have the capacity to absorb the demand.

1.5 The School noted that due to over-recruitment across the University in the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 academic years, many Schools closed their compulsory Year 1 courses to outside enrolment. This impacted the course choices for students within the School of Economics which, in turn, contributed to the low rates of student satisfaction within the School of Economics.

1.6 The School highlighted a particular recruitment challenge in the way that the PhD stipend currently operates. The School are unable to offer more places than the stipend allows, which means that when offers are not accepted, those positions and the associated stipend are lost. The School highlighted to the review team that this way of hiring does not provide the required flexibility to maximise recruitment fulfilment.

2 Enhancing the student experience

2.1 The approach to enhancing Learning and Teaching

2.1.1 The review team **commend** the School's continued emphasis on innovation and curriculum enhancement, despite significant staffing constraints. The review team noted developments to improve

optional course choices within the undergraduate pre-honours options, the creation of the new MSc in Mathematical Economics and Econometrics, and the creation of the four-year PhD model, with integrated study, to ensure graduates can effectively compete on an international level. The review team **commend** the School's senior management for their strategic allocation of resources to ensure quality of programme delivery.

2.1.2 The review team **commend** the teaching staff in the School for their commitment to academic excellence and their focus on enhancing the student experience. The review team noted that the undergraduate students were particularly complementary about their classes with Dr Sean Brocklebank and his initiatives, highlighting trips to Edinburgh-based businesses and project work that they enjoyed.

2.1.3 The review team **recommend** that the School take a holistic approach to the mapping of programmes across learning outcomes, delivery, assessment design and the timing of feedback, rather than reviewing these at course-level only. The review team recognise that this will have resource implications and **suggest** that the School appoint a Head of Teaching and Learning (in addition to current QAA lead) to lead this review.

2.1.4 The review team also **suggest** that the School could bring in external pedagogical expertise in economics e.g. via a bespoke review day with a team from the Economics Network - as a subscribing department, this service ought to be cost-free.

2.1.5 An overall review exercise to map the programmes would help to improve consistency in the quality of teaching delivery both within, and across, courses and build consistency in what students can expect from course to course (possibly differentiating between pre- and post-honours). The review raised questions around cohesion across courses and programmes within the School, noting that a student's perception of inconsistency can undermine confidence in their studies. This theme was evident during the meeting with Honours undergraduate students, although the review team does recognise that this was a small representation of the cohort.

2.1.6 This holistic review should consult with the student voice to ensure that the concerns of students are considered. The review team heard that taught students felt tutorials were often delivered in the style of mini lectures with little or no opportunity for discussion or clarification of thoughts/ideas. Postgraduate taught students noted that tutorials would benefit from visual presentations of solutions, as most of the communication is verbal which can be difficult for non-native English speakers to follow effectively. It was also highlighted that solutions to homework assignments were often not provided and that these were felt to be significant for the progression of personal learning. Where it may be the case that answers are not provided due to licence constraints, this should be made clear to the students.

2.1.7 Students on the new PhD model, which includes taught components, praised the programme, although noted that the optional courses were often not relevant as most students had already completed their desired options as part of their Masters degree. The examinations for these courses were, likewise, not deemed valuable. The review team **suggests** that these courses could be made more relevant if the students had different, research-based, assessments to build their skill set.

2.1.8 A number of academic supports are available to students, in addition to office hours with academic staff. The review team **commend** the daily helpdesk put in place to support undergraduate students at Honours level, which was highlighted by the student representatives as being particularly useful.

2.1.9 The School noted that the WAM tariff does not adequately reflect the time to review course material or undertake course organisation. The WAM underestimates the resource required to update course teaching materials.

2.2 Assessment and Feedback

2.2.1 The School of Economics invited the review team to focus upon Assessment and Feedback as one of the Subject Specific Remit items, noting that this topic has been an ongoing issue since the School was created.

2.2.2 The National Student Survey scores showed a decreased satisfaction around feedback within the undergraduate provision. Turn-around time for feedback by staff is reported as good and the review team considered the extent to which lower satisfaction rates could be due to student expectations around feedback, how feedback is perceived by the students, and a comparison with assessment feedback within other Schools, such as Mathematics.

2.2.3 The School confirmed that a rubric was in place to foster conformity within the feedback provided to students. However, feedback was conveyed to students through various mechanisms, depending on the course/assignment. The review team **recommend** that the method for providing feedback to students is standardised across courses, as far as possible, to promote consistency. The use of secure, electronic platforms is encouraged rather than emails to students.

2.2.4 A discussion with undergraduate students highlighted that feedback on assessed work was felt to arrive too late to be of use in the next assignment/exam. The undergraduate students gave an example of semester 1 feedback arriving the following March, after their marks had been communicated separately in the February.

2.2.5 The review team **suggest** that the volume of feedback required could be lessened in some areas by providing a combination of pre-assessment examples and generalised cohort feedback, rather than bespoke feedback for each individual student. Providing students with broad feedback focusing on the most significant points for development would allow students to build on their understanding of their own learning and encourage self-reflection, rather than providing a detailed breakdown of every area for improvement. The review team also **suggest** recorded feedback as a means for providing a faster turnaround on personalised feedback.

2.2.6 It was noted that undergraduate students were nervous around the return to in-person exams. To address this, the School hosted a mock exam with limited success, as exam conditions were not maintained and individual marks were not returned. The course organiser used the exam as a diagnostic assessment, and provided detailed feedback on the correct and incorrect responses observed in the students' answers. Discussion with the students suggested that this would be perceived as more beneficial if they received individual feedback. The resourcing implications for additional marking was acknowledged, however. In respect of exams, students reported that it was not always clear how marks were allocated within exam questions and noted that past exam questions were often reused over many years. The review team **suggest** that questions set in exams are new and the marks allocation clarified in each exam.

2.2.7 It was noted that most of the assessments within the School are summative, due to the need to apply academic resource where it is most needed. The review team noted that some formative assessment was occurring but may not be recognised as such by students.

2.2.8 The review team noted that the University subscribes to the Economics Network. This organisation can provide training sessions and workshops. The review team **suggest** that the School use this resource to deliver sessions on assessment and feedback. It was also suggested that the School investigate software to aid in assessment and feedback, such as Gradescope and Grademark within Turnitin &c.

2.3 Supporting students in their learning

2.3.1. The School of Economics have been part of the pilot of the new Student Support model. The review team **commend** the staff for their engagement with this model, as early adopters, and the work they have undertaken to ensure successful implementation. The School noted that the new system has allowed staff to be pro-active with student support, and to identify and connect with students before issues occur. The review team recognise the contribution Lorna Devlin has made not just to the new model in the School of Economics, but to the overall roll-out of the new Student Support model across the University.

2.3.2 The review team **commend** the Professional Services staff for their proactive and encouraging approach to developing support and services to students. These Professional Services staff work not just within the School, but proactively with central areas such as the Extensions and Special Circumstances Service (ESC) which, through tracking student applications acts as an additional mechanism for identifying students in difficulty, or patterns of requests that may give cause for concern.

In particular, the review team **commend** staff member Jon Beer (Manager of Student Administration) for his leadership in his role and the positive impact on the overall strength and direction of the UG and PG Office Professional Services teams in the School of Economics.

2.3.3 It is anticipated that the new Student Advisor posts will create a more consistent student experience than the previous Personal Tutor system. It was speculated that students may be less intimidated in approaching a non-academic member of staff. Throughout discussions with undergraduate students, however, it appeared to the review team that many students viewed the Student Support team in terms of pastoral care only. The School will ensure that the roles within the Student Support team are clearly communicated to students.

2.3.4 The review team **suggest** that cohort leads could be visibly involved in the teaching of that cohort, to ensure students are aware of the post and recognise their cohort lead. The review team are aware this cohort lead position is a new role which will naturally become more refined over next session. Students did report that they felt staff were accessible, although were not always sure of their office hours.

2.3.5 Postgraduate research students noted a preference for peer support when discussing mental health and wellbeing. It was noted that remote working, because of the pandemic, negatively impacted their ability to interact with one another - an issue that is lessened now on-site research has resumed. The collaborative nature of research was also affected during this time.

2.3.6 The review team **commend** the use of the Summer School, for students entering postgraduate programmes, to improve attainment outcomes for students entering from a non-economics

background. The screening function of the Summer School allows MSc offers to be made conditional on passing; this arrangement was noted to increase the number of committed, motivated students that embark on the MSc programmes.

2.3.7 Postgraduate research students noted that, within the Student Seminar series, some years were allocated a one-hour presentation slot, whereas in other years undertake only a 15-minute ideas session. Due to the individual nature of student research, the review team **suggest** that greater flexibility is granted around this to allow students the option in each year.

2.3.8 In terms of PhD funding for research support activities, issues were raised in relation to the new People and Money system for lack of transparency, where students were unclear as to the breakdown of their payments for teaching. Diversity travel was also flagged for creating issues for students due to the restrictive nature of what can be booked/purchased and higher cost implications. The system does not allow the students the choice to book the cheapest option which, in turn, affects the number of conferences &c. that they can attend. The current allowance is £500 p.a. for related trips, conferences, &c. The review team **suggest** that students be allowed to accumulate these amounts so that more funds can be assigned to the later years where these events hold greater value for students.

2.4. Listening and responding to the Student Voice

2.4.1 The review team were satisfied that students had opportunity to express their views via the student representative system and Student Staff Liaison Committees as well as external student surveys, such as the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

2.4.2 Mid-course feedback has proven variable in terms of responses, with a low return rate rendering the feedback unrepresentative/ not meaningful. Online course feedback has returned fewer responses than on-paper feedback requests that were requested after lectures.

2.4.3 Student Advisors were an informal means for students to feedback on areas of their studies/experience. Students were also able to submit informal feedback via a Q-code link. This link was advertised on posters within student spaces.

2.4.4 The review team formed the view that there was a disconnect, at times, between what the School was offering/communicating and how the students were understanding of the messaging from the School. As examples, there was the instance of the mock exam arranged by the School (detailed in 2.2.6) and the lack of awareness amongst students around 'graduate attributes' (see 2.6.2). This disconnect means that efforts of the School are not necessarily achieving the desired results with students.

2.4.5 These examples illustrate the need for the School and student voice to continue to develop their dialogue, in order to foster shared understanding of activities and objectives. Furthermore, discussions with students indicated that there were gaps in communication regarding key dates and information regarding general University resources, such as IS support. The review team **recommend** the School reviews its interaction with the student voice and the opportunities that allow for engagement. As suggestions on how to approach this:

1. Engage with students (at different levels) on needs/expectations through regular focus groups; Staff Student Liaison Committees seem insufficient as things stand.
2. Occasional focus groups with Tutors to discuss training/support/what they feel they need or would work effectively.
3. Map out of timings for key communications at certain points in the academic year to key groups (students, Tutors &c.), so all are informed on what to expect. The rationale behind decisions not always clear to students or tutors.

2.4.6 The review team **commend** the EconSoc and EconPALS for peer support, enterprise and the organisation of student activities which create a sense of community amongst the student body. It was confirmed that new staff posts have been created to further support student activities. The School engage with the highly valued student societies and support student-led activities and the new Student Engagement team will connect further with societies and student groups. Events such as Simon Talks allow students representatives to meet with cohort leads and help to build relationships between students and staff.

2.5 Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation

2.5.1 The review team noted that the Summer School allows students from a non-economics background to establish whether economics postgraduate study would be right for them before investing in a postgraduate degree they may not complete.

2.5.2 The importance of flagging the employability skills embedded into the curriculum was noted as of particular relevance to students from a WP background, who may have received less exposure to what is required in terms of a competitive CV/interview.

2.5.3 The School highlighted during this review that physical space is an issue for staff and students. Space as a resource is limited and the School of Economics is located in an old building on campus, and no part of the building is accessible to anyone with significant mobility issues.. Whilst the School may endeavour to make alternative arrangements when necessary to accommodate students/staff/visitors, fully accessible spaces would be preferable.

2.6 Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes

2.6.1 The School of Economics invited the review team to focus upon Embedding Skills and Graduate Attributes in the Curriculum, with an emphasis on PGT programmes, as one of the Subject Specific Remit items.

2.6.2 It was noted that the phrase 'graduate attributes' is not one that all undergraduate students recognise and is often treated as separate from the general curriculum, often being taught in isolation from the tutorial topics. Within the reflective report the School had identified the issue of lack of awareness amongst students as to the graduate attributes they are developing during their learning. It was acknowledged that 'graduate attributes' is a term used across the University at a strategic level. The review team recommend that the term is re-framed into something more identifiable to students, such as 'employability skills' and that the teaching of these skills is better embedded into teaching.

2.6.3 It was suggested that academic staff could be involved in delivering EconPALS workshops with a focus on practical skills, CV writing and career development (resource allowing).

2.6.4 The review team noted that the employability rate for Economics graduates, from the University of Edinburgh, was high suggesting that students leave their studies with the requisite skills to succeed in the job market. The review team established that graduate skills are present in the curriculum across all provisions; however, students do not necessarily recognise these skills during their studies.

2.6.5 As part of the recommended holistic review of programmes, the review team recommend that the School continue to embed graduate attributes/ employability skills in programme design and increase awareness of these attributes and skills amongst students. Better signposting of these skills throughout courses and assessment would raise the profile of these skills amongst students and provide them with an understanding of how the tasks/assessment are contributing to their skill set. As an example, assignments involving group work could request that students report on how tasks were delegated. The same student groups could then work together on more than one assignment within a course to mimic work-place interactions and investment in the collaborative nature of each task. Similarly, assessment activity could be couched in employability terms with assignments in the writing of funding proposals, policy briefs, etc.

2.6.5 Discussion with students indicated that postgraduate taught students did feel that they were receiving the appropriate skills and attributes for employability. Some felt that coding, specifically via Python, would be beneficial as a compulsory component of the programme. The introduction of this as a compulsory component invited mixed opinions across the student body, however. The review team provided an example of Python-based group projects that students could elect to undertake. A final remote Loom presentation would create less marking/feedback resource than an essay submission.

2.6.7 Postgraduate taught students noted that the School were supportive in communication careers events. Recent careers events that are specific to economics, however, took part in other institutions that meant students were not always able to attend. The review team **suggest** that similar events are hosted by the University of Edinburgh.

2.6.8 Postgraduate research students felt they were provided with a lot of information and support regarding their future careers and job market performance. Students would welcome the opportunity to participate in a mock interview with an academic outside of their supervisory team. The review team **suggest** the School include the option of mock interview to final year PhD students, resource allowing.

2.6.9 It was felt that students would more readily respond to alumni when raising the topic of graduate destinations and employability, as alumni have more recent experience of the current job market. The review team **commend** the recent Networking for Success event held within the School and suggest that similar events are held in the future. It was noted that the School do not have a direct link with the central Alumni Services team, and that creating a specific alumni link within the School of Economics would require a dedicated post.

2.7 Supporting and developing staff

2.7.1 Staff recruitment has been an issue within the School, with the current staff/student ratio at The School noted that they were understaffed pre-pandemic and the issue has been exacerbated by the recruitment freeze during the pandemic and by College policy regarding staff recruitment. The school have recently hired a number of Early Career Researchers on three-year contracts; however, short term placements create issues for terms of strategic planning.

2.7.2 The review team stress the importance of being able hire talent as it is identified and **recommend** that the College review policies around recruitment to account for the timings of the economics job market, allowing the school to make appropriate recruitment decisions as desirable candidates are presented, and to make the staff/student ratio comparable to other institutions. The review team **recommend** that the School require ten additional academic staff members to address the imbalance in staff:student ratio.

2.7.3 The review team support the School's move to employ Early Career Researchers as a means of plugging the staffing gap. It was recognised, however, that this is not an ideal long-term solution. The review team also acknowledge that the demands on academic staff due to shortages in the department can have a negative impact on the wellbeing of staff, and the School and College must show consideration towards this.

2.7.4 The review team heard that the School run briefing sessions for all new academic tutors, with separate training for tutors new to teaching. New staff members initially undertake tutorials for core courses to understand the system and level, prior to delivering their own courses.

2.7.5 The review team **recommend** that the School evaluate their approach to tutor training, and look to strengthen the support and resources available to tutors in their first years of teaching. The review team propose that the School design a programme of pedagogical training and support that is carefully timed to be most effective. This could involve up front pedagogical training e.g. a full-day workshop run by the Economics Network, and follow up through teaching observations, and ongoing communication within teaching teams etc. (<https://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/events/gta>). The review team suggests postgraduate tutors are made aware of the EdTA award of Associate Fellow (HEA accredited) so that their teaching can be recognised for future employment.

2.7.6 PhD tutors reported that they felt encouraged to take additional IAD training, although there was felt to be less emphasis on consistency in teaching skills and styles. The review team established that these tutors would welcome the opportunity to observe experience staff during tutorials and to receive feedback on their own tutorials by experienced academics. This will promote a greater consistency across tutorial classes and aid those who may wish to engage in teaching roles as part of their career path. The review team **suggest** the school consider how to put this system into place and **suggest** arranging focus groups with tutors to better understand their needs. The tutors with whom the review team met had many concrete ideas for improvement and change which may be of benefit to the School.

2.7.7 It is important that the School anticipate practical needs of tutors in terms of what they need to teach; the review team heard that some first year PhD tutors experienced difficulties with accessing course material in advance of their tutorial classes. This related to a delay in receiving their staff email accounts to allow the necessary access permissions. The review team **suggest** that the School address this issue with IS in time for the next PhD tutor cohort.

2.7.8 In addition, the review team **suggest** that the School could alleviate resourcing constraints by allowing PhD students the option to be more involved in course management. Teaching excellence for PhD and early career researcher tutors could be rewarded with a letter of commendation and encouraged to interact with the Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA) and/or the Introduction to Academic Practice (IntroAP) course, delivered by the Institute for Academic Development. This would be particularly valuable for those interested in pursuing an academic career.

2.7.9 The School have funded development for their Professional Services staff but would like more centralised training particularly in areas/systems that are common across the University. A great deal

of pressure is placed on PS staff due to the current, manual, method used for student course enrolment. A lack of system to effectively administrate this process has led to a significant staff resource being redirected to this task, reducing resource elsewhere. This has also negatively impacted the student experience. The review team **recommend** that the University invest in a system for online course enrolment.

2.8 Learning environment (physical and virtual)

2.8.1 The review team **commend** the use of the student study Hub space within 40 George Square and note the popularity of this space for students. The School have utilised the space exceptionally well and the demand for the space was evident through the number of students who tried to access the room during the review visit. The review team note that more physical space is required for students.

2.8.2 The review team note that space will be required for staff/student 1:1 meetings, to deliver on the new Student Support model. Adequate space for confidential conversations must be available.

2.8.3 The review team **commend** the creation of the virtual student Hub space, developed via MS SharePoint, as an example of best practice in providing an information point for students. It is **suggested** that the School continue to develop this virtual space and highlight it to students as a useful resource.

2.8.4 The review team note that the academics do not appear to feature in the social or community building activities aimed at the students. It was **suggested** that the essay competitions, for example, could be judged by academics. It was acknowledged, however, that a shortage of staff would make engagement in these activities problematic.

2.8.5 The PGT students noted some of the texts within reading lists were not available digitally, and there were limited copies within the library. Where this is the case, investment in more hard copies of texts would be welcome. As the overall intake of students has increased, there is the need to increase resources and materials to match the increased demand.

2.8.6 Some students highlighted that they had tight turnaround times in their timetables and struggled to get from one building to another, or from one part of campus to another. As the review team understand it, courses or programmes in different Schools may not be considered together by timetabling which can lead to unrealistic schedules for certain students. The review team **suggest** that the School works with both timetabling and other Schools in the University to identify courses where this needs to be considered, and monitor this going forwards.

3 Assurance and enhancement of provision

The School operates within the University's Quality Assurance Framework and the review team is confident that academic standards are rigorous and robust. The approach within the school for setting and maintaining academic standards is effective, demonstrated within external examiner reports, student feedback and annual quality monitoring and reporting.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Range of provision considered by the review

Programmes

Programme Code	Programme Name
PRMPHECNMC1F	Economics (MPhil)
PRMSCECNMC1F	Economics (MSc by Research)
PRPHDECNMC1	Economics (PhD) (Full-time)
PRPHDECNMC1	Economics (PhD) - 6 Years (Part-time)
PRPHDECNMC2	Economics (PhD with Integrated Study) - 4 Years (Full-Time)
PRPHDECNMC2	Economics (PhD with Integrated Study) - 8 Years (Part-Time)
PRPHDECNMC3	Economics - Full Time (ESRC) (PhD) - 4.5 Years
PTMSCECNEC1	Economics (Econometrics) (MSc) - 1 Year (Full-time)
PTMSCECNEC1	Economics (Econometrics) (MSc) - 2 Years (Part-time)
PTMSCECNFI2F	Economics (Finance) (MSc) (Full-time)
PTMSCECNFI3P	Economics (Finance) (MSc) (Part-time) - 2 years
PTMSCECNRS1	Economic-related Studies MSc
PTMSCECNRS1	Economic-related Studies MSc - 2 Year (Part-time)
PTMSCECONO1	Economics (MSc) (Full-time)
PTMSCECONO1	Economics (MSc) (Part-time) - 2 Years
PTMSCECORS1	Economics-Related Studies (MSc)
PTMSCERSFI1F	Economic-related Studies (Finance) MSc
PTMSCMAEEC1	Mathematical Economics and Econometrics MSc - 1 Year (Full-Time)
PTMSCMAEEC1	Mathematical Economics and Econometrics MSc - 2 Years (Part-Time)
PTPGCECNEC1F	Econometrics (PgCert) - 4 Months
PTPGCECONO1	Economics (PgCert) - 4 Months (Full-time)
PTPGCFINAN1F	Finance (PgCert) - 4 Months (Full-time)
PTPGCMAEEC1	Mathematical Economics and Econometrics (PgCert) - 9 Months
PTPGDECNEC1F	Econometrics (PgDip) - 9 Months
PTPGDECONO1	Economics (PgDip) - 9 Months (Full-time)
PTPGDFINAN1F	Finance (PgDip) - 9 Months (Full-time)
PTPGDMAEEC1	Mathematical Economics and Econometrics (PgDip) - 9 Months (Full-Time)
UTBAHSSECN2F	Arts, Humanities and Social Science (BA) (AHSS) (ECN) - (Full-time)
UTEACNAC	Economics and Accounting (MA Hons)
UTEACNEH	Economics and Economic History (MA Hons)
UTEACNES	Economics with Environmental Studies (MA Hons)
UTEACNFIMAH	Economics with Finance (MA Hons)
UTEACNLA	Economics and Law (MA Hons)
UTEACNMA	Economics and Mathematics (MA Hons)
UTEACNMC	Economics (MA Hons)
UTEACNMS	Economics with Management Science (MA Hons)
UTEACNPO	Economics and Politics (MA Hons)
UTEACNSO	Economics and Sociology (MA Hons)
UTEACNST	Economics and Statistics (MA Hons)
VSCRDSGPEP1F	SGPE Summer Programme
VSCRDSGPEP2F	SGPE Summer Programme (Online Learning)
VTCRDECNPG1	Visiting PG Taught Student in ECN (ICL) - 4 Months

Courses

Course Code	Course Name	UG/PG
ECNM08002	Economic Principles and Applications	UG
ECNM08003	Economic Applications	UG
ECNM08004	Economic Principles	UG
ECNM08006	Economics 2	UG
ECNM08011	Economics 2 (VS1)	UG
ECNM08012	Issues in Global Economics	UG
ECNM08013	Economics 1	UG
ECNM08014	Economics 1 (VS1)	UG
ECNM08016	Statistical Methods for Economics	UG
ECNM08017	Research Frontiers and Methods in Economics	UG
ECNM08018	Economics of Corporate Social Responsibility	UG
ECNM08019	Introductory Financial Economics	UG
ECNM10007	Economics of Self-Management	UG
ECNM10013	Economics of Strategic Behaviour	UG
ECNM10018	History of Economic Thought	UG
ECNM10020	Economics of Financial Markets	UG
ECNM10022	Natural Resource and Environmental Economics	UG
ECNM10024	Monetary Theory and Policy	UG
ECNM10025	History of Economic Thought 1	UG
ECNM10026	History of Economic Thought 2	UG
ECNM10030	Economics Honours Dissertation	UG
ECNM10032	Economics of Strategic Behaviour 1	UG
ECNM10036	Economics of Transition	UG
ECNM10052	Essentials of Econometrics	UG
ECNM10056	Applications of Econometrics	UG
ECNM10061	Development Economics	UG
ECNM10066	Behavioural Economics	UG
ECNM10068	Economics of Sport	UG
ECNM10069	Topics in Macroeconomics	UG
ECNM10070	Topics in Microeconomics	UG
ECNM10074	Economics of the Family	UG
ECNM10077	Issues in Climate Change Economics	UG
ECNM10078	Modelling the Financial Crisis and its Aftermath	UG
ECNM10079	The Chinese Economy: Past and Present	UG
ECNM10080	The Economics of Crime	UG
ECNM10081	Economics of Inequality	UG
ECNM10082	Health Economics	UG
ECNM10083	Economics of Asymmetric Information	UG
ECNM10084	Policy Evaluation for Public Economics	UG
ECNM10085	Advanced Mathematical Economics	UG
ECNM10086	The Economics of Cities and Regions	UG
ECNM10087	International Economics	UG
ECNM10088	Productivity, Growth and Development	UG
ECNM10089	Economics of Migration	UG
ECNM10090	Experimental Economics	UG
ECNM10091	Women in the Global Economy	UG
ECNM10092	Economics of Education	UG
ECNM10093	Economic Development and Structural Transformation	UG
ECNM10095	Introduction to Environmental Economics	UG
ECNM10096	Key Developments in Modern Economic Analysis	UG
ECNM10098	History of Monetary, Capital and Interest Theories	UG
ECNM10099	The Economics of Corporate Social Responsibility	UG
ECNM10100	Unemployment and Labour Market Dynamics	UG

ECNM10101	Economics of Organisations	UG
ECNM10102	Structural Transformation in the Labour Market	UG
ECNM10103	The Economics of Sorting	UG
ECNM10104	Fiscal Policy, Macroeconomics and Inequality	UG
ECNM11005	Advanced Topics in Macroeconomics	PG
ECNM11006	Advanced Topics in Microeconomics	PG
ECNM11008	Development and Methodology of Economic Thought	PG
ECNM11009	Economics of Labour Markets	PG
ECNM11013	Health Economics	PG
ECNM11014	Industrial Organisation	PG
ECNM11015	International Money and Finance	PG
ECNM11016	International Trade	PG
ECNM11017	Economic Policy	PG
ECNM11022	Macroeconomics 2	PG
ECNM11023	Microeconomics 1	PG
ECNM11024	Macroeconomics 1	PG
ECNM11025	Microeconomics 2	PG
ECNM11028	Environmental and Natural Resource Economics	PG
ECNM11030	Development Economics	PG
ECNM11031	Asset Pricing	PG
ECNM11032	Corporate Finance	PG
ECNM11034	Carbon Economics	PG
ECNM11036	Economics for Postgraduates	PG
ECNM11041	Topics in Economic History	PG
ECNM11042	Economics for Postgraduates	PG
ECNM11043	Econometrics 1	PG
ECNM11048	Advanced Microeconometrics	PG
ECNM11049	Advanced Time Series Econometrics	PG
ECNM11050	Econometrics 2	PG
ECNM11051	Econometrics Project	PG
ECNM11052	Dissertation (MSc Economics/Economics (Finance))	PG
ECNM11053	Experimental Economics and Finance	PG
ECNM11054	Econometrics A	PG
ECNM11055	Microeconomics A	PG
ECNM11056	Macroeconomics A	PG
ECNM11060	Bayesian Econometrics	PG
ECNM11061	Models and Research Methods in Microeconomics	PG
ECNM11062	Models and Research Methods in Macroeconomics	PG
ECNM11063	Models and Research Methods in Econometrics	PG
ECNM11064	Dissertation for the MSc(R) in Economics	PG
ECNM11065	Frontiers in Economics	PG
ECNM11066	Computational Methods in Economics	PG
ECNM11067	Economics of the Public Sector	PG
ECNM11068	Dissertation (MSc Economic-Related Studies/ Economic-Related Studies (Finance))	PG
ECNM11069	Dissertation (MSc Economics (Econometrics))	PG
ECNM11071	Dissertation (ESRC)	PG
ECNM11072	Advanced Mathematical Economics	PG
ECNM11073	Mathematical Microeconomics 1	PG
ECNM11074	Advanced Topics in Applied Microeconomics 1	PG
ECNM11075	Advanced Topics in Applied Microeconomics 2	PG
ECNM11076	Advanced Topics in Economic Theory 1	PG
ECNM11077	Advanced Topics in Economic Theory 2	PG
ECNM11078	Advanced Topics in Macro & Labour Economics 1	PG
ECNM11079	Advanced Topics in Macro & Labour Economics 2	PG
ECNM11080	Numerical Methods in Economics	PG
ECNM11081	Research Methods in Econometrics	PG
ECNM11082	Research Methods in Macroeconomics	PG
ECNM11083	Research Methods in Microeconomics	PG

ECNM11084	PhD Research Seminar	PG
ECNM11085	PhD Dissertation Prospectus	PG
ECNM11086	Foundations of Economics	PG
ECNM11087	Further Topics in Economics	PG
ECNM11088	Dissertation in Mathematical Economics and Econometrics	PG
ECNM11089	Econometrics 2 - Time Series	PG
ECNM11090	Econometrics 2 - Applied Microeconometrics	PG
ECNM11091	Econometrics 2 - Microeconometrics	PG
ECNM11092	Research Methods and Models in Econometrics	PG
ECNM12001	Research Design and Qualitative Methods	PG

Appendix 2 – University remit

The University remit provides consistent coverage of key elements across all of the University's internal reviews (undergraduate and postgraduate).

It covers all credit bearing provision within the scope of the review, including:

- Provision delivered in collaboration with others
- Transnational education
- Work-based provision and placements
- Online and distance learning
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD)
- Provision which provides only small volumes of credit
- Joint/Dual Degrees
- Massive Open Online Courses MOOCs (even if non-credit bearing)

1. Strategic overview

The strategic approach to:

- The management and resourcing of learning and teaching experience,
- The forward direction and the structures in place to support this.
- Developing business cases for new programmes and courses,
- Managing and reviewing its portfolio,
- Closing courses and programmes.

2. Enhancing the Student Experience

The approach to and effectiveness of:

- Supporting students in their learning
- Listening to and responding to the Student Voice
- Learning and Teaching
- Assessment and Feedback
- Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation
- Learning environment (physical and virtual)
- Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes
- Supporting and developing staff

3. Assurance and Enhancement of provision

The approach to and effectiveness of maintaining and enhancing academic standards and quality of provision in alignment with the University Quality Framework:

- Admissions and Recruitment
- Assessment, Progression and Achievement
- Programme and Course approval
- Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting
- Operation of Boards of Studies, Exam Boards, Special Circumstances
- External Examining, themes and actions taken
- Alignment with SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) level, relevant benchmark statements, UK Quality Code
- Accreditation and Collaborative activity and relationship with Professional/Accrediting bodies (if applicable)

Appendix 3 Additional information considered by review team

Prior to the review visit:

- Reflective Report
- College response to Reflective Report
- List of programmes and courses
- External Examiner reports
- Personal Tutoring Statement 2022-23
- Organisational charts and staff information
- Programme handbooks
- Statistical reports
- SSLC minutes
- NSS, PTES and PRES reports, and associated school reflection reports
- University Remit
- IPR Final Report (2017)
- 1 Year Response to previous IPR (2017)
- Graduate Outcomes report (Careers)

Study and Work Away report (2022)

During the review visit

- PGT student feedback document, to support meeting with students (student authored)
- PGR student feedback document, to support meeting with students (student authored)

Appendix 4 Number of students

Undergraduate Programmes:

Entrant for Selected Programmes

Entry Programme Name	2015/6	2016/7	2017/8	2018/9	2019/20	2020/1	2021/2
Economics (MA Hons)	0	73	96	96	80	99	121
Economics and Accounting (MA Hons)	0	7	9	7	5	8	11
Economics and Economic History (MA Hons)		2	3	7	5	0	
Economics and Law (MA Hons)		1					
Economics and Mathematics (MA Hons)	0	15	21	23	15	27	29
Economics and Politics (MA Hons)	0	33	30	44	44	44	26
Economics and Sociology (MA Hons)	0	1	3	2	3	7	6
Economics and Statistics (MA Hons)	0	6	7	7	6	10	15
Economics with Environmental Studies (MA Hons)	0	1	3	3	5	6	11
Economics with Finance (MA Hons)	0	38	44	44	51	53	82
Economics with Management Science (MA Hons)	0	7	10	11	12	12	21

Postgraduate Taught Programmes:

Entrant for Selected Programmes

Entry Programme Name	2015/6	2016/7	2017/8	2018/9	2019/20	2020/1	2021/2
Economics (Econometrics) (MSc) - 1 Year (Full-time)	0	1	15	14	10	2	10
Economics (Econometrics) (MSc) - 2 Years (Part-time)				0	1	0	1
Economics (Finance) (MSc) (Full-time)	0	16	37	22	21	38	33
Economics (Finance) (MSc) (Part-time) - 2 years	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Economics (MSc) (Full-time)	0		34	38	44	43	46
Economics (MSc) (Part-time) - 2 years	0	0	0	2	0	3	1
Mathematical Economics and Econometrics MSc - 1 Year (Full-Time)							2
Mathematical Economics and Econometrics MSc - 2 Years (Part-Time)							3

Postgraduate Research Programmes:

Entrant for Selected Programmes

Entry Programme Name	2015/6	2016/7	2017/8	2018/9	2019/20	2020/1	2021/2
Economics (PhD with Integrated Study) - 4 Years (Full-Time)	0					7	8
Economics (PhD) (Full-time)		6	9	8	7	6	