

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

**Meeting to be held on Thursday 27 February 2020 at 2pm
in the Liberton Tower Room, Murchison House, King's Buildings**

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 - [Professional Services programmes](#) (November 2019)
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H/02/28/02

- 14. Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 23 April 2020 at 2pm in the Elder Room, Old College

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5 December 2019
at 2pm in the Torridon Room, Charles Stewart House**

Present:

Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Dr Shereen Benjamin	Associate Dean (Quality Assurance) College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Brian Connolly	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Dr Gail Duursma	School Representative (Engineering), College of Science and Engineering
Nichola Kett	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Dr Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, College of Science and Engineering
Dr Claire Phillips	Dean of Quality Assurance, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Dr Inger Seiferheld	School Representative (Business), College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Steph Vallancey	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
Paula Webster	Head of Student Data and Surveys (Student Systems), co-opted representative for Student Systems.

In Attendance:

Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services and Assistant Principal Online Learning
Sue MacGregor	Director, Academic Services
Stuart Nicol	Head of eLearning Services / Section Head, Educational Design, Educational Design and Engagement

Apologies:

Brian Green	Deputy Associate Principal (Learning & Teaching), University of Strathclyde
Dr Jeni Harden	School Representative (School of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Sarah Moffat

Edinburgh University Students' Association Representative

Dr Sara Shinton

Head of Researcher Development, Institute for Academic Development

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Convenor welcomed **Melissa Highton** (Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services and Assistant Principal Online Learning) and **Stuart Nicol** (Head of eLearning Services / Section Head, Educational Design, Educational Design and Engagement) attending to present on Paper D, and **Sue MacGregor** (Director of Academic Services) attending to present on Papers F to J.

The Convenor reported that **Katie Scott** (Peer Support Manager, Students' Association) would be joining as a co-opted member with expertise relating to the student voice from February 2020.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18 September 2019

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

3. Matters Arising

The Committee discussed the following matters arising:

3.1 School Annual Quality Reports – Actions

The Committee considered the School responses to the Committee's requests for further information in relation to the School Annual Quality Reports. The Committee was content that the responses met the original requests. The following actions were agreed:

- **Literature, Languages and Cultures – Widening Participation**
The Committee noted that the School was seeking additional funding to support its Widening Participation initiatives, specifically in relation to the training for student volunteers, recruitment into Modern Languages, and administrative support.
Action: Committee Secretary to refer to Student Bursaries with a request to liaise with the School to discuss funding options.
- **Biological Sciences – Data Monitoring**
The Committee noted the School response regarding student data on entrants, progression rates, course pass rates, completion rates withdrawal rates, widening participation and black and minority ethnic (BME) students. It was noted that data trends and monitoring would be a key item for discussion at the next meeting in February.
Action: Committee Secretary to refer findings on data trends and monitoring from the QA annual reporting process, and the February meeting, to the Vice Principal Students for consideration in relation to the curriculum review.
- **Biological Sciences – Student Representation**
The Committee noted that the School's concerns in relation to the move to a programme based representative system, and in particular the concern that a smaller

number of representatives would result in a narrower perspective and less diversity of student voices being presented.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer issue to the Students' Association.

It was noted that some responses had been delayed due to the industrial action.

Action: Committee Secretary to circulate the outstanding responses when ready.

3.2 Degree Classification Outcomes **CLOSED PAPER**

The Committee considered the School responses to the Committee's requests for further information in relation to Degree Classification Outcomes. The Committee was content that the responses met the original requests.

3.3 Internal Audit of Assessment

The Convenor reported on discussions with the Deputy Secretary Student Experience regarding plans to maximise the value of quality processes and the use of data. It was noted that this would be a focus of the February meeting.

For Discussion

4. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) Annual Update 2018-19

The Committee received and discussed an update on the University's portfolio of existing and proposed MOOCs including: portfolio summary data; new courses launched in 2019; courses completing development; courses approved at the May 2019 strategy board; and enrolment and certificate data for all courses.

The Committee agreed that MOOCs should be included in the annual quality reporting process. It was also agreed that the MOOCs data must include information on new sign-ups.

Action: TH, NK, PW, MH, SN to discuss what MOOCs data should be made available on Power BI and what guidance should be provided to Schools.

5. College Annual Quality Reports 2018-19

The Committee considered the annual College Quality Reports for 2017-18. The Committee discussed the reports, with particular attention to section 3, 'Themes for SQAC forward planning'.

5.1 College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

The College Dean of Quality thanked Alastair Duthie (Academic Administrator, Enhancement and Quality) for his work on the report. It was noted that the College had implemented a new process, encouraging collaboration across a broader range of staff which had resulted in greater awareness of and engagement with the annual report.

The following was noted for action at University level:

- **Data and Power BI**

The College reported that it was looking at ways of utilising the PowerBI data to support strategic planning particularly in the area of student support for Widening Participation. To facilitate this initiative the College requested additional support and training for key users of the Power BI Dashboards to enhance the ability of staff to analyse and evaluate the qualitative and quantitative data.

- **Course Enhancement Questionnaires**

The College requested that the role of Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs) be considered alongside other modes of student feedback and the role of each in staff appraisal as part of the impending review. The College also requested that Student Systems consider how appropriate training, guidance and enhanced data sets could be provided to appropriate staff in Schools and Colleges.

- **Feedback Turnaround (15-Day Turnaround)**

The College reported that the 15-day feedback turnaround had had a negative impact on staff and students. The College expressed support for the planned review of the 15-day turnaround.

- **Impact of Estates on Learning, Teaching and Community Building**

The College reported that problems with its estate were now at a critical point and were directly impacting on the staff and student experience. It was noted that community building among students and staff was a key strategic priority and therefore inadequate and poorly configured teaching and social spaces act as a significant barrier to effective student community building. The College requested that careful and transparent consideration be given to immediate concerns, with investment in additional space and carefully coordinated redevelopment of existing space.

5.2 College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

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

The following was noted for action at University level:

- **Postgraduate Taught (PGT)**

The College requested a review of the technology and technical support for the online programmes and a review of recruitment through a widening participation lens.

- **Fees**

The College noted that its competitor's fees are often lower. It was noted that while the programmes can ensure marketing highlights the teaching and research excellence at Edinburgh, it would help if fees remained the same once the student had signed up for the programme and if there was a freeze in the 5% increase in fees per annum.

5.3 College of Science & Engineering

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

The following was noted for action at University level:

- **Assessment and Progression Tool**

The College reported concerns that the current lack of capacity in the Assessment and Progression Tool (APT) required schools to set up spreadsheets to manually calculate results where the structure of resit assessment differed from the original structure. It was noted that this significantly increased administrative effort around the resit diet, increased the risk of human error in the calculation of marks and reduced the ability to audit the input and amendment of marks during resits. The College requested that work to address this be prioritised as the current situation, with resits largely having to be administered outside APT, was neither acceptable or sustainable.

- **Graduate Apprenticeships**

The College reported that the development of Graduate Apprenticeships was an emerging area of activity, with two programmes currently in place (one UG, and one PG) both linked to Skills Development Scotland along with a number of industrial partners. The College requested that the University clarify the overall strategic direction in relation to Graduate Apprenticeships (i.e. whether this activity should be prioritised and, if so, who is responsible for developing a framework for supporting this activity) given the high level of support required to develop and deliver them.

- **Feedback**

The College reported ongoing difficulty in some Schools in returning timely feedback for coursework within the publicised 15 day feedback turnaround time, as evidenced by student survey scores. It was noted that this was particularly challenging for Schools with large numbers and was linked to the broader discussion about capacity, size and shape. Schools had observed that the 15 working day turnaround time did not necessarily ensure quality of feedback and there were concerns that with the implementation of the new process for approving extensions, it would be difficult to guarantee a 15 day turnaround time as it is expected that, at least in the short-term, there will be an increase in the number of extension requests.

- **Capacity for Computer-Based Examinations**

The College expressed support for the idea of rolling out computer-based examinations, particularly in relation to the benefit this could bring to examinations through greater use of online assessment and feedback techniques. It was noted that the College is interested to understand what appetite and capacity there might be across the University to develop computer-based examination.

- **Course Enhancement Questionnaires**

The College expressed support for the proposed review of the purpose and context of CEQs. It was noted that the current CEQ format is not perceived to be fulfilling the intent or need for course-related feedback in contrast with mid-course feedback, which is seen as a valuable and less onerous exercise. It was suggested that the

placement of CEQs within the broader context of feedback mechanisms within the University should be addressed.

- **Timetabling**
The College requested that the University continues to monitor the impact of timetabling changes and works toward identifying actions that can ensure consistency of experience and communication across all schools.
- **MScR Marking Scheme**
The College requested that the University level guidelines for the award of MScR bands be reviewed to clarify the criteria for markers and External Examiners.

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

Action: Academic Services to direct College issues to relevant individuals/areas for consideration and ensure that responses are disseminated to the College as part of the 2019-20 annual quality reporting process.

6. Annual Reports 2018-19

6.1 Undergraduate Taught External Examiner Reports: Thematic Analysis

The Committee considered an analysis of data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) covering undergraduate programmes for the academic year 2018-19.

The Committee noted the high number of commendations across the University and the low number of issues requiring attention, with no significant issues escalated to University-level.

The main theme of commendation across all three Colleges was the assessment process and the most commendations of a single sub-theme was for good practice and innovation (in the Programme Development theme).

Of the issues highlighted by External Examiners the most frequently mentioning were in relation to the provision of information and issues raised in a previous report. The Committee noted that while schools should reflect on and respond to External Examiners' comments they are not required to take the action that an External Examiner recommends and a lack of understanding on this point may be a source of dissatisfaction.

The Committee noted that the number of issues remained relatively small in the context of the size of each college. It was agreed that the annual report should also include total numbers as well as percentages in order to provide greater context. However, even where the numbers were small it was important that the Committee was assured that there was no local concentration or pattern of issues at subject or course level that may be hidden in the College level analysis.

Action: Academic Services to include (a) total numbers and (b) more contextual analysis to determine if any patterns or clusters of issues have emerged in specific local areas.

The Committee noted that a number of reports were still outstanding. The Committee had previously asked for the annual analysis to include information on External Examiners terms of office to determine how many of the outstanding reports could be attributable to External Examiners coming to the end of their term of contract. Academic Services confirmed that this data was not held on the central External Examiner Reporting System.

Action: College Deans of Quality to ensure that the outcomes of the Committee's discussions in regard to the External Examiner Reports are made available to and considered by the relevant College committee(s).

6.2 Academic Appeals – CLOSED PAPER

The Committee considered the annual report on academic appeals from academic year 2018-19.

6.3 Student Discipline – CLOSED PAPER

The Committee considered a report on the number of breaches of the Code of Student Conduct over the course of the academic year 2018/19.

6.4 Complaint Handling

The Committee considered a report on the handling of complaints to the University for the academic year 2018-19.

The Committee noted that there were no readily discernible trends in the complaint handling cases or the range of issues complained about.

The Committee noted that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) had contacted institutions across Scotland with a consultation document on proposed changes to the Model Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP). Any changes would most likely be implemented from April 2020 and will be covered in next year's report.

6.5 Annual Review of Student Support Services

The Committee considered a report on the review of Student Support Service annual reports for 2018-19, highlighting areas of good practice and themes for consideration in the next reporting cycle.

The Committee noted the issue of recruitment ratios and the suggestion that Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA) consider the scope for partnership working with Schools to ensure that the level of new student recruitment was sustainable and manageable within existing School resources.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer recruitment ratios issue and suggestion to SRA for consideration.

The Committee discussed the theme of affordability and specifically the financial challenges faced by students and the resulting barriers to participation which had emerged as a key concern for students. The review noted that there was a need to help develop student financial literacy and understanding of the full cost of their time at Edinburgh. Also, work was required to help overcome the stigma associated with financial problems and encourage students to report problems early.

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

Action: The Convenor to include the themes identified in the annual report to the University Executive.

7. **Students' Association School Reports**

The Committee considered the reports detailing School engagement with the Students' Association.

The Committee welcomed the reports and agreed that they would provide each College with useful insight into their student population at a local level. It was noted that the full reports were available on the Committee wiki:

<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SQAC/Thursday+5+December+2019>

Action: EUSA to include an institutional-level report and an executive summary/overview with next year's set of reports.

8. **Course Enhancement Questionnaires – Review Proposals**

The Committee considered the proposed framework for a fundamental review of Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs) in the 2019/20 academic year.

The Committee noted the relative success of mid-course feedback but agreed that it could not provide a holistic understanding of the student experience of each course as a whole (particularly in relation to programme level QA and external accreditation requirements). It was also agreed that the CEQ review must ensure that there is appropriate student representation (i.e. College and School level) on the review group and during the consultation process.

Action: Head of Student Analytics and Insights (Student Systems) and Vice President Education (Students' Association) to address student engagement with the review.

The Committee **approved** the governance framework and the Terms of Reference for the CEQ review group.

9. **UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Advice and Guidance Mapping**

The Committee considered the following set of mappings of the University's policies and practices to the advice and guidance that underpins the UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Admissions, recruitment and widening access; Assessment; Concerns, complaints and appeals; Course design and development; External expertise; Learning and teaching; Monitoring and evaluation; Research degrees; Student engagement

The Committee **approved** the Advice and Guidance Mapping.

10. **Associated Institution Policy – Minor Amendments**

The Committee considered the proposal Senate Quality Assurance Committee replace Senate Researcher Experience Committee as the academic advice body for the Associated Institution nomination and approval process, and the approving authority for the Associated Institution Policy. It was noted that the proposal reflected the incorporation of postgraduate research degree training into the Committee's remit. It was also noted that, in line with the

provisions in the Delegated Authority Schedule, the paper proposed that the Head of College has responsibility for the nomination and signing process (which reflected current practice for collaborative agreements under the terms of the Delegated Authority Schedule).

The Committee **approved** the amendments to the Associated Institution Policy.

11. Consultation on Quality Enhancement of UK HE Transnational Education

The Committee considered the draft response to the consultation on future approaches to the external quality enhancement of UK Higher Education transnational education. The following was agreed:

- Question 12 – important to strike a balance between the costs and impact of reviews – must be proportionate.
- Question 16 – change to strongly disagree with opt-out.
- Question 18 – the number of Transnational Education (TNE) arrangements should be top of the priority list (followed by students, and then number of countries).

Action: Members to send any further comments to the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services by Tuesday 10 December 2019.

12. Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Third Party Credit Rating Policy

The Committee considered the updated version of the University's SCQF Third Party Credit Rating Policy.

It was noted that Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC), formerly Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, had been responsible for overseeing the operation of the Policy. However, given the quality-related aspects of the Policy, it was proposed that it may be more appropriate for the Committee oversee the Policy (although APRC may need to be consulted about aspects of the Policy's operation on occasions).

The Committee **approved** the transfer of responsibility for overseeing the SCQF Third Party Credit Rating Policy transfers from Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) to Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

The Committee also noted that, in line with the University's schedule for reviewing policies, the Third Party Credit Rating Policy had been reviewed by Academic Services, in consultation with colleagues from Moray House School of Education and Sport. It was noted that minor changes had been made (primarily changes to Committee names), but that a more substantial review may be undertaken once the ongoing review of the SCQF Quality Assurance Model had been completed in March 2020.

The Committee **approved** updated version of the University's SCQF Third Party Credit Rating Policy.

13. Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Principles and Operational Guidance

The Committee discussed the revised Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Principals and Operational Guidance.

It was noted that the principles and of the guidance would receive a 'soft' launch with optional adoption during current academic session to allow for any issues to be identified and addressed before they became mandatory from 2020-21.

The Committee commended the author, Gillian Mackintosh (Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services), for her work on the document.

The Committee **approved** the Principles and Operational Guidance with the proviso that references to 'should' (in section 6.1) be removed from the Guidance document.

For Information and Formal Business

14. Internal Periodic Review

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

- Postgraduate Programme Review of Edinburgh College of Art (ECA)
- Teaching Programme Review of Engineering
- Teaching Programme Review of History of Art
- Teaching Programme Review of Philosophy

The Committee also noted the forward schedule for Internal Periodic Reviews 2020/21 – 2024/25.

15. Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)

The Committee noted an update on preparations for ELIR 2020.

The Committee also noted a paper produced by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland identifying the key themes arising from the recommendations and commendations of the first seven reviews completed in the ELIR 4 cycle and a comparison between the ELIR 4 outcomes and the themes identified in the ELIR 3 cycle.

16. Subject Benchmark Statements

The Committee noted that the QAA had also published updates to Subject Benchmark Statements in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Action: Committee Secretary to circulate benchmark statements to relevant Heads of School, Directors of Teaching, and Directors of Professional Services.

17. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

18. Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday 27 February 2019 at 2pm in the Liberton Tower Room, King's Buildings.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

**Annual Monitoring Reporting:
Retention, Progression, and Attainment**

Description of paper:

1. Proposal for systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. For discussion.

Background and context:

3. Thematic Review Recommendations to Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).
4. More context documents can be found on the Committee wiki:
<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SQAC/Thursday+27+February>

Discussion:

5. Discuss the options for systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data.
6. Consider the resource requirements of any agreed change to the monitoring process.

Resource implications:

7. If the Committee decides to systematically monitor retention, progression, and attainment data then additional statistical analysis resources may be required. These would need to be costed.

Risk management:

8. Poor performance in retention, progression, and attainment metrics is a risk to the University's reputation, increasing as these measures gain more publicity. As these measures gain more profile, it will be an increasing risk to the University's reputation if we do not develop a better understanding of which groups of students are at higher risk of withdrawing or under-achieving and of any underlying reasons.

Equality & diversity:

9. Equality and diversity issues are integral to the proposal.

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

10. Committee Secretary will feedback comments to relevant areas.

Author

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy
Officer, Academic Services

Presenter

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy
Officer, Academic Services

February 2020

Freedom of Information: Open

Annual Monitoring and Reporting

It is proposed that the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) implement systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data.

Specifically, understanding what works to improve outcomes for different groups at three key moments in the student life-cycle: retention (the likelihood of continuing or withdrawing from study); attainment (the extent to which students are enabled to fulfil their potential); and progression (successful transitions within the programme of study and afterwards to employment or further study).

There are three drivers behind this proposal:

1. Thematic Review Recommendations

SQAC has been remitted recommendations from the last two Thematic Reviews to implement systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data for mature students, student parents and carers, and black and minority ethnic (BME) students.

The [final report](#) of the 2017-18 Thematic Review of support for mature students and student parents and carers include the following recommendation:

The review panel **recommends** that Senate Quality Assurance Committee implement systematic monitoring of retention and degree outcome data by age and caring responsibility and, if appropriate, develop interventions where there are clear and consistent patterns of divergence between 'traditional' students and mature students, student parents, student carers.

The [final report](#) of the 2018-19 Thematic Review considered BME students' experiences of support at the University include the following recommendation:

The Review Panel **recommends** that Senate Quality Assurance Committee implement systematic monitoring of retention, progression and degree outcome data for BME students and, if appropriate, recommend interventions where there are clear and consistent patterns of divergence between BME students and white students.

The review panels were in agreement that the University needed to implement systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and degree outcome data by age, caring responsibility, and ethnicity (including separate data for UK-domiciled and international BME students). It was noted that it would be important to understand this data in terms of the 'distance travelled' by these students to provide a greater understanding of the 'value added' by the

University and the extent to which student needs have been supported by the University. The data could be monitored at an institutional level, weighted by qualifications on entry, to determine if any differential is actually evidence of systematic disadvantage or whether pre-existing disadvantage is exacerbated or mitigated whilst at Edinburgh. It would also be important to monitor the reasons why mature students, student parents and carers, or BME students decide to withdraw. This will enable the University to better understand and evaluate the individual context and challenges of each subject area and School.

The University is seeking to expand its intake beyond the 'traditional' student profile as part of the new Widening Participation Strategy. The review panels were in agreement that the University must recognise the range of support needs of these new and diverse student cohorts. In some aspects, these support needs may diverge from the provision of support that the University has traditionally been geared towards. The review panels were also in agreement that the University has a duty of care to support all of its students and provide them with an equal opportunity to succeed at their studies.

2. Data Transparency and Institutional Risk

In recent years issues relating to retention, progression and attainment have gained increasing attention both within the University and across the wider Higher Education (HE) Sector.

The recent development of the student data dashboards has increased the transparency and visibility of data across the University. Also, as noted above, widening participation to higher education is now a strategic priority for the University. Both these developments have started to expose retention, progression and attainment data to public scrutiny and have in turn highlighted equality and diversity issues.

The use of metrics related to these issues is increasingly common in external frameworks used to encourage institutional accountability, such as the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)¹ and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Outcome agreements². Furthermore, the Scottish Government's Commission on Widening Access³ has made it clear that its priority is not only to promote access to universities, but also to ensure that students '*can maintain their studies and successfully graduate*'.

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/what-is-the-tef/>

² http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/guidance_sfcgd202017/SFC_University_OA_guidance_2018-19.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/progress-report/2016/03/blueprint-fairness-final-report-commission-widening-access/documents/00496619-pdf/00496619-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00496619.pdf>

As these issues gain more publicity, poor performance in retention, progression, and attainment metrics is a risk to the University's reputation. To mitigate this risk the University must develop a better understanding of which groups of students are at higher risk of not completing their studies or of attaining a lesser outcome than their peers and of any underlying reasons.

To this end, University Court recently commissioned Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) to investigate undergraduate retention rates (<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SQAC/Thursday+27+February>). This work remains ongoing with Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP) currently scoping the extent and cost of proposed further research in this area.

3. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience

The current QAA Enhancement Theme, *Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience*, has also challenged institutions to reflect on the data available within the Scottish sector to understand what is working and what could be improved in order to: identify any issues that will benefit from intervention; help prioritise interventions to improve the student experience; and evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions, including reporting on the ways in which the student experience is improving.

Current Monitoring Processes

The University's annual monitoring, review and reporting processes provide a number of opportunities and fora for retention, progression, and attainment issues to be raised and considered.

Annual Programme Monitoring, and School and College Annual Quality Reports encourage academic areas to engage with progression and performance data and highlight any equality and diversity issues. The Internal Periodic Review process also provides Schools with an opportunity to reflect on areas for development and again a key element of this process is the requirement to engage with progression and performance data. In each of these processes retention, progression, and attainment issues are raised and considered. However, this tends to happen on an ad hoc basis dependent on the diligence or priorities of the particular members of staff authoring the reports or the specific school or subject area.

The [Equality Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee \(EDMARC\)](#) produces an annual report analysing student and staff data by the key equality dimensions of gender, age, disability and ethnicity. The report provides the University with comprehensive statistical data on protected characteristics to support the monitoring of equality and diversity within the University. However, staff are not required to systematically engage with the EDMARC data once it has been published on the University's Equality and Diversity website. Instead, the data is simply made available to Colleges and Schools for use if they wish to take it forward.

The Thematic Review process does provide a mechanism for a considered, in-depth examination of an issue in the round and across the University. However, the University does not have a specific and systematic process for monitoring retention, progression, and attainment issues.

Benchmarking

Across the sector there appears to be two broad approaches to the monitoring of retention, progression and attainment data.

As at Edinburgh, some institutions rely on broad annual monitoring and reporting processes to capture and consider issues. An alternative approach is to dedicate specific, institution-level mechanisms to undertake analysis and direct actions. For example, at the University of St Andrews the Academic Monitoring Group has primary oversight. The University of Aberdeen has in place a cross-institutional Retention Taskforce, which leads on data analysis and initiatives to support progression and retention. The University of Glasgow has established a Retention and Success Working Group and has set an internal Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of 94% students to continue after year 1. This approach appears to reflect the growing importance of KPIs on an institutional level and their application for multiple reporting purposes (internal and external).

Monitoring Options

Given the drivers to enhance the way SQAC monitors retention, progression, and attainment data and absence of a clear standard approach to the issue across the sector, the Committee is asked to consider two possible approaches:

- **Specific Mechanism**

One option would be for SQAC to take the command and control approach adopted by some Universities. This could be achieved by establishing KPI thresholds for retention, progression, and attainment for each subject area, School, and College. Any area falling below its target threshold would trigger further investigation and possible intervention. However, this approach has not worked particularly well at Edinburgh in the past (for example the 80% satisfaction threshold for the Personal Tutoring system in each School) and a single threshold may not be appropriate given the diversity of subject areas and student cohorts across the University.

Furthermore, recent research undertaken by the Higher Education Academy (HEA)⁴ suggests that local intervention, relevant to pedagogical practice, is more effective than standardised interventions. One size does not fit all and interventions ought to be tailored to address the issues experienced in specific disciplines and in relation to the characteristics of the student cohort.

- **Annual Monitoring and Reporting**

⁴ What Works? Student Retention & Success programme, Professor Liz Thomas, Michael Hill, Dr Joan O' Mahony, Professor Mantz Yorke, Higher Education Academy, April 2017.

The approach that SQAC has taken to monitoring Degree Classification Outcome data provides an alternative model which could be expanded to encompass retention and progression data. In April each year SQAC receives an annual report (produced by GaSP) on degree classification outcomes of successfully exiting undergraduates, including sector trends in undergraduate degree classification outcomes. Any subject areas considered 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. SQAC then continues to monitor progress via these two annual reporting processes until the issue is considered to have been resolved. 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 local solutions. This approach could be expanded to include data on retention and progression as well as attainment.

Challenges

There are a number of challenges to attaining a better understanding of retention, progression, and attainment data across the University.

- **Data Granularity** – granular analysis of retention/non-continuation rates can be problematic as the University’s flexible curriculum means that students can move between programmes and even between Schools, making the analysis needed of different cohorts challenging.
- **Data Capture** - the current approach to recording students’ reasons for withdrawal (including for non-continuation) provides limited information. Data is collected on the reasons for student withdrawal, but in a lot of cases this will be very high-level such as ‘Personal reasons’ which provides little help in understanding why individual students leave the University or why particular groups are more likely to withdraw than others. Schools may have more comprehensive local information on why students withdraw but this is not readily available for central analysis.
- **Data Set Size** - numbers can be very small in relation to protected characteristics which means it can be difficult to draw inferences from the data and staff may perceive the numbers to be insufficient to be useful. The provision of trend or benchmarked data to schools can be helpful under these circumstances to develop an understanding of the bigger picture and help place information in context. There is also a need to balance monitoring against wider data protection concerns.
- **Data Analysis** – the Student Management Information tool (STUDMI) contains the source data on every student at the University, including multiple demographic and socio-economic variables. The complex nature of this data

will require specialist statistical modelling analysis by the GaSP team. Any enhancement to this element of annual monitoring and reporting would therefore depend on sufficient analytical resource in GaSP.

For discussion

SQAC is invited to:

1. Discuss the options for systematically monitoring retention, progression, and attainment data.
2. Consider the resource requirements of any agreed change to the monitoring process.

Brian Connolly
Academic Services
February 2020

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

Differential Attainment

Description of paper

1. An analysis of differential levels of student attainment at the University of Edinburgh. The analysis tracks cohorts of students comparing the relative probability of different groups of students completing; achieving a first class or a first and / or upper second class degree. Data for three entry cohorts have been combined and tracked to allow for robust analysis of the outcomes of BME and Widening Participation.

Action requested / recommendation

2. SQAC are asked to discuss and to advise on next steps for this project.

Background and context

3. Analysis was requested by SQAC.

Discussion

4. There are statistically significant differences in the outcomes of Scottish, BME and Widening Participation Students at the University of Edinburgh. These differences exist when data are normalised for prior attainment and subject area.
5. First year attainment appears to be a better predictor of student success than attainment before entry.

Resource implications

6. N/A

Risk management

7. N/A

Equality & diversity

8. N/A

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

9. To be confirmed

Author

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Date 21/02/20

Presenter

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Freedom of Information

Differential Attainment

Introduction

Analysis of the latest qualifier population from the HESA student return (for the 2018/19 academic year) shows that statistically significant differences in the levels of attainment between students with different demographic characteristics exist at the University of Edinburgh. A higher proportion of female students were awarded a first class or upper second class degree (84% of female students compared to 82% of male students¹).

White students out-performed Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and non-UK students (86%, 78% and 79% being awarded a first class or upper second class degree respectively²).

When comparing the proportion of students who were awarded a first class degree Medicine and Veterinary Medicine students are removed from the population as they are awarded unclassified degrees. Again, a slightly higher proportion of female students were awarded first class degrees (30% compared to 28% of male students³). This is not a statistically significant difference.

Significant differences in the achievement of BME, White and non-UK students appear again when examining the proportion of first class degrees awarded. Non-UK students achieved the highest proportion of firsts (32.6%) whilst 28% of White students were awarded a first and 22.4% of BME students⁴.

The gap between the proportion of White and BME students attaining a first or upper second class honours degree is greater than the gap between students achieving a first class degree.

This paper explores these differences in more detail. Full data tables are provided in the Appendices.

Methodology and a note on the data

Comparing the proportion of students who achieve a particular degree classification is problematic as it does not take into account those students who fail to qualify. The analysis described in this paper tracks students from their year of entry to their degree outcome to capture those who transferred to another university or withdrew for another reason.

One of the issues explored in this analysis is whether Widening Participation (WP) or BME Students are at a disadvantage at the University of Edinburgh. As numbers of these students are low, data for three entry cohorts have been tracked (2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16). Students who are continuing are treated as a positive outcome in the completion metric.

This analysis uses HESA Student return data for ease of tracking cohorts between years. The HESA Student Standard Registration Population excludes incoming exchange students; students who aren't studying for HE credit and distance learning students who are based outside the UK.

¹ $\chi^2 = 4.68, df = 1, p > 0.05$

² $\chi^2 = 40.59, df = 2, p > 0.05$

³ $\chi^2 = 1.63, df = 1$

⁴ $\chi^2 = 15.32, df = 2, p > 0.05$

Entry tariff scores have been used as a proxy for prior levels of attainment. These data are only collected for students with tariffable entry qualifications. Data have been interpolated for students who do not hold tariffable entry qualifications. To assess the impact of achievement in the early stages of a degree on students' probability of achieving a first class or an upper second class award a simple indicative Grade Point Average (GPA) has been calculated using credit weighted final course scores.

Widening Participation measures can only be applied to students who resided in the UK prior to joining the university. To enable a direct comparison between Scottish students and those from other parts of the country previous school type i.e. state or independent, whether the student is a care leaver or care experienced and ACORN classifications of postcodes have been used to identify students who might be considered to be Widening Participation.⁵ It is acknowledged that these are imperfect measures but they are sufficiently robust to help to understand whether students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are disadvantaged when compared to peers from more privileged backgrounds.

Data have been analysed in a set of Binomial Logistic Regression models. These models show the probability of a student achieving a particular outcome. As the models require a binary categorical outcome data have been aggregated to show: completed / continuing or not; achieved a first or upper second class degree or not and achieved a first class degree or not (excluding Medics and Vets).

Which students complete or continue?

This measure does not attempt to replicate the HESA non-continuation performance metric which is a very specific way of tracking student retention. Students who withdraw at any stage of their studies are counted as a not completing in this analysis as are students who transfer to a different university. This analysis does not address the time it takes for students to complete or whether students completed with their intended degree or transferred to a different programme of study.

Students in the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) are more likely to not complete (9.8%) however this is only slightly higher than the proportion of students in the College of Arts and Humanities (CAHSS) (8.0%). The very small number of students who do not complete in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) make the differences between the Colleges statistically significant.

Scottish students and students from Widening Participation backgrounds are less likely to complete than their peers (see data tables in Appendix B).

Outputs for all models are provided in Appendix E. The first model tested how far prior attainment predicted whether students would complete or fail to complete their degree. The model only accounted for 2% of the variance (Nagelkerke R^2). An increase in tariff score decreases the likelihood of not completing (odds ratio = 0.997).

⁵ ACORN data on the Student Records System is somewhat patchy so Postcode on Entry data have been run against the ACORN postcode database (2017) held on the ESRC's UK Data Service. Postcodes classified as Category 4 – Financially Stretched and Category 5 – Urban Adversity are considered to be Widening Participation.

Introducing College as a proxy for subject of study does not increase the predictive power of the model (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 2.8\%$).

Adding Country of Domicile to the model increases the amount of variance the model can explain but it is still limited (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 6.1\%$). Scottish students have significantly lower odds of completing than RUK, EU students or students from outside the EU.

Running the model for UK students only to assess whether ethnicity and WP characteristics are effective predictors of completion increases the amount of variance that can be explained (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 8.6\%$) but this is still a small proportion. Scottish students are significantly less likely to complete than their RUK peers (odds ratio = 2.16). State school students are significantly less likely to complete than students who attended an independent school (odds ratio = 0.64) and students from a non-widening participation area are more likely to complete (odds ratio = 1.71).

In any further analysis the relationship between country of domicile and widening participation status should be examined. Whilst the models suggest that subject of study, demographics and prior attainment do have statistically significant effects on the likelihood of students completing their degrees the models do not explain a great deal of the variance. This suggests that other aspects of students' experiences have an impact on completion and this should be explored in subsequent analysis.

Which students achieve first class or upper second class degrees?

This analysis does not include completers or continuers – only those students who have gained an award. Unclassified Medical and Veterinary Medicine degrees are counted as a positive outcome in this metric.

Students in CSE are less likely to achieve a first or upper second class degree than students in either CAHSS or CMVM (82% compared to 86% in CAHSS and 97% in CMVM). Scottish, BME, male and Widening Participation students are all less likely to achieve first or upper second class degrees.

Modelling the likelihood of achieving a first or upper second class degree using tariff score as a proxy for prior attainment explains 2% of the variance in the model (Nagelkerke R^2). Increasing tariff score decreases the likelihood of not achieving a first or upper second class degree (odds ratio 0.997).

Using first year grade point average as a predictor rather than entry tariff significantly increases predictive power of the model (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 14.2\%$). Increasing GPA decreases the likelihood of not achieving a higher degree classification (odds ratio = 0.908). This indicates that experiences of teaching and learning at Edinburgh have more of an impact on student attainment than attainment prior to joining the university.

Subject of study is a significant factor in predicting the likelihood of students achieving a first or upper second class degree. Adding College into the model increases its predictive power (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 16.9\%$). Even when normalising for GPA, the College a student belongs to is a statistically significant predictor.

Just under 20% of the variance in attainment of higher degrees is explained when country of domicile is added into the model. The odds of a Scottish student not achieving a higher degree are half those of an RUK student (odds ratio = 0.482).

Running the model for UK domiciled students only to measure the impact of demographic and widening participation characteristics shows that being Scottish, having a Widening Participation

background and being from a BME background are significant predictors of a students' likelihood of achieving a higher degree. Independent school students are less likely to fail to achieve a higher degree than state school students (odds ratio = 0.648). White students are more likely to achieve a higher degree than their BME peers (odds ratio = 2.073).

Whilst demographic and widening participation characteristics can be shown to be significant predictors of student attainment, the model only accounts for a fifth of the variance. This indicates that other factors that have not been considered in this analysis contribute to student attainment and more research should be done to identify these.

Which students achieve a first class degree?

Again, this analysis does not include completers or continuers – only those students who have gained an award. Unclassified Medical and Veterinary Medicine degrees are not counted in the population for analysis.

Students in the College of Science and Engineering are more likely to achieve a first class degree than students in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (33% compared to 28%). There is no significant difference in the proportion of male and female students or students with a declared disability and students with no disability achieving a first class degree at the University of Edinburgh but students from widening participation backgrounds, Scottish students and BME students are significantly less likely to achieve a first.

Again, first year outcomes act as a better predictor of achieving a first class degree than tariff scores. Adding College into the analysis increases the level of variance that can be explained (Nagelkerke R^2 = 32.1%).

There are interesting differences in the factors that act as predictors for achieving the first compared to predictors of achieving a higher degree when the model is run for UK students and demographic and widening participation variables are examined. When normalised for first year achievement and subject school type is not a significant variable. Students from widening participation areas, BME students and Scottish students are significantly less likely to get a first class degree.

Conclusions and areas for further investigation

There are statistically significant differences in levels of attainment between different groups of students. Scottish students, students from BME backgrounds and students from Widening Participation backgrounds are less likely to complete their degrees and those who do qualify are less likely to achieve first or upper second class degrees even when data are normalised for subject of study and prior attainment.

Grade Point Average at the end of the first year appears to be a better predictor of the level of a final award than entry tariff. This implies that the experience of studying at Edinburgh is more influential than prior attainment.

Whilst statistically significant differences and predictors of attainment have been found; the models used in this analysis do not account for a large percentage of the differential levels of attainment at the University of Edinburgh. More work should be done to examine other factors that might be driving different levels of outcome between student groups. The impact of first year performance

indicates that there are different experiences from the first year that are shaping outcomes for students.

As a next step this analysis will be run at College level and the university wide data on completion and awards will be combined to see the extent to which this exacerbates the different rates of attainment.

Acknowledged gaps in this analysis include addressing programme transfer within the university, the time taken to complete and assessment type and these should be included in any subsequent work.

Appendix A

Descriptive statistics – cohort tracking dataset

Table 1 Student numbers by Sex (%)

	CAHSS	CSE	MVM	Edinburgh
Female	66.6%	43.3%	66.7%	59.3%
Male	33.4%	56.7%	33.3%	40.7%
Other ⁶	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
N	9873	5137	1264	16274

Table 2 Student numbers by Ethnicity (%)

	CAHSS	CSE	MVM	Edinburgh
BME	5.6%	6.3%	9.8%	6.1%
White	69.8%	57.0%	57.8%	64.8%
Unknown / Refused	0.5%	0.5%	1.3%	0.5%
Non-UK	24.2%	36.2%	31.1%	28.5%
N	9873	5137	1264	16274

Table 3 Student Numbers by disability

	CAHSS	CSE	MVM	Edinburgh
Declared disability	10.0%	7.3%	7.8%	9.0%
No known disability	90.0%	92.7%	92.2%	91.0%
N	9873	5137	1264	16274

Table 4 Student Numbers by Widening Participation Category (ACORN)

	CAHSS	CSE	MVM	Edinburgh
WP	6.4%	5.2%	2.4%	5.7%
Not WP	31.3%	28.1%	31.7%	30.3%
Unknown / unclassified	38.1%	30.6%	34.8%	35.4%
Non-UK	24.2%	36.2%	31.1%	28.5%
N	9873	5137	1264	16274

⁶ Two students so excluded from rest of analysis

Table 5 Student Numbers by Widening Participation Category (School type)

	CAHSS	CSE	MVM	Edinburgh
Independent School	23.0%	14.9%	22.8%	20.4%
State School	50.4%	46.6%	41.4%	48.5%
Non-UK	26.6%	38.5%	35.8%	31.1%
N	8982	4821	1099	14902

Table 6 Student Numbers by Widening Participation Category (Care Leaver)

	CAHSS	CSE	MVM	Edinburgh
Care leaver	0.8%	0.4%	0.2%	0.6%
Not a care leaver	74.0%	62.4%	67.6%	69.9%
Non-UK	24.2%	36.2%	31.1%	28.5%
Information refused	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%
Unknown	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%
N	9873	5137	1264	16274

Table 7 Student Numbers by Country of Domicile

	CAHSS	CSE	MVM	Edinburgh
Scotland	39.8%	38.7%	35.0%	39.1%
RUK	35.8%	25.0%	33.5%	32.2%
CI & IoM	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%
EU	5.8%	18.9%	3.4%	9.8%
Other country of domicile	5.8%	4.3%	3.6%	5.1%
USA	4.2%	1.8%	7.8%	3.7%
China	2.2%	5.7%	0.6%	3.2%
Malaysia	1.1%	2.4%	5.7%	1.8%
Hong Kong	1.8%	0.8%	1.7%	1.5%
Singapore	0.8%	0.9%	2.2%	1.0%
Canada	0.8%	0.2%	5.4%	1.0%
Norway	1.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.8%
India	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%	0.7%
N	9873	5137	1264	16274

Appendix B – Completion rates (cohorts tracked)

Students who transferred out are counted as non-completions

Table 8 - completion rate by College

	Completed	Did not complete	Continuing	N
CAHSS	83.3%	8.0%	8.7%	9873
CSE	72.5%	9.8%	17.7%	5137
MVM	79.9%	2.7%	17.4%	1264
Chi Sq = 367.6, df = 4, p > 0.05				

Table 9 - completion rate by Sex

	Completed	Did not complete	Continuing	N
Female	82.2%	7.4%	10.3%	9659
Male	75.9%	9.2%	14.9%	6631
Chi Sq = 100.6, df = 2, p > 0.05				

Table 10 - completion rate by Ethnicity

	Completed	Did not complete	Continuing	N
BME	75.3%	8.7%	16.0%	999
Non-UK	82.3%	6.1%	11.6%	4643
White	78.9%	9.0%	12.0%	10561
Chi Sq = 54.5, df = 4, p > 0.05				

Table 11 - completion rate by Disability

	Completed	Did not complete	Continuing	N
Declared disability	74.5%	10.5%	15.0%	1460
No known disability	80.2%	7.9%	11.9%	14832
Chi Sq is 27, df = 2, p > 0.05				

Table 12 - completion rate by WP (ACORN)

	Completed	Did not complete	Continuing	N
Non-UK	82.3%	6.1%	11.6%	4643
Not WP	80.7%	7.2%	12.1%	4943
Unknown / unclassified	78.6%	9.3%	12.2%	5778
WP	67.7%	16.5%	15.8%	928
Chi Sq is 150.2, df = 6, p > 0.05				

Table 13 -completion rate by WP (School type)

	Completed	Did not complete	Continuing	N
Independent School	86.7%	4.7%	8.6%	3036
Non-UK	82.3%	6.1%	11.6%	4643
State School	75.7%	10.4%	13.9%	7238
Chi Sq is 203.8, df = 4, $p > 0.05$				

Table 14 - completion rate by WP (Care Leaver)

	Completed	Did not complete	Continuing	N
Care leaver	76.8%	16.2%	7.1%	99
Non-UK	82.3%	6.1%	11.6%	4643
Not a care leaver	78.5%	9.0%	12.5%	11384
Chi Sq is 50.9, df = 4, $p > 0.05$				

Table 15 - completion rate by Domicile

	Completed	Did not complete	Continuing	N
RUK	84.6%	5.3%	10.1%	5273
Scotland	73.6%	12.0%	14.3%	6376
Other COD	82.3%	6.1%	11.6%	4643
Chi Sq is 287.6, df = 4, $p > 0.05$				

Appendix C – Completing with a First or Upper Second

Data includes Medicine and Veterinary Medicine students with unclassified degrees as a positive outcome. Students who did not complete or who have not yet completed have been removed from the dataset.

Table 16 - Higher awards by College

	First / Upper Second	Other degree	N
CAHSS	86%	14%	8229
CSE	82%	18%	3726
MVM	97%	3%	1010
Chi Sq is 146.2, df = 2, $p > 0.05$			

Table 17 - Higher awards by Sex

	First / Upper Second	Other degree	N
Female	88%	12%	7941
Male	82%	18%	5034
Chi Sq is 70, df = 1, $p > 0.05$			

Table 18 - Higher awards by Ethnicity

	First / Upper Second	Other degree	N
BME	80%	20%	752
Non-UK	83%	17%	3820
White	87%	13%	8337
Chi Sq is 59.7, df = 2, $p > 0.05$			

Table 19 - Higher awards by Disability

	First / Upper Second	Other degree	N
Declared disability	85%	15%	1087
No known disability	86%	14%	11889
Chi Sq is 0.023, df = 1, $p < 0.05$			

Table 20 - Higher awards by WP (ACORN)

	First / Upper Second	Other degree	N
Non-UK	83%	17%	3820
Not WP	88%	12%	3989
Unknown / unclassified	87%	13%	4539
WP	76%	24%	628
Chi Sq is 93.5, df = 3, $p > 0.05$			

Table 21 - Higher awards by WP (School type)

	First / Upper Second	Other degree	N
Independent School	92%	8%	2633
Non-UK	83%	17%	3820
State School	85%	15%	5480
Chi Sq is 128, df = 2, $p > 0.05$			

Table 22 - Higher awards by WP (Care Leaver)

	First / Upper Second	Other degree	N
Care leaver	79%	21%	76
Non-UK	83%	17%	3820
Not a care leaver	87%	13%	8942
Chi Sq is 34.9, df = 2, $p > 0.05$			

Table 23 - Higher awards by Domicile

	First / Upper Second	Other degree	N
RUK	91.8%	8.2%	4129
Scotland	80.1%	19.9%	4339
Other COD	81.4%	18.6%	3520
Chi Sq is 260.5, df = 2, $p > 0.05$			

Appendix D – Completing with a First class degree

Medicine and Veterinary medicine students have been excluded from the dataset as have students who did not complete or who have yet to finish.

Table 24 - Firsts by College

	First	Other degree	N
CAHSS	28%	72%	8229
CSE	33%	67%	3726
MVM	23%	77%	22
Chi Sq is 34.6, df = 2, $p > 0.05$			

Table 25 - Firsts by Sex

	First	Other degree	N
Female	30%	70%	7298
Male	29%	71%	4689
Chi Sq is 1.6, df = 1, $p < 0.05$			

Table 26 - Firsts by Ethnicity

	First	Other degree	N
BME	24%	76%	654
Non-UK	33%	67%	3520
White	28%	72%	7763
Chi Sq is 39.3, df = 2, $p > 0.05$			

Table 27 - Firsts by Disability

	First	Other degree	N
Declared disability	27%	73%	1018
No known disability	30%	70%	10970
Chi Sq is 3.2, df = 1, $p < 0.05$			

Table 28 - Firsts by WP (ACORN)

	First	Other degree	N
Non-UK	33%	67%	3520
Not WP	29%	71%	3682
Unknown / unclassified	29%	71%	4179
WP	17%	83%	607
Chi Sq is 67, df = 3, $p > 0.05$			

Table 29 - Firsts by WP (School Type)

	First	Other degree	N
Independent School	31%	69%	2424
Non-UK	33%	67%	3520
State School	26%	74%	5130
Chi Sq is 50, df = 2, $p > 0.05$			

Table 30 - Firsts by WP (Care Leaver)

	First	Other degree	N
Care leaver	16%	84%	74
Non-UK	33%	67%	3520
Not a care leaver	28%	72%	8268
Chi Sq is 35.9, df = 2, $p > 0.05$			

Table 31 - Firsts by Domicile

	First	Other degree	N
RUK	34.5%	65.5%	4129
Scotland	21.9%	78.1%	4339
Other COD	33.2%	66.8%	3520
Chi Sq is 192.4, df = 2, $p > 0.05$			

Appendix E – Model Outputs

Completion – Tariff Score only

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)
(Intercept)	-1.01	0.12	8.56	<2e-16 ***
Tariff score	0.00	0.00	-11.97	<2e-16 ***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Model Chi Sq - 138.96, df = 1

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R² 0.02

Cox and Snell R² 0.01

Nagelkerke R² 0.02

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.03	0.98
(Intercept)	0.36	0.29	0.46
Tariff score	1.00	1.00	1.00

Completion – Tariff Score and College

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)
(Intercept)	-1.09	0.12	-9.18	< 2e-16 ***
Tariff score	0.00	0.00	-11.60	<2e-16 ***
CSE vs CAHSS	0.31	0.06	5.01	5.53e-07 ***
CMVM vs CAHSS	-0.56	0.14	-4.11	3.94e-05 ***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Model Chi Sq – 195.62, df = 3

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R² 0.02

Cox and Snell R² 0.01

Nagelkerke R² 0.03

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.03	0.98
(Intercept)	0.34	0.26	0.42
Tariff score	1.00	1.00	1.00
CSE vs CAHSS	1.36	1.21	1.53
CMVM vs CAHSS	0.57	0.43	0.74

Completion – Tariff Score, College and Domicile

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	-0.55	0.12	-4.48	0.00	***
Tariff score	0.00	0.00	-12.51	2.29e-08	***
CSE vs CAHSS	0.35	0.06	5.59	2.29e-08	***
CMVM vs CAHSS	-0.50	0.14	-3.63	0.00	***
EU vs Scotland	-1.11	0.13	-8.62	2.29e-08	***
Other vs Scotland	-0.64	0.08	-7.75	9.11e-15	***
RUK vs Scotland	-0.95	0.07	-12.94	2.29e-08	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

CHiSq = 432.7, df = 6L

Pseudo R^2 for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R^2 0.05

Cox and Snell R^2 0.03

Nagelkerke R^2 0.06

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.03	0.98
(Intercept)	0.58	0.45	0.73
Tariff score	1.00	1.00	1.00
CSE vs CAHSS	1.42	1.26	1.61
CMVM vs CAHSS	0.61	0.46	0.79
EU vs Scotland	0.33	0.26	0.42
Other vs Scotland	0.53	0.45	0.62
RUK vs Scotland	0.39	0.33	0.45

Completion – UK only with WP and demographic variables

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	-1.33	0.16	-8.26	2.29e-08	***
Tariff score	0.00	0.00	-11.92	2.29e-08	***
CSE vs CAHSS	0.52	0.07	7.01	2.29e-08	***
CMVM vs CAHSS	-0.57	0.18	-3.17	0.00	**
RUK vs Scotland	0.77	0.08	9.49	2.29e-08	***
Acorn unknown vs Not WP	0.27	0.07	3.64	0.00	***
Acorn WP vs Not WP	0.53	0.11	4.78	0.00	***
Independent School vs State	-0.45	0.10	-4.45	0.00	***
Unknown School vs State	0.00	0.12	0.00	1.00	
BME vs White	0.01	0.13	0.06	0.96	
Unknown ethnicity vs White	-0.36	0.48	-0.74	0.46	

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Chi Sq = 442.66, df = 10L

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R ²	0.07
Cox and Snell R ²	0.04
Nagelkerke R ²	0.09

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.03	0.98
(Intercept)	0.27	0.19	0.36
Tariff score	1.00	1.00	1.00
CSE vs CAHSS	1.68	1.45	1.93
CMVM vs CAHSS	0.56	0.39	0.79
RUK vs Scotland	2.16	1.85	2.54
Acorn unknown vs Not WP	1.31	1.13	1.52
Acorn WP vs Not WP	1.71	1.37	2.12
Independent School vs State	0.64	0.52	0.77
Unknown School vs State	1.00	0.78	1.26
BME vs White	1.01	0.78	1.28
Unknown ethnicity vs White	0.70	0.24	1.64

Firsts / Upper Second class awards – Tariff only

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	-0.402	0.110	-3.651	0.000	***
Tariff score	-0.003	0.000	-12.540	0.000	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Chi Sq = 158.0, df = 1

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R ²	0.015
Cox and Snell R ²	0.012
Nagelkerke R ²	0.022

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.025	0.975
(Intercept)	0.669	0.539	0.830
Tariff score	0.997	0.997	0.998

Firsts / Upper Second class awards – GPA

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	4.110	0.195	21.120	<2e-16	***
GPA	-0.097	0.003	-29.460	<2e-16	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Chi Sq = 158.0, df = 1

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R² 0.101

Cox and Snell R² 0.080

Nagelkerke R² 0.142

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.025	0.975
(Intercept)	60.948	41.716	89.454
GPA	0.908	0.902	0.913

Firsts / Upper Second class awards – GPA and College

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	4.343	0.199	21.830	<2e-16	***
GPA	-0.104	0.003	-30.330	<2e-16	***
CSE vs CAHSS	0.790	0.060	13.280	<2e-16	***
CMVM vs CAHSS	-0.583	0.143	-4.080	0.000	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Chi sq = 1293.63, df = 3

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R² 0.121

Cox and Snell R² 0.095

Nagelkerke R² 0.169

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.025	0.975
(Intercept)	76.934	52.213	113.880
GPA	0.901	0.895	0.907
CSE vs CAHSS	2.204	1.961	2.477
CMVM vs CAHSS	0.558	0.418	0.732

Firsts / Upper Second class awards – GPA, College and Domicile

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	4.245	0.201	21.109	<2e-16	***
GPA	-0.100	0.004	-28.489	<2e-16	***
CSE vs CAHSS	0.743	0.061	12.243	<2e-16	***
CMVM vs CAHSS	-0.702	0.144	-4.865	0.000	***
EU vs Scotland	-0.034	0.108	-0.319	0.750	
Non-EU domicile vs Scotland	0.303	0.066	4.558	0.000	***
RUK vs Scotland	-0.730	0.071	-10.339	<2e-16	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Chi Sq = 1490, df = 6

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R ²	0.139
Cox and Snell R ²	0.109
Nagelkerke R ²	0.193

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.025	0.975
(Intercept)	69.757	47.140	103.701
GPA	0.905	0.899	0.911
CSE vs CAHSS	2.103	1.866	2.368
CMVM vs CAHSS	0.496	0.370	0.652
EU vs Scotland	0.966	0.780	1.190
Non-EU domicile vs Scotland	1.354	1.188	1.542
RUK vs Scotland	0.482	0.419	0.553

Firsts / Upper Second class awards – UK only including WP and demographic variables

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	3.920	0.268	14.646	< 2e-16	***
GPA	-0.098	0.005	-21.298	< 2e-16	***
CSE vs CAHSS	0.758	0.077	9.854	< 2e-16	***
CMVM vs CAHSS	-0.508	0.183	-2.780	0.005	**
RUK vs Scotland	-0.631	0.078	-8.051	0.000	***
Independent vs State school	-0.434	0.093	-4.668	0.000	***
Unknown vs State school	0.899	0.109	8.227	< 2e-16	***
Acorn unknown vs not WP	0.139	0.072	1.932	0.053	.
Acorn WP vs not WP	0.467	0.117	3.996	0.000	***
BME vs White	0.729	0.112	6.487	0.000	***

Unknown ethnicity vs White 0.236 0.495 0.477 0.633

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Chi Sq = 1015, df = 10

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R² 0.147

Cox and Snell R² 0.109

Nagelkerke R² 0.200

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.025	0.975
(Intercept)	50.423	29.933	85.487
GPA	0.907	0.898	0.915
CSE vs CAHSS	2.134	1.834	2.480
CMVM vs CAHSS	0.602	0.414	0.850
RUK vs Scotland	0.532	0.456	0.620
Independent vs State school	0.648	0.539	0.776
Unknown vs State school	2.457	1.980	3.039
Acorn unknown vs not WP	1.149	0.998	1.323
Acorn WP vs not WP	1.595	1.266	2.002
BME vs White	2.073	1.659	2.577
Unknown ethnicity vs White	1.266	0.423	3.052

Firsts – Tariff only

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	2.463	0.102	24.250	<2e-16	***
Tariff score	-0.003	0.000	-16.230	<2e-16	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Chi Sq = 277.90, df = 1L

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R² 0.019

Cox and Snell R² 0.023

Nagelkerke R² 0.033

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.025	0.975
(Intercept)	11.742	9.632	14.343
Tariff score	0.997	0.996	0.997

Firsts – GPA only

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	10.382	0.220	47.260	<2e-16	***
GPA	-0.148	0.003	-44.190	<2e-16	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Chi Sq = 2873.11, df = 1

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R² 0.198

Cox and Snell R² 0.213

Nagelkerke R² 0.303

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.025	0.975
(Intercept)	32268.520	21059.880	49827.030
GPA	0.862	0.857	0.868

Firsts – GPA and College

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	11.231	0.236	47.663	< 2e-16	***
GPA	-0.164	0.004	-44.741	< 2e-16	***
CSE vs CAHSS	0.700	0.056	12.460	< 2e-16	***
CMVM vs CAHSS	1.117	0.161	6.933	0.000	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

CHiSq = 3065.23, df = 3

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R² 0.211

Cox and Snell R² 0.226

Nagelkerke R² 0.321

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.025	0.975
(Intercept)	75417.020	47723.990	120199.800
GPA	0.848	0.842	0.854
CSE vs CAHSS	2.013	1.805	2.249
CMVM vs CAHSS	3.055	2.240	4.215

Firsts – GPA, College and Domicile

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	11.249	0.242	46.564	< 2e-16	***
GPA	-0.164	0.004	-42.869	< 2e-16	***
CSE vs CAHSS	0.665	0.057	11.685	< 2e-16	***
CMVM vs CAHSS	1.116	0.162	6.901	0.000	***

EU vs Scotland	-0.178	0.083	-2.152	0.031	*
Non-EU vs Scotland	0.389	0.072	5.420	0.000	***
RUK vs Scotland	-0.291	0.055	-5.238	0.000	***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

CHiSq = 1490, df = 10

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R² 0.218

Cox and Snell R² 0.233

Nagelkerke R² 0.331

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
		0.025	0.975
(Intercept)	76839.930	48060.500	123911.200
GPA	0.849	0.843	0.855
CSE vs CAHSS	1.945	1.740	2.176
CMVM vs CAHSS	3.051	2.235	4.214
EU vs Scotland	0.837	0.712	0.985
Non-EU vs Scotland	1.475	1.282	1.699
RUK vs Scotland	0.748	0.671	0.834

Firsts – UK only including WP and demographic variables

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	
(Intercept)	11.457	0.310	36.910	< 2e-16	***
GPA	-0.168	0.005	-34.399	< 2e-16	***
CSE vs CAHSS	0.748	0.072	10.375	< 2e-16	***
CMVM vs CAHSS	1.171	0.212	5.516	0.000	***
RUK vs Scotland	-0.241	0.061	-3.954	0.000	***
Independent vs State school	-0.065	0.066	-0.986	0.324	
Unknown vs State school	0.220	0.107	2.052	0.040	*
Acorn unknown vs not WP	-0.003	0.058	-0.048	0.961	
Acorn WP vs not WP	0.373	0.132	2.833	0.005	**
BME vs White	0.417	0.113	3.692	0.000	***
Unknown ethnicity vs White	-0.103	0.356	-0.290	0.772	

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Chi Sq = 1877, df = 10

Pseudo R² for logistic regression

Hosmer and Lemeshow R² 0.195

Cox and Snell R² 0.206

Nagelkerke R² 0.297

	Odds ratio	Confidence intervals	
(Intercept)	94586.850	51809.170	174946.500

GPA	0.845	0.837	0.853
CSE vs CAHSS	2.113	1.836	2.436
CMVM vs CAHSS	3.225	2.151	4.952
RUK vs Scotland	0.786	0.698	0.886
Independent vs State school	0.937	0.824	1.066
Unknown vs State school	1.246	1.012	1.541
Acorn unknown vs not WP	0.997	0.890	1.117
Acorn WP vs not WP	1.453	1.126	1.888
BME vs White	1.517	1.219	1.898
Unknown ethnicity vs White	0.902	0.453	1.846

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting – Minor Changes

Description of paper

1. Proposals for minor changes to the Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy and accompanying documentation.

Action requested / recommendation

2. To approve the proposed minor changes and discuss: how the Personal Tutor systems should be reflected upon through School annual quality reports for 2019/20; whether the requirement for Colleges to provide benchmarked data for schools should be removed; and the guidance added to the School annual quality report template to support reflection on postgraduate research provision.

Background and context

3. The proposed changes are being made in response to feedback, including ensuring that postgraduate research provision is reflected upon appropriately, industrial action, and the removal of the Personal Tutor question from national surveys.

Discussion

4. The School annual quality report template asks for a reflection on [the] “Current institutional priority: performance indicator of 80% student satisfaction with personal tutoring.” Reflection was supported by the inclusion of the question “I am satisfied with the support provided by my Personal Tutor” in the National Student Survey and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey. This question has been removed from both surveys in 2020. Additionally, there is a review of Student Support and the Personal Tutor system underway.

The Committee is asked to discuss how the Personal Tutor system should be reflected upon through annual monitoring in School annual quality reports for 2019/20.

5. The Policy states that “During the year college quality committees will support schools’ preparations for annual reporting by: providing and discussing college benchmarked data for schools’ reflections on performance, including degree classification, college level external examiners report themes, and student surveys data. Equality and diversity aspects will be highlighted where available.” In response to feedback from Schools, who feel that comparison to other Schools and against the College benchmark is not useful, colleagues in College Offices have suggested that this requirement is removed. As part of the PowerBI dashboards, Schools can benchmark undergraduate awards and student numbers against other UK providers (split by Russell Group member and non-member filters). Additionally, all Annual Monitoring Data PowerBI reports have

demographic tabs which present available information on, for example: sex, disability, ethnicity, domicile, etc.

The Committee is asked to discuss the request to remove this requirement, particularly in the context of data available through the Annual Monitoring Data PowerBI reports.

6. The challenge of ensuring postgraduate research provision is adequately reflected in annual monitoring has been identified by the Sub Group that reviews School annual quality reports. The topic was discussed at the School Directors of Quality meeting in October 2019. Proposed guidance, which has been discussed with College Deans of Quality and College quality contacts, has been added into the School annual quality report template.

The Committee is asked to discuss and approve the proposed guidance and the availability of data to support reflections.

7. Prompts have been added into the School annual quality report and annual programme monitoring templates in line with those added during the last period of industrial action.
8. Changes are proposed to how good practice from School annual quality reports is identified to reflect current practice.
9. Changes are proposed to the suggested word lengths for sections of the School annual quality report template based an analysis of the length of the three reports that were commended in 2019:

Section	Current suggested word length	Average of the three commended reports	Change
1 progress against actions	500	570	Up to 600
2 what has worked well	500	617	Up to 600
3 developments worth sharing	200	158	None
4 areas requiring attention/further development	300	298	None
5 actions planned and requested	300	306	None

10. In consultation with Student Analytics and Insights, the Data to Support Annual Quality Processes will undergo minor updates prior to a full update to reflect

changes to the Annual Monitoring Data PowerBI reports being made in June to support the next cycle.

11. The opportunity has again been taken to simplify language and shorten documentation wherever possible.

Resource implications

12. There are no resource implications.

Risk management

13. There are risks associated with ineffective monitoring, review and reporting.

Equality & diversity

14. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the process. The only proposed change which could have an equality impact is the removal of the requirement for Colleges to provide benchmarked data highlighting equality and diversity aspects where available. The Committee should consider this in light of the equality and diversity data available on the PowerBI dashboard reports.

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

15. Academic Services will inform key stakeholders when the updated policy and templates are available online. Work to support Schools with the annual monitoring, review and reporting processes continues across the academic year.

Author

Nichola Kett, Academic Services
21 February 2020

Freedom of Information

Open

Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Purpose of Policy

To outline the University's approach to annual monitoring, review and reporting.

Overview

Describes the University's annual monitoring, review and reporting processes.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

Applicable to all credit-bearing provision.

Contact Officer

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Document control

Dates	Approved: 08.09.16	Starts: 08.09.16	Equality impact assessment: 25.05.16	Amendments: 27.02.2019	Next Review: 2022/23
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Approving authority

Senate Quality Assurance Committee
This Policy was created from the University Quality Framework Review Proposals for Consultation which was approved on 26.05.16

Consultation undertaken

Schools, Colleges, Senate Quality Assurance Committee

Section responsible for policy maintenance & review

Academic Services

Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

[Course Enhancement Questionnaire Policy](#)

UK Quality Code

Monitoring and Evaluation

Policies superseded by this policy

Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 2138.

Keywords

Annual monitoring, review, reporting

Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy



Policy

This document sets out the quality assurance processes for annual monitoring, review and reporting in place across all credit-bearing provision in the University. The University is responsible for its academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. It is committed to reflecting on and systematically reviewing its provision and taking action to enhance it. The University is also answerable to a number of external bodies for the quality of its provision.

The University's quality framework is thus informed by the requirements of:

- The Scottish Funding Council
- The Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code
- Expectations of external professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)

The University's management of its academic standards and quality of the student experience is reviewed periodically by the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland) Enhancement-led Institutional Review method.

Annual Programme Monitoring

WHAT: Schools carry out annual programme monitoring, using a process which meets both local contexts and institution-wide requirements, considering a standard set of data and reporting using a standard [template](#)

WHEN: All programmes must be monitored annually and reports provided to the School Director of Quality in time to inform the preparation of the School annual quality report (due in late August each year).

Monitoring and review of provision is ongoing throughout the year through formal evidence-based discussion of student performance and progression data, teaching review meetings, taught and research programme monitoring, consideration of external examiner reports and student feedback. These inform the school annual quality report.

When conducting the annual programme monitoring process, Schools consider the sustainability of their courses and programmes (e.g. whether they are recruiting appropriately, whether any staffing issues need attention) and the strategic relationship between the programmes and the School's wider portfolio. As part of this, either via the annual quality review process or the annual planning process, Schools should explore those courses with student cohorts of less than 10 over the last three years and consider whether they remain financially sustainable and / or have a clear strategic rationale. In addition, three years after the introduction of a new programme, Schools revisit the original business case (including the Fees Strategy Group Programme Costing Template), revisit costings to ensure they remain appropriate, and review whether the programme is on track to be financially sustainable. Schools should have the flexibility to look at individual programmes separately, or to review their viability as part of a broader portfolio. This should either be done within the context of the annual quality monitoring processes or via an alternate School process.

Operational outline:

- Schools will decide on the optimum clustering of their programmes for Annual Programme Monitoring (i.e. single and/or joint honours programmes, clusters of similar programmes), to enable effective evaluation and reflection whilst avoiding duplication of effort. Annual Programme Monitoring does not require a separate process and can take place in existing

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meetings, such as undergraduate/postgraduate/learning and teaching committees, or small groupings of programme directors and other relevant staff.

- **Schools** will consider the data listed in [Data to Support Annual Quality Processes](#) to support their reflection in a way that is meaningful to them.
- Annual Programme Monitoring will include consideration of course monitoring including both core and elective courses relating to the programme(s). Credit-bearing courses offered by a school which do not form a core part of a single programme (e.g. common courses, stand-alone courses taught by staff from several schools) and courses taken by large numbers of students from outwith the programme must also be reviewed annually within the Annual Programme Monitoring process. Stand-alone courses may be grouped together in a meaningful way (to be determined by the school) and an annual programme monitoring form completed for each group.
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), although not credit bearing, should be subject to appropriate course-level monitoring. Consideration should be given to aspects such as overall numbers, engagement, performance on activities, completion and student feedback. School Directors of Quality should be made aware of the outcomes of the monitoring of MOOCs in time to inform the preparation of the School annual quality report (due in late August each year).
- **Schools** can give consideration down to course level as relevant to the local context, however reporting will be at the level of the programme or programme clusters.
- Annual Programme Monitoring can feed in to school annual and strategic planning.
- **Colleges** will support schools and provide appropriate opportunities as necessary for briefing and support, with a particular emphasis on delivering an effective, streamlined approach.
- The effectiveness of Annual Programme Monitoring arrangements will be evaluated in internal periodic reviews.

School Annual Quality Report

WHAT: Schools report annually to Senate Quality Assurance Committee, considering a standard set of data and reporting using a standard [template](#)

WHEN: By late-August annually. Date will be confirmed by Academic Services.

Operational Outline:

The school annual quality report draws on the school's ongoing processes for review and reflection on its provision. All reflections should be evidence-based.

- The template makes provision for reporting on key institutional priorities.
- The annual reflection will draw on the school's annual monitoring and review processes where student performance and course-related issues are discussed, including annual programme monitoring based on the University template, Boards of Examiners' discussions, annual teaching review and programme review meetings.
- Themes identified in the annual report should contribute to the learning, teaching and research student experience element of the school annual plan.
- Schools will maintain a School quality model which is a description of how annual monitoring, review and reporting operates. The description states when and how the processes are carried out, and roles and responsibilities. If changes are made to the School quality model an updated copy should be submitted with the completed annual quality report in August. The process description will support continuity between School Director of Quality

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appointments.

- The effectiveness of the school's monitoring and review arrangements will be evaluated as part of ~~teaching/postgraduate programme~~ internal periodic reviews.

Timing

Quality reporting will be able to contribute to the learning, teaching and research student experience element of the school annual plan. The timescale means that issues arising after the reporting deadline will be reflected on in the next annual report, however, action to resolve urgent issues at all levels of provision should take place at the earliest possible stage.

The data available at the time of review in the [Data to Support Annual Quality Processes](#) should be considered. The outcome of resits and of taught postgraduate dissertations will be considered by schools in their next annual report. Postgraduate research issues which miss the summer reporting period can likewise be included in the next annual report. The majority of boards of examiners will have met by the time the annual report is being prepared and External examiners' views will be available through the minutes of Boards of Examiners meetings: again the emphasis should be on reporting major issues, commendations relating to positive or innovative academic practice, or significant recommendations for action.

Student engagement with quality processes continues throughout the academic year, with issues identified during semester time from student-staff liaison committees or equivalent, student surveys and other mechanisms feeding into the school annual quality report. The school annual quality report will identify themes and actions being taken by the school which may be discussed in student-staff liaison committees (or equivalent meetings) at the start of the following academic year.

What Happens Next

School annual quality reports will be considered by Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), which will focus on recommendations for Schools to take forward, with support from colleges as appropriate.

Operational outline:

- Schools complete their annual quality reports by late August and ~~for CAHSS and CSE submit them using the School and Programme Quality System OR for CMVM send them to Academic Services copied to the college office. and the college dean for quality.~~
- ~~Following receipt of the reports, t~~he Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance will convene a meeting of a sub group of the college deans and the head of quality assurance and enhancement, Academic Services, to review the reports and prepare recommendations for consideration by SQAC at its first meeting in September. This consideration will also inform the University's annual report to the Scottish Funding Council, due at the end of September.
- ~~The sub group will identify good practice examples from reports to share across the University.~~
- College quality committees will also consider the report of the sub group and identify good practice for sharing.
- SQAC will be responsible for tracking schools' actions planned and actions in response to SQAC's recommendations through schools reporting in their next annual quality report, and for reporting to schools on actions taken in response to issues they have raised for attention

Commented [KN1]: To be confirmed if the College of Science and Engineering will be using SPSQ.

Commented [KN2]: Updated to reflect current practice.

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at University level. Colleges will similarly report to schools on actions raised for attention at college level.

College Annual Quality Report

WHAT: Colleges report annually to SQAC using a standard [template](#)

WHEN: November (annually). Date will be confirmed by Academic Services.

Operational outline:

- College quality committees (or equivalent) will consider school annual quality reports and identify themes.
- Colleges will report annually to the SQAC meeting in November/December.

College Role in Annual Reporting and Quality Processes

Operational outline:

- Colleges will continue proactively to support schools in taking forward actions from annual reporting, including where colleges identify clustering of issues across schools where action would be more effective on a college-wide basis.
- Colleges will monitor Annual Programme Monitoring to ensure full coverage.
- ~~In the first meeting of semester 1 following the August school quality report, college quality committees will identify good practice from school reports to share across the University.~~
- During the year college quality committees will support schools' preparations for annual reporting by: providing and discussing college benchmarked data for schools' reflections on performance, including degree classification, college level external examiners report themes, and student surveys data. Equality and diversity aspects will be highlighted where available.
- Colleges will support and develop student engagement in quality processes.
- College committees will support discussion and sharing of good practice.

20~~2019~~^{27 August-February}

The University of Edinburgh

School Annual Quality Report

School of

Academic Year 2019/20

The ~~school annual quality~~ report should be a **concise report informed by** evaluation of the key themes from the school's monitoring and review of ~~the student learning and the student~~ experience over the past year. The **key** themes should be based on **both quantitative and qualitative** evidence from the **range of available Data to Support Annual Quality Processes** and ~~on discussions through in the school processes and committees of student performance and programme and course issues. A key focus of the report should be on actions already taken and planned in response to the issues identified.~~ The report should cover all **taught and research** credit-bearing provision (including collaborative **programmes provision and CPD**), as well as MOOCs. Schools are encouraged to use **bullet point** format. **For CAHSS and CSE r** Reports should be **submitted using the School and Programme Quality System OR for CMVM** sent to Academic Services copied to the college office by Friday 21~~3~~ August 2020~~19~~.

Reflect on **Data to Support Annual Quality Processes** and report by exception. Reflect upon how actions taken and planned reflect the student voice and include a narrative on postgraduate research provision[#].

There are three specific areas that require reflection. Please report in the appropriate sections (2, 3, 4 and/or 5) on:

- 1) The patterns of **degree classification outcomes**, including reasons for these patterns and actions taken to address any inappropriate patterns; and
- 2) Current institutional priority: performance indicator of 80% student satisfaction with **personal tutoring**; and
- 3) ~~Whether the disruption caused by the industrial action 2017/18 has led to any ongoing issues regarding the quality of the provision and student outcomes, and, if so, how this has been mitigated.~~
Whether the disruption caused by the 2019/20 industrial action has led to any issues regarding the quality of the provision, and, if so, how this has been mitigated.

Commented [KN1]: The Committee to discuss how the Personal Tutor system should be reflected upon through annual monitoring for reporting on 2019/20.

Author:

Contributors:

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|---|
| 1. Progress with (see Aide Memoir from Academic Services):
—actions planned in last year's report; and
• any recommendations from last year's Senate Quality Assurance Committee sub group meeting |
|---|

Suggested word length: 500-600 words

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| 2. What has worked well throughout the year? |
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Suggested word length: 500-600 words

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

Identify innovative good practice examples with the potential to be applicable to the wider University that are having a demonstrable positive impact on the student learning experience. Around 1-3 examples.

Suggested word length: 200 words

4. Any areas identified requiring attention/further development?

Suggested word length: 300 words

5. Actions planned and requested

Suggested word length: 300 words (sections A and B)

Section A

- Actions planned by the school based on the analysis in sections 1-4.

Section B

These should be actions that the Schools cannot progress themselves, that are of an appropriately high level and importance to be considered by the College or University, and that are informed by the above reflections. Around 1-3 key actions (where appropriate) under each bullet point.

- Actions requested of the college based on the analysis in sections 1-4.
- Actions requested of the University based on the analysis in sections 1-4.

Guidance

- **Scope:** the report covers all taught and research credit-bearing provision including collaborative provision and credit-bearing CPD, as well as MOOCs. For ease of reporting, each section may be split into different provision into taught and research as appropriate related themes.
- **Postgraduate research provision:** Reporting on research provision should be at school or programme level (e.g. training, performance) rather than by at individual student level. Reflect on (as appropriate): training (e.g. responsible innovation, ethics, EDI) including cohort-based training; collaborations; themes from examiner comments after assessment (Part III) forms; completion and outcomes of annual progression reviews.
- **Data sources:** See the Data to Support Annual Quality Processes document for sources of data to be considered. For UG resits, PGT progression and dissertation outcome data and PGR progression and completion data, the most recently available results should be used. During the year College quality committees will support schools' preparations for annual reporting by: providing and discussing college benchmarked data for schools' reflections on performance, including degree classification, college level external examiners report themes, and student surveys data. Equality and diversity aspects will be highlighted where available. Schools should note in their annual reports any enhancements that could be made to data for quality purposes.
- **External Examiners' comments:** reporting on external examiners' comments in the school annual report should be by exception should focus on themes rather than a summary of all comments, i.e. where external

Commented [KN2]: Committee to discuss removing this requirement.

examiners raise substantial issues of good/innovative practice or areas for development. [College quality committees will discuss an analysis of external examiner themes annually.](#)

- **School quality model:** This is a description of how annual monitoring, review and reporting operates within the School. The description states when and how the processes are carried out and roles and responsibilities. If changes are made to the School quality model an updated copy should be submitted with the completed report.

[December-February 2020~~18~~](#)

The University of Edinburgh
Annual Programme Monitoring

- Annual programme monitoring is part of the University's quality framework. All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes should be formally monitored every year to reflect on:
 - the learning opportunities students have experienced
 - student performance and academic standards
 - continuing sustainability (eg whether they are recruiting appropriately, whether the business case remains appropriate, whether any staffing issues need attention), currency and relevance
- Enhancements of the student learning experience are identified and implemented through programme monitoring
- Annual programme monitoring supports college and school planning.

The process

- This template contains the minimum features for all programme monitoring across the University. Schools may add to it if they wish, while ensuring that additions are not burdensome/duplicate existing processes.
- All programmes must be monitored annually within the academic year covered by the report. All credit-bearing [taught and research](#) provision resulting in an award by the University must be monitored (including collaborative provision [and CPD](#)), as well as MOOCs. Programme monitoring can be part of a continuous engagement by staff and students throughout the academic year or part of a formal event at a particular time of the year. There is no set format for an event: it may be a small meeting of the programme director and other relevant colleagues, or it may be part of a scheduled meeting, e.g. a teaching committee.
- Schools will decide on the optimum clustering of their programmes for Annual Programme Monitoring, to enable effective evaluation and reflection whilst avoiding duplication of effort. The template may be used to report on clusters of programmes. Each section may be broken down into [different taught and research](#) provision if wished. Reporting on research provision should be at the programme level (e.g. training, performance) rather than [at](#) individual student-level.
- Annual Programme Monitoring will include consideration of course monitoring including both core and elective courses relating to the programme(s). Credit-bearing courses offered by a school which do not form a core part of a single programme (e.g. common courses, stand-alone courses taught by staff from several schools) and courses taken by large numbers of students from outwith the programme must also be reviewed annually within the Annual Programme Monitoring process. Stand-alone courses may be grouped together in a meaningful way (to be determined by the school) and an annual programme monitoring form completed for each group.
- Programme monitoring must be evidence-based. See the [Data to Support Annual Quality Processes](#) document for sources of data to be considered. [For UG resits, PGT progression and dissertation outcome data and PGR progression and completion data, the most recently available results should be used.](#) During the year college quality committees will support schools' preparations for annual reporting by providing and discussing college benchmarked data for schools' reflections on performance, including degree classification, college level external examiners report themes, and student surveys data. Equality and diversity aspects will be highlighted where available.
- There is no set time to monitor and review a programme but there must be a formal record showing that a programme has been monitored and reviewed and relevant action taken. The key outcomes from Annual Programme Monitoring should inform school annual quality reporting (due annually in late August) and strategic planning and schools should devise their own mechanisms for ensuring this. The School Director of Quality should receive a copy of

Commented [KN1]: Amend as appropriate following discussion at the Committee.

completed Annual Programme Monitoring reports in order to inform the School annual quality report.

Annual Programme Monitoring Template

Programme/s
Academic year
Reviewed by (e.g. programme director + state other colleagues involved; teaching committee) + contact for any queries
Date of review
<p>Areas for Reflection</p> <p>Marketing/recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is marketing appropriate? • Is the programme/programme cluster sustainable and recruiting appropriately? <p>Curriculum design, learning and teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the programme/programme cluster promote the achievement of learning outcomes appropriately? • Do the courses relate sufficiently well to the overall aims of the programme/s? Are there any gaps in course provision in relation to programme aims? • Are the assessment types appropriate? • Reflect on feedback for the programme/programme cluster. Is feedback being provided to students within 15 working days or in time to be of use in subsequent assessments (whichever is sooner)? Do students have at least one formative feedback or feed-forward event for each course? • How does the programme/programme cluster support student employability or, for those already in employment, enhance their chances of career progression? • Is the learning environment inclusive? Are all mainstreamed adjustments in place? • If placements are used, are they appropriate and working well? <p>Student performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the student performance as expected and in line with benchmarks? • Are there any courses or aspects of the programme/programme cluster where student performance has not been as expected? • Are there any notable trends/differences across years or by student characteristics? <p>Student voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has feedback on the programme/programme cluster been gathered through mid-course feedback (MCF) and course enhancement questionnaires (CEQs)? • What are the themes arising from student feedback mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sources of data include: CEQs, student feedback through Student-Staff Liaison Committees, National Student Survey, Postgraduate Taught/Research Experience Survey ▪ Other student voice mechanisms may include: MCF and programme-level student representatives • How has the feedback loop to all students been closed? <p>Learning resources and staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are resources/facilities/equipment adequate? • Are there any staffing issues that need attention? <p>Relationship to the wider school portfolio/college/university strategy?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the strategic purpose of the programme/programme cluster within the wider portfolio? • Does programme planning involve reflection on school/college/university strategic aims? <p>Progress with internal/external review recommendations (as appropriate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress with actions as a result of the most recent TPR/PPR/internal periodic review, where relevant to the programme/s. • Progress with actions as a result of accreditation reviews, where relevant to the programme/s. <p>Good/innovative practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there good or innovative practice which could be implemented more widely? If yes, please provide examples.
<p>What issues were discussed?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update on actions planned from previous year's Annual Programme Monitoring 2. 3. <p>Etc.</p> <p>Impact of industrial action 2017/18 Reflect on whether the disruption caused by the industrial action has led to any issues regarding the quality of the provision, and, if so, how this has been mitigated. Reflect on whether the disruption caused by the industrial action has led to any ongoing issues regarding the quality of the provision and student outcomes, and, if so, how this has been mitigated.</p>
<p>What actions are planned based on the reflections above?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. <p>Etc.</p>
<p>Which School Committee(s) will this report be taken to? (if review not carried out through a committee)</p>

[December-February 2020/18](#)

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

**Thematic Review 2018-19: Black and minority ethnic (BME)
students' experiences of support at the University**

Report on Recommendations/Remitted Actions

Description of paper:

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

Action requested / recommendation:

2. For discussion.

Background and context:

3. At the meeting held on Wednesday 18 September 2019, Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) approved the final report of the [Thematic Review 2018-19: Black and minority ethnic \(BME\) students' experiences of support at the University](#). The individuals and areas remitted actions have been asked to provide an initial response to each, noting expected timescales for completion and highlighting potential barriers to progress.

Discussion:

4. Committee is asked to consider the responses.

Resource implications:

5. Resource implications were considered as part of the review.

Risk management:

6. Risks were considered as part of the review.

Equality & diversity:

7. Equality and diversity was an integral part of the review.

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

8. Committee Secretary will feedback comments to relevant areas.

Author

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy
Officer, Academic Services

Presenter

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy
Officer, Academic Services

February 2020

Freedom of Information: Open

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

**Thematic Review 2018-19:
Black and minority ethnic (BME) students' experiences of support at the University**

Report on Recommendations/Remitted Actions

Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), at the meeting held on Wednesday 18 September 2019, approved the final report of the [Thematic Review 2018-19: Black and minority ethnic \(BME\) students' experiences of support at the University](#).

The individuals and areas remitted actions were asked to provide an initial response to each, noting expected timescales for completion and highlighting potential barriers to progress. The following responses were received:

Report Paragraph Reference	Recommendation	Timescale for completion <i>If no timescale suggested in Final Report, please indicate a realistic timescale.</i>	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date/ Expected completion date
4.1.1	The Review Panel recommends that the University work with the student BME Liberation Campaign, BME Staff Network, and the Race Equality Working Group (see section 4.1.5) to identify mechanisms for reporting racial micro-aggressions and racism.	Ongoing	The University will take a holistic approach to responding to both the Thematic Review of BME student experiences, and the LTC report on Using the Curriculum to Promote Inclusion, Equality and Diversity. Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley will drive forward the recommendations of both reports under the new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee. A 'Race Equality' subgroup (which may	Ongoing

			<p>have task and finish groups within it) will be established to take forward the Thematic Review recommendations and will also be convened by Professor Cunningham-Burley. In addition to responding to the thematic and other reviews, it will also prepare for submitting to the Race Equality Charter Mark (RECM).</p> <p>The Deputy Secretary Student Experience Gavin Douglas presented a paper to the University Executive in January, noting the recommendations from the Thematic Review, the LTC review and the recent Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) critical <u>report</u> into how universities across the UK handle racial harassment. The University Executive will also consider ethnicity data from the Equality Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) in March.</p> <p>So there has been quite a bit of discussion and thinking here - now to move to an integrated, holistic action plan. There is some activity already of course. In short, the Thematic Review is stimulating action.</p>	
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4.1.2	The Review Panel recommends that the University work with the student BME Liberation Campaign, BME Staff Network and the Race Equality Working Group (see section 4.1.5) to identify mechanisms that address BME staff-student experiences.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.1.3	The Review Panel recommends that University Leadership recognise the need to improve knowledge and upskill in the area of developing racial literacy.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.1.4	The Review Panel recommends that the Principal leads a conversation on 'race' in higher education and the implications for the University of Edinburgh.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.1.4	The Review Panel recommends that the University provide each Head of College, School, and Professional Service area with a copy of 'Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race'.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.1.5	The Review Panel recommends that the University reapplies for the Race Equality Charter Mark (RECM).		See response for 4.1.1	
4.1.6	The Review Panel recommends that the University conduct a benchmarking of approaches to supporting BME students across the UK. The findings of this exercise must be implemented at a level above the benchmarked basic level of provision.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.1.7	The Review Panel recommends that the EDMARC Report receives a high profile communication upon publication and that each College, School, and Professional Service is systematically required to provide a formal response each year.		See response for 4.1.1	

4.1.7	The Review Panel recommends that the University review the collection of data for BME students to provide more granular data, accessible via the PowerBI Data dashboards.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.1.7	The Review Panel recommends that the University requires Colleges, Schools, Deaneries, and Professional Services to respond to BME data as part of annual review processes.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.2.1	The Review Panel recommends that the Sense of Belonging strand of the Student Experience Action Plan consider ways of specifically improving the experience of community and belonging for BME students.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.2.1	The Review Panel recommends that the University recognise and celebrate the contributions of BME staff and students.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.2.2	The Review Panel recommends that the University recruit a new BME Outreach Officer to work with BME communities. The Review Panel encourages the University to use positive action to diversify staffing.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.2.2	The Review Panel recommends that the University commit to increase the percentage of BME staff, both academic and professional services, with immediate priority in the professional services areas. The Review Panel encourages the University to use positive action to diversify staffing.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.2.3	The Review Panel recommends that Student Recruitment and Admissions consult with the Students' Association and the student BME Liberation Campaign to explore how the pre-arrival information can be enhanced to better meet the needs of BME students.	April 2020	The Pre-arrival and Induction team will begin revising pre-arrival information in spring 2020 for September 2020 entry, and will consult with students at this point. The initial focus will be on	1 May 2020

			developing existing interactive maps of local shops, services and facilities to ensure they are more comprehensive and inclusive.	
4.2.4	The Review Panel recommends that the Sense of Belonging strand of the Student Experience Action Plan consult with the Students' Association and the student BME Liberation Campaign to agree how best to target funding for BME groups, societies and networks.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.3.1	The Review Team recommends that the Service Excellence Programme ensure that a systematic staff training programme is an integral part of the final recommendations of the current Personal Tutor and Student Support Team Review.	Evolved model of Student Support to be implemented for academic year 2021-22	In the evolved model of student support, we will be creating school/deanery based teams of professional Advisors who will support cohorts of students throughout their time at the university. As part of the change programme, we will be developing a robust recruitment, induction and training programme to ensure they are well equipped and skilled to support our diverse student populations. We will be working with the Student Wellbeing function to identify key skills and training resources specific to supporting students' wellbeing, and with a number of other functions across the university to identify key skills and resources needed for other aspects of the advisor role, and all other roles associated with the evolved model of student support,	In Advance of April 2021 (phased introduction of new Advisor roles) and ongoing as part of CPD

			notably Academic Cohort Leads and Peer Senior School Leaders. A key evaluation criteria of the evolved model is that the new structure will 'appropriately recognise and develop individuals' ensuring colleagues in student-facing roles are well supported, trained and rewarded in their roles.	
4.3.2	The Review Panel recommends that the Student Counselling Service use positive action to diversify its staffing.		In the last two periods of recruitment, August 2019 and December 2019, advertisements for counsellor post vacancies have been circulated on the Black, African and Asian Therapy network (the largest community of Counsellors and Psychotherapists of Black, African, Asian and Caribbean Heritage in the UK). We will continue to advertise all vacancies through this network. The vacancies that have arisen have largely been for counsellors to work in the evening on a sessional basis (c. 6-8 hours per week).	
4.3.2	The Review Panel recommends that the Student Counselling Service should ensure that it has a Service Level Agreement in place with any organisation that it uses to support University of Edinburgh students.		The service does not use any external organisation to support University of Edinburgh students. The service signposts students to external organisations, including the NHS, who are open to and serve members of the local community including students. These include	

			<p>organisations that work with particular population groups within Edinburgh (e.g. BME women, or members of the LGBTQ community) or who work with particular issues (e.g. bereavement, self-harm, drug use) or users resident in particular areas of the city. Organisations will work with students who meet their client population irrespective of whether they are students or not. SCS have collated a significant list of twenty-five local and national agencies and organisations, both general and specialist, all of which information is already publically available, and it would constitute a significant additional administrative workload to negotiate SLAs with each. The service does not subcontract work to other agencies so there is no need for an SLA.</p>	
<p>4.3.2</p>	<p>The Review Panel recommends that the Student Counselling Service conduct a benchmarking of approaches to supporting BME students across the UK. The findings of this exercise must be implemented at a level above the benchmarked basic level of provision.</p>		<p>SCS was represented at the Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference: Priorities for tackling racial harassment and improving the BAME experience in Higher Education</p> <p>SCS are undertaking a benchmarking exercise through the Heads of University Counselling Service network (part of BACP) and</p>	

			the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education network.	
4.4.1	The Review Panel recommends that the proposed Curriculum Review enables BME students to be involved in diversifying content, including the co-design of curricula and assessments. Academic staff must collaborate with BME students to understand their experiences in the design, implementation and evaluation of their access, progression, and employability activities.	Ongoing	The Thematic Review recommendation will be considered as part of the ongoing consultation phase of the Curriculum Review.	Ongoing
4.4.2	The Review Panel recommends that the University address the attainment/awarding gap. The action plan should include targets to reduce the attainment gap.		See response for 4.1.1	
4.4.2	The Review Panel recommends that Senate Quality Assurance Committee implement systematic monitoring of retention, progression and degree outcome data for BME students and, if appropriate, recommend interventions where there are clear and consistent patterns of divergence between BME students and white students.	Ongoing	Recommendation to be considered at the meeting of SQAC to be held on Thursday 27 February 2020.	Ongoing

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

Reflection on Thematic Review Process

Description of paper:

1. A reflective look at the reviews to date, highlighting any overarching themes or issues, and set out options for the future approach to Thematic Reviews.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. For discussion.

Background and context:

3. At the meeting held on Thursday 23 May 2019 the Committee agreed that due to the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) there would be no Thematic Review during 2019-20. Instead, it was agreed that Academic Services would take a reflective look at the reviews to date, highlighting any overarching themes or issues, and set out options for the future approach to Thematic Reviews.

Discussion:

4. Committee is asked to consider the options for future reviews.

Resource implications:

5. Dependent on Committee's decision on the future approach to reviews.

Risk management:

6. N/A

Equality & diversity:

7. Equality and diversity have been considered as part of the paper.

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

8. Committee Secretary will feedback comments to relevant areas.

Author

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy
Officer, Academic Services

Presenter

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy
Officer, Academic Services

February 2020

Freedom of Information: Open

Reflection on Thematic Review Process

At the meeting held on Thursday 23 May 2019 the Committee agreed that due to the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) there would be no [Thematic Review](#) during 2019-20. Instead, it was agreed that Academic Services would take a reflective look at the reviews to date, highlighting any overarching themes or issues, and set out options for the future approach to Thematic Reviews.

To this end this paper sets out what seems to have worked well (Student Engagement, Equality and Diversity, Agile Methodology) including the key overarching theme that has emerged across the reviews (i.e. need for better collection and use of data to support underserved student groups), what the challenges have been (Resource Intensive), and options going forward.

Context

In April 2015, the Committee agreed that future reviews of student support would be conducted on a thematic basis rather than service-based. Thematic Review is the process by which the quality of the student experience is reviewed in relation to a particular theme or aspect of student support, rather than an individual service or academic area.

To date, the following four three Thematic Reviews have been conducted:

- [2015-16 Thematic Review of Mental Health Services](#)
- [2017-18 Thematic Review of support for Mature Students and Student Parents and Carers](#)
- [2018-19 Thematic Review of black and minority ethnic \(BME\) students' experiences of support at the University](#)

Academic Services has also co-ordinated a fourth review which, though technically not a Thematic Review, was much thematic in nature: [2016-17 Review of Support for Disabled Students](#).

Student Engagement

Student collaboration is essential to Thematic Review. Students are not only heavily involved setting the theme but also in defining and leading the consultation process, communication with the wider student body, and determining what issues should be the focal point of the final report and recommendations. The crucial choice of theme provides an illustration of this fundamentally collaborative approach.

A key element of the annual monitoring and reporting processes is the identification of issues and common themes which emerged across the University during the previous year. These are then considered by Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) and inform the choice of topic for future Thematic Reviews. Student input at this crucial stage is fundamental. The Students' Association and sabbatical team are consulted on the choice of theme and invited to propose their own topic in line with their understanding of the issues of current concern to students.

For example, the theme of the 2017-18 Thematic Review was initially chosen to be underserved student groups, which had been identified as a key theme by the Student Support Services annual reports 2016-17. The scope was to be all students who had either lower levels of use of services on offer and/or faced barriers to access. The underserved student groups identified by the support services included, but were not limited to, students as parents; students as carers; commuting students; part-time students; widening participation students, online distance learning students.

However, the Students' Association was concerned that the scope of the review was too broad and risked only skimming the surface of the issues of each group due to the disparate experiences of the students involved. Instead, the students proposed (and SQAC agreed to) a more limited scope and a more in-depth examination of support for mature students and student parents and carers. The number of students touched by this review was therefore significantly smaller than initially envisioned but the direct impact on the students concerned had the potential to be more significant than would have been the case with a broader review.

Thematic Review has allowed for more student engagement and ownership of the review process. For example, the student consultation phase of the 2018-19 Thematic Review of black and minority ethnic (BME) students' experiences of support at the University was defined and led by a team of students. The Students' Association team (consisting of the Black and Minority Ethnic Officer, the Vice President Welfare, the Welfare and Equality Coordinator, and the Vice President Education) devised a question set, organised the communications and invitations, and took turns to lead focus group sessions on each campus across the University. They then presented their findings to the review panel for consideration.

The strength of this collaborative approach has been reflected in the positive feedback from student representatives upon the publication of each of the final reports and their enthusiasm to keep up momentum by being involved with the recommendation implementation work of each. Student engagement and enthusiasm for the Thematic Review process can also be evidenced by the Students' Association Teaching Awards nomination for Best Support Staff Award which a member of Academic Services was nominated for almost entirely due to their collaborative work with students during the 2018-19 Thematic Review.

Equality and Diversity

As noted above, the strength of the Thematic Review process is that it can provide the opportunity and space for marginal issues and underserved groups to become the focal points of reviews which in the past have failed to gain the critical mass necessary for the University to commit time and resource to a strategic review.

For example, the recent themes encompassing student parents and carers and BME students have often been overlooked or subsumed and marginalized in wider/bigger more strategic themes because of the relatively small sizes of the student populations at Edinburgh. The student driven nature of Thematic Review has allowed these underserved students to come to the centre of the stage.

Thematic Review has also helped draw attention to equality and diversity issues within annual monitoring and reporting processes. A major theme cutting across reviews has been the need for the University to improve the way it collects data on underserved student groups and how it uses the data to ensure that these groups are supported to progress and succeed in their studies.

For example, the two most recent Thematic Reviews have recommended that the University implement a systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data. Annual Programme Monitoring, and School and College Annual Quality Reports encourage academic areas to engage with progression and performance data and highlight any equality and diversity issues. The Internal Periodic Review process also provides Schools with an opportunity to reflect on areas for development and again a key element of this process is the requirement to engage with progression and performance data. In each of these processes retention, progression, and attainment issues are raised and considered. However, this tends to happen on an ad hoc basis dependent on the diligence or priorities of the particular members of staff authoring the reports or the specific school or subject area. SQAC is currently considering options for a systematic process for monitoring retention, progression, and attainment data.

Agile Methodology

The University's approach to reviews of academic areas or support services has traditionally centred around one or two formal days of highly structured meetings with staff and students. This approach is efficient in maximising the number of participants whilst minimising the diary and time commitment of staff. However, the efficiencies of this approach can also place limits on both the student voice (with the main opportunity for student input coming via a couple of hour long lunchtime meetings with the review panel) and the review panel (sometimes during packed day of meetings it can feel like the surface of an issue has just started to be scratched before the panel have to move onto the next scheduled meeting).

Thematic Review adopts a more agile and in-depth approach utilizing a range of qualitative and quantitative tools including interviews, small focus groups and surveys. This range allows review panels to drill down under the general sector-wide issues in order to get a better understanding of the specific, practical problems faced by students at Edinburgh. It is the Thematic Review panel that determines what approach is appropriate. This can entail a traditional formal day of scheduled meetings but can just as well involve one or two members of review panels meeting individual staff members or holding focus groups with groups of students which are then reported back to the wider review panel for consideration at a later meeting. This approach, marked by methodological variety and diversity, allows for more follow-up opportunities to exploration issues further or take enquiries in new directions.

For example, during the course of the 2017-18 Thematic Review it was noted that there had been at the lack of responses from younger parents and carers during the initial round of student focus group sessions. Therefore, in order to ensure that these

particular cohorts had sufficient opportunity to contribute a further survey of student carers was conducted in partnership with the Student Carers' Representative at the Students' Association. This resulted 51 additional responses which provided the review panel a better understand the needs of younger parents and carers at the University and allowed for a richer final report and a more relevant set of recommendations.

Essentially, this agile and responsive approach has allowed for a lighter touch review process which can drill down in greater depth on issues of specific importance to specific student groups.

Resource Intensive

A key challenge of Thematic Reviews is that they are relatively resource intensive. The agile and responsive approach noted above requires more co-ordination and administrative resource than the traditional approach to internal reviews. Organising a range of interviews, focus groups, surveys, and additional meetings requires additional work on the part of the review co-ordinator and can require additional time of each member of the review panel. Basically, the reviews are relatively labour intensive and may not be regarded as efficient if measured by the numbers of students they serve.

Benchmarking

There is no standard approach to Thematic Review across the sector. Instead the term is used in a variety of differing contexts and encompasses a broad and diverse range of reviews.

For example, at Heriot-Watt University Thematic Reviews are led by the Learning and Teaching Board with one review conducted per academic year, within a five-year programme. Previous themes have included: Technology-enhanced learning and teaching; Assessment; PGT student learning experience; Induction, Transition and Retention; Employability and Graduate Attributes.

Durham University carries out a number of Thematic Reviews each year (normally two reviews per academic year) which are peer review processes focused on aspects of the learning and teaching across faculties.

At Lancaster University reviews are undertaken by Professional Services to ensure that the delivery of the University's administrative support is aligned with the University's strategic priorities. Three reviews take place each academic year and past themes have included: Research Support; The Colleges; Learning support; Employability.

At the University of Birmingham Thematic Review is reserved for significant issues which are not addressed within other University processes. Past Thematic Reviews have included anonymous marking and peer observation of teaching.

Options

As noted above, given the resource intensive nature of Thematic Reviews the Committee is asked to consider the following options for future reviews:

1. Annual Thematic Reviews but scaled back approach in-line with the formal and structured approach of Internal Periodic Reviews.
2. Maintain the current approach but reserve Thematic Review process for significant issues requiring in-depth exploration.

Brian Connolly
Academic Services
February 2020

Senate Education Committee

27 February 2020

**Postgraduate Taught External Examiner Reports:
Thematic Analysis 2018/19**

Description of paper

1. An analysis of data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS).
Covers postgraduate taught programmes for academic year 2018/19, provides comparison with 2017/18 and trend analysis over the past five years.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee to note the report and identify any University-level actions (assigning to specific areas as appropriate).

Background and context

3. The University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy states that the Senate Quality Assurance Committee uses information from External Examiners reports to identify common themes to help shape strategic approach to quality assurance, quality enhancement and to enhance student experience.

Discussion

4. Analysis includes major themes arising from commendations, suggestions, issues, comments identified for institutional escalation in the External Examiners' reports and summarises report status. Analysis was conducted based on data available on 20 February 2020. Full analysis is attached as Appendix 1.

Resource implications

5. The paper is a report on activity therefore there are no resource implications associated with it. Any actions taken by Schools and Colleges as a result of External Examiner reports are expected to be met from within existing resources.

Risk management

6. The paper is a report on activity and no risks are identified.

Equality & diversity

7. The paper is a report on activity and an equality impact assessment is not required. Academic Services has identified no major equality impacts in relation to this report.

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

8. The Committee should consider implementation and communication of any agreed action. College representatives should ensure that the outcomes of the

Committee's discussions are available for consideration by the relevant College committees.

Author

*Susan Hunter, Academic Services
20 February 2020*

Presenter

Nichola Kett

Freedom of Information

The paper is **open**.

Appendix 1

Postgraduate Taught External Examiner Reports: Thematic Analysis 2018/19

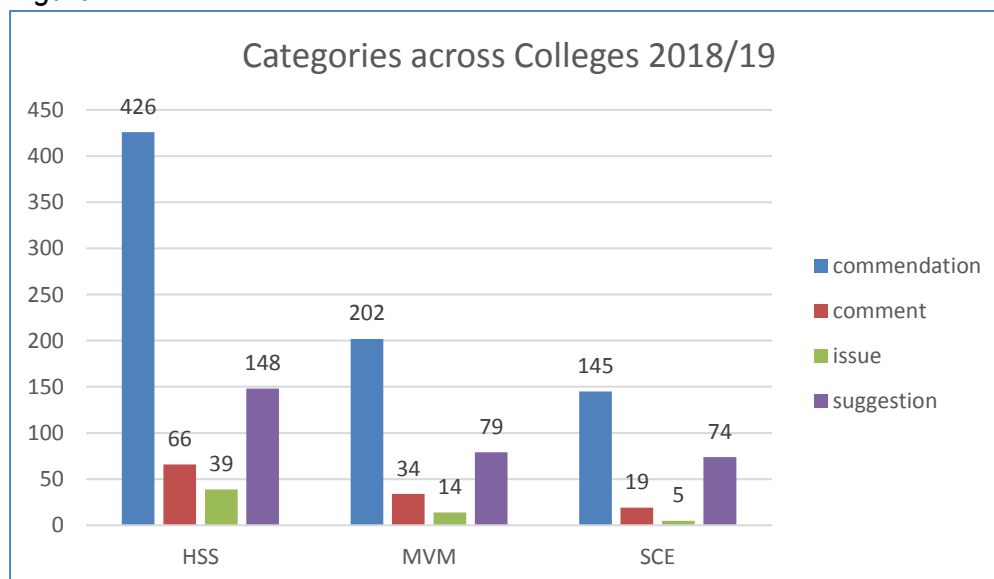
1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a thematic analysis of External Examiner reports for postgraduate taught programmes. Analysis was conducted based on data available from the online reporting system on 20 February 2020.
- 1.2 **Action requested:** Senatus Quality Assurance Committee to discuss the report and identify any University-level actions (assigning to specific areas as appropriate).

2. Analysis of major themes

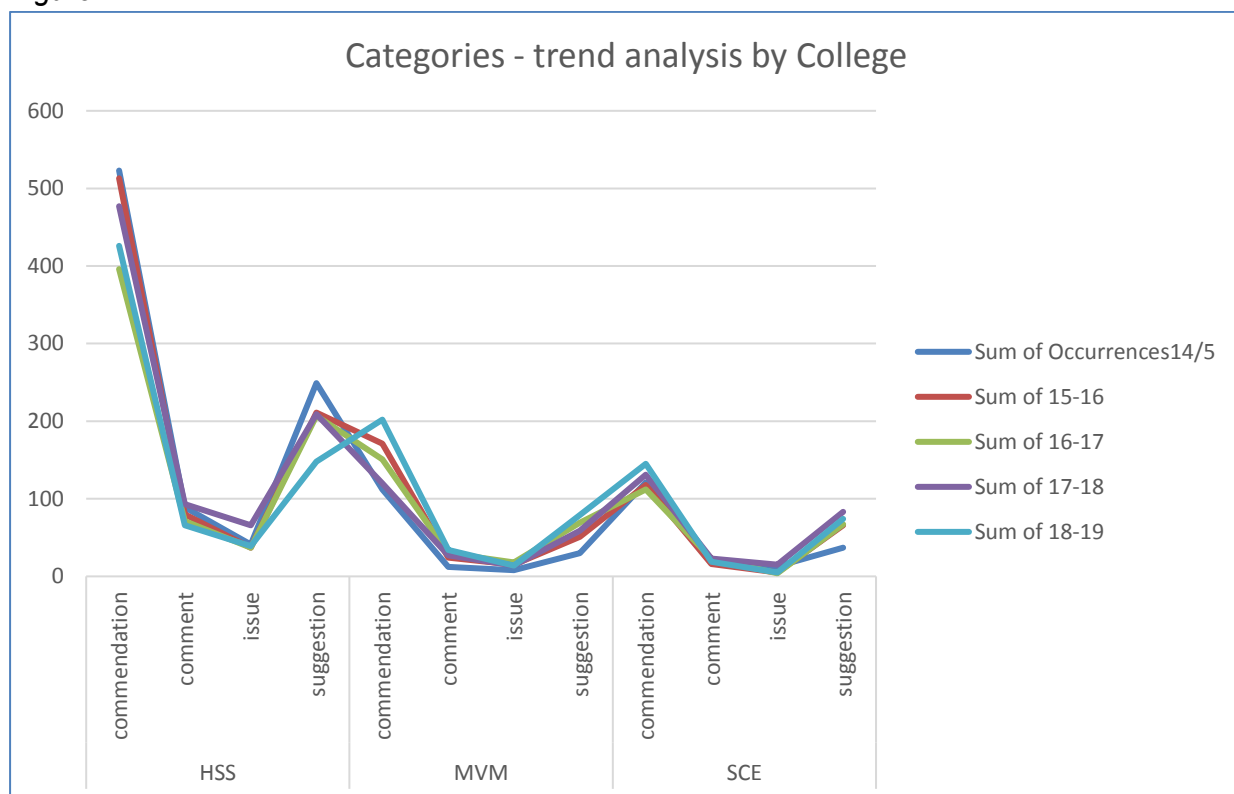
- 2.1 Analysis continues to show a high number of commendations (773, 62% of the total category comments) across the University and a low number of issues (58, less than 5% of the total). The total number of examiner reports has reduced slightly in 2018/19 (1252) compared with the previous year (1318). The Committee should note that External Examiners can make multiple comments across categories and the analysis reflects the trends shown by the reporting system as well as from free text narrative.
- 2.2 All Schools received commendations from their External Examiner reports. The average commendation rate across all Schools was 62%.

Figure 1



HSS (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), MVM (College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine), SCE (College of Science and Engineering). The number of issues, commendations and so on are in the context of the relative size of each college.

Figure 2



HSS (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), MVM (College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine), SCE (College of Science and Engineering). The number of issues, commendations and so on are in the context of the relative size of each college.

2.3 Commendations

The main sub-theme commended across all three Colleges was Good Practice and Innovation (145 commendations, 18.8% of the total number of commendations). 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. Some examples of External Examiners' comments are given below:

"...this is an excellent programme, with really up-to-date content and very suitable and innovative assessment methods. Feedback is excellent. I have actually learnt a lot myself by being examiner on this programme."

"Great range of assessment techniques in use across the course - including both individual work and combined/co-authored work. In addition, the outputs involve a range of products - blog posts, essays, diaries, etc... This course is really one of the most innovative and exciting that I have seen in the UK."

"This course makes innovative use of distance learning to support students working in low resource countries and/or conflict zones which would otherwise preclude their involvement in a higher degree of this nature."

2.4 Suggestions

The Programme Development and Enhancement theme attracted the highest number of suggestions at 114 (38% of the total number of suggestions). This theme has one sub-theme, Enhancing Student Learning Experience. Suggestions were spread across the three Colleges and were varied and often subject-specific. The most often recurring theme was suggestions relating to providing consistent and full feedback (a total of 21 suggestions, 18.5%): raised in Biological Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Business, Centre for Open Learning, Clinical Sciences, Divinity, Education and Sport, GeoSciences, History Classics and Archaeology, Mathematics and Social and Political Sciences by one External Examiner in each School/Deanery; in Health in Social Sciences by two External Examiners; and in the Vet School by three External Examiners.

2.5 Issues

Overall, 58 issues were raised (down from 91 in the previous year). The main theme was Provision of Information with 25 issues (43%) raised across all three Colleges. The most common of these related to receiving material in too short a time before the Board meeting: raised in Literatures, Languages & Cultures, Social and Political Sciences and GeoSciences by one External Examiner in each School, and in Business, Vet School and Biomedical Sciences by two Externals in each. Schools have responded to the majority of comments raised. Analysis suggests there may be some inconsistency in provision of information in some areas – see 3.1 below.

3. Additional analysis of issues, suggestions and comments

The majority of issues, suggestions and comments were specific to the programme or course. Analysis showed two main additional themes emerging consistently across Schools and Colleges.

3.1 Quality of Programmes, Courses and Teams

In 79 comments (16.5% of the total number of issues, suggestions and comments) across 17 Schools, External Examiners praised the quality of the programmes and courses, highlighting the dedication of academic and professional service teams. They had experienced good support and had found the external examining experience at Edinburgh to be valuable. In Business, Clinical Sciences, Edinburgh College of Art, GeoSciences, Law and Literatures Languages and Cultures, External Examiners also commented positively on the timely provision of information in relation to their role (although it was not always clear from the narrative whether this related to material for Boards of Examiners meetings).

3.2 Marking and moderation

External Examiners suggested clarity on moderation procedures and marking criteria and descriptors would be helpful for examiners, markers and students. Consistency of marking and clear marking criteria also featured in some External Examiner reports. These were reported in 27 suggestions (5.7% of the total

number of issues, suggestions and comments) and covered both marking and moderation (except where indicated) as follows: raised by four External Examiners in Vet School, three External Examiners in Biomedical Sciences and GeoSciences, two External Examiners in Business (moderation) and one External Examiner in each of Biological Sciences (marking), Clinical Sciences (marking), Edinburgh College of Art (marking), Edinburgh Medical School (marking), Engineering (marking), Mathematics and Social and Political Sciences.

Schools have responded to, or are preparing responses for, the majority of these reports.

4. Overview of the number of External Examiner Reports

- 4.1 Outlined in the figure and table below are the number of postgraduate taught (PGT) reports by College compared with the previous academic year.

Table 1: Number of postgraduate taught reports by College

	2018/19	2017/18
College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)	185	191
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)	68	53
College of Science and Engineering (CSE)	38	36
Total number of reports	291	280

- 4.2 Outlined in the figures below are the number and stage of postgraduate taught reports in each College for 2017/18 and 2016/17.

Table 2: Number and stage of reports by College and academic year

	Report Stage	2018/19	2017/18
CAHSS	Response Submitted (complete)	79	120
	Draft Response (response outstanding)	54	28
	Draft Report (report outstanding)	26	20
	Allocation (see below)	26	23
CMVM	Response Submitted	40	29
	Draft Response	9	8
	Draft Report	16	10
	Cancelled	1	0
	Submitted Offline	1	4
	Allocation	1	2
CSE	Response Submitted	12	26
	Draft Response	23	6
	Draft Report	2	3
	Submitted Offline	1	1

- 4.2 Reports at the allocation stage relate to reports that have not been allocated to an Academic Response Coordinator and therefore have not been circulated to the External Examiner. This can happen for a variety of reasons, for example,

due to the External Examiner no longer being used due to resignation or replacement.

- 4.3 CAHSS are continuing to work with Schools to ensure any outstanding draft reports are received and that responses are completed as soon as possible. The College expects a small number of reports to be submitted offline due to issues with allocation deadlines in EERS and more general problems with the structure of the reporting system. The College plans to investigate this issue further with Student Systems.
- 4.4 CMVM report that there are a number of examiners who need to be removed from the system either because they have left, been replaced or that the programmes are no longer running. The Schools or Deaneries will contact student Systems to request removal. Analysis showed only two instances where an External Examiner in their final year of tenure had not submitted their report.

5. Items identified by Academic Response Coordinators as Institutional matters

- 5.1 As was the case in 2017/18, External Examiners reports did not raise anything for escalation to institutional level in 2018/19.

Susan Hunter
Academic Services
20 February 2020

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

**External Examiner Reporting System:
Total reports for 2018/19**

Description of paper

1. A summary of the total number of undergraduate and postgraduate taught reports submitted through the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS). Reports are illustrated by status, stage and College.

Action requested / recommendation

2. To formally note the paper.

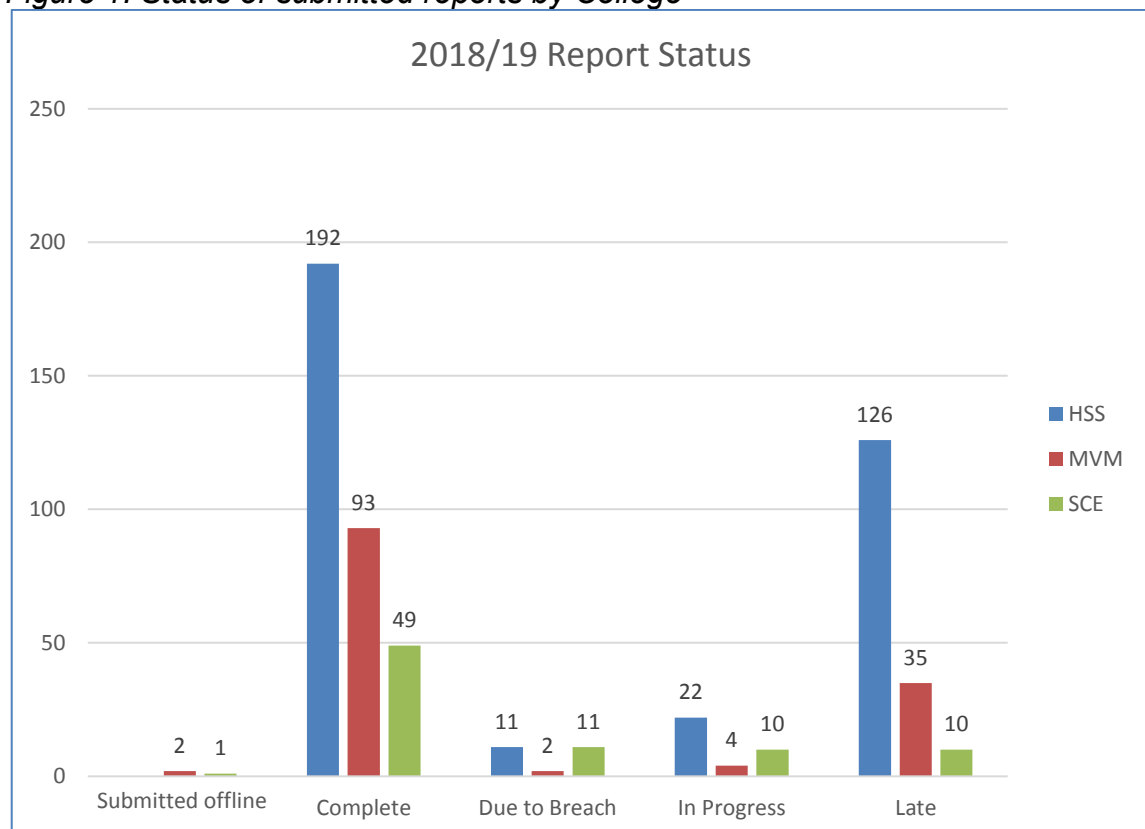
Background and context

3. Annual report on total submissions through EERS provided for information.

Discussion

4. In 2018/19 a total of 568 undergraduate and postgraduate taught external examiner reports were submitted through EERS. This report draws on data from the system on 20 February 2020.

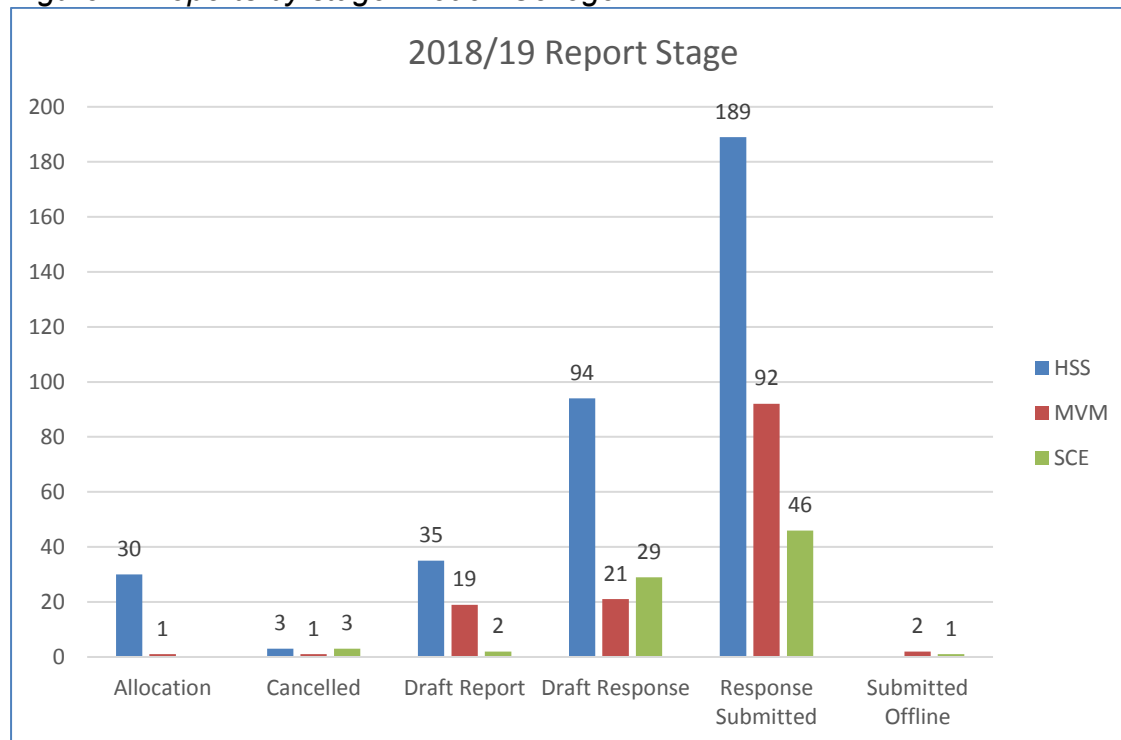
Figure 1: Status of submitted reports by College



HSS – College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, MVM – College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine, SCE – College of Science & Engineering

- Colleges continue to follow up with Schools on any outstanding reports. Colleges reported that some outstanding reports were allocation errors, for example duplication of allocation or allocation to External Examiners who were no longer in the role.

Figure 2: Reports by stage in each College.



- Two reports in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (MVM) and one in the College of Science and Engineering (SCE) were submitted offline. There were three cancelled reports each in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and in Science and Engineering and one in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

Table 1: Breakdown of reports by stage in each College

College Code	Allocation	Cancelled	Draft Report	Draft Response	Response Submitted (complete)	Submitted Offline	Grand Total
HSS	30	3	35	94	189	0	351
MVM	1	1	19	21	92	2	136
SCE	0	3	2	29	46	1	81
Grand Total	31	7	56	144	327	3	568

Resource implications

- The paper is for information and no resource implications are identified.

Risk management

- The paper is for information and no risk assessment is required.

Equality & diversity

9. The paper provides a report on activity and no equality and diversity implications are identified. An equality impact assessment is not required.

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

10. No action is associated with the paper. The Committee should consider communication, implementation and evaluation of any actions arising from discussion of the paper.

Author

*Susan Hunter, Academic Services
20 February 2020*

Presenter

Nichola Kett, Academic Services

Freedom of Information

The paper is open.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance Mapping

Description of paper

1. Mapping of the University's policies and practices to the advice and guidance that underpins the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Action requested / recommendation

2. To approve the mapping.

Background and context

3. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Code) sets out fundamental principles that should apply to higher education quality across the UK. It was significantly redeveloped in 2018 with the aims of: making it applicable across all four UK nations; reducing length and improving accessibility to a wide variety of stakeholders; and placing a greater emphasis on student outcomes and engagement.
4. The current Code comprises (for both standards and quality) mandatory expectations and core practices and, mandatory for Scotland, common practices. 12 "themes" of non-mandatory advice and guidance underpin the mandatory elements of the Code. The Code also has supporting reference documents such as subject benchmark statements and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.
5. Although the advice and guidance is non-mandatory, QAA Scotland expect institutions to map down to the level of guiding principles in order to demonstrate that they are meeting the mandatory expectations and practices of the Code.
6. The Advance Information Set for the University's next Enhancement-led Institutional Review in 2020 will contain a mapping of the institution's policies and practices to the redeveloped Code.
7. In May 2019, Senate Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to the following approach for mapping to the advice and guidance¹:
 - Academic Services will work with policy and practice owners to undertake, during Semester 1 2019/20, an initial mapping (using the mandatory elements of the Code and mapping down to the level of the guiding principles of the advice and guidance) with the aim of identifying any gaps. Due to the breadth of the mandatory elements of the Code and the guiding principles, it is not anticipated that any major gaps will be identified. However, if there are any

¹ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20190522combinedagendapapers.pdf> (Paper E)

gaps identified, the relevant policy and/or practice will be reviewed promptly, and before the deadline for the submission of documentation for ELIR.

- Providing there are no gaps identified, thereafter, each policy and/or practice will be reviewed within its planned timescale. During these reviews, opportunities should be sought for making efficiencies whilst still ensuring the effectiveness of the policy and/or practice and that all requirements of the Code, including the guiding principles of the relevant advice and guidance theme(s), are met.
- A comprehensive mapping of the University's policies and practices to the current Code will be completed in time for the submission of the Advanced Information Set in summer 2020.

8. Mappings have been completed for the following advice and guidance themes:

- Admissions, recruitment and widening access
- Assessment
- Concerns, complaints and appeals
- Course design and development
- External expertise
- Learning and teaching
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Research degrees
- Student engagement

Discussion

9. A completed mapping is presented for approval for the following advice and guidance theme:

- Enabling student achievement

10. Mappings for the following advice and guidance theme will be presented to the April meeting:

- Work-based learning
- Partnerships

Resource implications

11. There are resource implications for Academic Services and policy and practice owners in undertaking the mapping exercise. There may be additional resource implications as a result of reviewing policies and practices against the guiding principles of the advice and guidance, however, the recommended approach aims to minimise these.

Risk management

12. The University's policies and practices must align with the Code.

Equality & diversity

13. Equality and diversity implications would be considered as part of any review of policies and/or practices.

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

14. Approved mappings are made available on the Academic Services' website
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/quality-code>

Author

Nichola Kett, Academic Services
20 February 2020

Presenter

Nichola Kett, Academic Services

Freedom of Information

15. Open

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH – MAPPING TO THE UK QUALITY CODE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE
Theme – Enabling Student Achievement

Expectations for standards

Expectations for quality

From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

Core practices for standards

Core practices for quality

- The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.
- The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.
- The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their education experience.

Common practices for standards

Common practices for quality

The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/enabling-student-achievement>

The guiding principles given here are not mandatory for any provider. They are a concise expression of the fundamental practices of the higher education sector, based on the experience of a wide range of providers. They are intended as a framework for providers to consider when establishing new or looking at existing higher education provision. They are not exhaustive and there will be other ways for providers to meet their requirements.

Guiding Principle	Mapping to the University's policies and/or practices	Additional notes
1. Strategic and operational plans for supporting students and enabling achievement to align to the student journey.	<p>Strategy 2030 https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/strategy-2030</p> <p>College and Professional Service Group outline plan templates make reference to key University strategies. Specifically, the areas of focus for the plan should reflect the Strategy 2030 values.</p> <p>Student Support Services Annual Review https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/sssqaf</p>	

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH – MAPPING TO THE UK QUALITY CODE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Theme – Enabling Student Achievement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report template asks services to reflect on how activities link to key strategies 	
<p>2. Clear, accessible and inclusive policies and procedures to enable students and staff to identify when support mechanisms may be required for academic and personal progression.</p>	<p>Main University students webpage https://www.ed.ac.uk/students</p> <p>Academic Services students webpage https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students</p> <p>Academic Services students webpage https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff</p> <p>Supporting students webpage https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/student-support</p> <p>Programme and Course Handbooks Policy: core content requirements https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/progcoursehandbooks.pdf</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessments https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/impact-assessment</p>	<p>Policies are regularly updated. Either in line with an agreed schedule or beforehand if required.</p>
<p>3. Training and resources are allocated to student support services to enable effective delivery, ensure comprehensive evaluation and subsequent development.</p>	<p>College and Professional Service Group outline plan templates cover supporting teaching and learning, including student experience and wellbeing.</p> <p>Human Resources https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development</p> <p>Institute for Academic Development https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching</p> <p>Student Support Services Annual Review https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/sssqaf Report template covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff development activities accreditation user engagement and feedback analysis of service use 	

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH – MAPPING TO THE UK QUALITY CODE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Theme – Enabling Student Achievement

	<p>Thematic Review https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/student-support-thematic</p>	
<p>4. Clear, consistent and accessible communication about opportunities and support available to students from pre-entry through to completion and beyond.</p>	<p>Study webpages https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying</p> <p>New students webpages https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students</p> <p>Current students webpages https://www.ed.ac.uk/students</p> <p>Development and alumni webpages https://www.ed.ac.uk/development-alumni</p> <p>Students’ Association https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/</p> <p>Support and professional services https://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/support-professional-services</p> <p>Here to Help Guide and Wellbeing Map https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/getting-started-resources/getting-started-guides/student-services-here-to-help</p> <p>Academic and Pastoral Support Policy https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/academic_pastoral_support.pdf</p> <p>Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf</p>	<p>EdHelp (online and on campus) providing easy access to information and services for students under development as part of the Service Excellence Programme</p>
<p>5. Equality of opportunity for all students to develop academic and professional skills.</p>	<p>Academic and Pastoral Support Policy https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/academic_pastoral_support.pdf</p> <p>Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible_and_inclusive_learning_policy.pdf</p> <p>Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog_course_approval.pdf</p>	

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH – MAPPING TO THE UK QUALITY CODE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Theme – Enabling Student Achievement

	<p>Edinburgh Learning Design Roadmap (ELDeR) https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/learning-technology/learning-design/about</p> <p>Annual Progression review monitoring provides an opportunity to identify support mechanisms https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf</p> <p>Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf</p>	
<p>6. Provide an accessible, inclusive and engaging community that incorporates staff and students to facilitate a supportive environment.</p>	<p>Peer learning and support https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/peer_learning_and_support/</p> <p>Academic Pastoral Support https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/academic_pastoral_support.pdf</p> <p>Thematic Review https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/student-support-thematic</p> <p>Student Partnership Agreement https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-voice/partnership-agreement</p>	<p>A Sense of Belonging Task Group has been established as part of the Student Experience Action Plan</p>
<p>7. Enable students to take responsibility for their own learning and become resilient individuals, equipped for a rewarding career.</p>	<p>Student Disability Service https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service</p> <p>Careers Service https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers</p> <p>Employability https://www.ed.ac.uk/employability</p> <p>Scholarships and Student Funding https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding</p> <p>Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible_and_inclusive_learning_policy.pdf</p>	

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH – MAPPING TO THE UK QUALITY CODE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Theme – Enabling Student Achievement

	<p>Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog_course_approval.pdf</p> <p>Thematic Review https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/student-support-thematic</p> <p>Work-based and Placement Learning Policy https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/work-based_placement_learning.pdf</p>	
<p>8. Clearly communicate course outcomes and graduate attributes to all current and prospective students, staff and associated organisations.</p>	<p>Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/</p> <p>Programme and Course Handbooks Policy: core content requirements https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/progcoursehandbooks.pdf</p> <p>Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog_course_approval.pdf</p> <p>Employability https://www.ed.ac.uk/employability</p>	<p>Relevant current activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme and Course Information Management project (Service Excellence Programme) • Curriculum review (Vice-Principal Students)
<p>9. Actively seek the feedback and engagement of students and staff to ensure continuous improvement of the learning environment.</p>	<p>Student voice https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-voice</p> <p>Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting</p> <p>Student Support Services Annual Review https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/sssqaf</p> <p>Thematic Review https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/student-support-thematic</p> <p>Internal Periodic Review https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review</p>	

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

Mid-year update on progress against SQAC priorities

Executive Summary

The paper provides an update on progress towards SQAC's priorities agreed at Senate in May 2019.

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

The paper is relevant to the University's aim to "provide the highest-quality research-led teaching and learning", and the strategic objective of 'Leadership in learning'.

Action requested

For Information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

For Committee members to disseminate as appropriate.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

No.

2. Risk assessment

The paper is for information and risk assessment is not required.

3. Equality and Diversity

The paper is for information and equality impact assessment is not required.

4. Freedom of information

Yes.

Key words

Class Representation, ELIR, mid-course feedback, Personal Tutor, degree classification

Originator of the paper

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy Officer

Mid-year update on progress against SQAC priorities

1. Continue to evaluate the impact of the new programme-based approach to the Class Representation System

The Committee considered the Students' Association School Reports and welcomed the insight the reports offered to the student population at a local level. The Committee agreed that the information in the reports would be included in internal review documentation and that the reports, with an institutional-level report, would be submitted to the Committee annually.

2. Oversee institutional activities in response to the University's 2015 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) and contribute to preparations for the 2020 ELIR, including continuing to work on assessment and feedback

The Committee continues to receive regular updates on preparations, next steps and information on visits for ELIR 2020.

3. Oversee implementation of mid-course feedback to taught postgraduate courses (subject to the outcome of the review during 2018-19)

The Committee continues to monitor the implementation of mid-course feedback through annual monitoring, review and reporting processes.

4. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the operation of the Personal Tutor system

The Committee will continue to monitor the current PT system via the PT system Oversight Group until the implementation of the evolved model of Student Support at the start of the academic year 2021-22.

5. Continue to support Schools to reflect on their patterns of degree classification outcomes

The Committee will receive the annual report on Degree Classification Outcomes at the April meeting.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

Internal Periodic Review Reports

Description of paper

1. The final reports from Internal Periodic Reviews 2019/20

Action requested / recommendation

2. For Approval. The Committee is asked to note the commendations and recommendations.

Background and context

3. The following final reports from Internal Periodic Reviews 2019/20 are published on the Committee wiki:

<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SQAC/Thursday+27+February>

- Internal Periodic Review of Literatures, Languages and Cultures (PGR & PGT provision)
- Internal Periodic Review of School of Social and Political Science (PGR provision)

Discussion

4. See attached paper.

Resource implications

5. No additional resource implications

Risk management

6. No risk associated

Equality & diversity

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

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

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

Author

*Gillian Mackintosh
20 February 2020*

Presenter

Academic Services

Freedom of Information

Open

Internal Periodic Review reports 2019/20

IPR	No	Commendations	Recommendations	Responsibility
Literatures Languages and Cultures,	1	The review team commends the School management team's strategic direction which is delivering innovation in an environment and for a range of subjects that are unpredictable sector-wide.	<p>Student recruitment</p> <p>The School recognises the benefits of this change in professionalising admissions but acknowledges potential risks if student numbers continue to rise without an increase in resources. The review team recommends that the School ensures continued dialogue with the College on recruitment criteria and that all relevant colleagues engage with the process. The School should consider developing common principles for flexibility and fluctuation across programmes in future years. The review team recommends that the School establishes common pedagogic principles for postgraduate class and course size and strategies for scaling if numbers fluctuate. The School should aim to develop resource and contingency planning to manage risks associated with student recruitment to support growth within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences' minimum and maximum targets. The School should also reconsider entrance criteria for programme recruitment to support resource sustainability.</p>	School Management Team
	2	The review team observed that a significant number of programmes were operating with very small cohort numbers. The review team commends the School for addressing this through its Postgraduate Sustainability Review and encourages it to continue with this work.	<p>Teaching, learning and assessment</p> <p>There is scope for harnessing cross-disciplinary potential in the School to identify emerging areas for collaboration. The review team recommends that the School consider whether it is maximising the opportunities created by its inherent diversity and range of subjects.</p> <p>The review team heard from staff who wanted to see clearer articulation of the assessment structure linked to learning outcomes. There was evidence that clear rubrics exist in some areas and the review team recommends the School consider the potential to extend these across its provision.</p>	School
	3	The review team commends the School on its reputation and distinctive programmes which attract increasing student numbers.	The review team recommends that the School ensures clearer student awareness of contacts for information, for example the Graduate School Office and Student Support Office, across School,	School/Graduate School/Student Support Office

			programme and subjects to avoid reinforcement or entrenchment of differing practices in different areas.	
	4	The review team commends the School's introduction of new postgraduate taught programmes in Intermediality, Korean Studies and Traditional Arts Performance.	<p>Student development opportunities</p> <p>The review team recommends clarity and equity of access to teaching opportunities for postgraduate research students across the School. Postgraduate research students particularly value teaching experience and appreciate the value of work opportunities and career advice for professional development. The review team recommends the School consider opportunities for enhancement of internships and work-based learning opportunities.</p>	School
	5	The review team commends the School's culture of valuing teaching, and articulation of how academics are defined by teaching as well as research.	The review team recommends that the School consider an independent review of the supervisory arrangements at an early stage of Year 1, before the annual review as a required engagement point.	School Management Team
	6	The review team commends the School's aim of using a variety of assessment types and fostering assessment and feedback literacy. The School Learning and Teaching Committee facilitates conversations so that these literacies can be incorporated into local practice.	The review team recommends that the School ensures that postgraduate annual progression points are consistently robust and include personal development, academic matters and a forward plan.	School Management Team
	7	The review team commends School level activity to harmonise teaching and learning processes and an evident clear strategic focus on the need for change.	<p>Community and environment</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School encourages initiatives for postgraduate research to postgraduate taught mentoring as a means of supporting community building. This could also provide development opportunities for postgraduate research students in areas where teaching opportunities are not available for all.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School encourages and supports student-led activity to support community building.</p> <p>The review team was supportive of the School making the case for provision of spaces that cultivate academic interaction and support community building and recommends that the School Management</p>	School

			Team pursue this with College. For example, following the move to 50 George Square, the School identified a priority for development by the University Gaelic Plan to reinstate a Gaelic common room, to support Gaelic language students in their language skills and community building.	School Management Team/College
	8	The School has set up a Postgraduate Research Working Group to look at support for postgraduate research students and the review team commends this approach.	The School values its diverse student population but acknowledged there were some challenges in ensuring all students had the necessary skills, including but not limited to academic English, for postgraduate study. The review team recommends that the College consider how the School can be supported in addressing skills gaps in its postgraduate student population.	College/School Management Team
	9	Creative Writing organises an alumni event and student conference. The review team commends this as an area of good practice and something the School could consider having at School-level to support community building.		
	10	The review team commends the School for maintaining and growing postgraduate taught and research communities, including distinctive, thriving, individual programmes.		
	11	The review team was impressed to hear that mid-course feedback has already been adopted across the full range of postgraduate taught courses and commends the School for early adoption of this initiative.		
	12	The review team commends the School's appointment of an Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer and the School's work on equality and diversity including the Widening Participation working group.		
	13	The review team commends the School's introduction of a tutor training day and they heard from postgraduate		

		research students who teach how much they appreciated this training opportunity.		
	14	The review team commends the induction workshops and guaranteed hours tutor mentoring model in English Literature, which includes induction, briefing, mentoring and reflection, as an example of good practice .		
	15	The review team commends the commitment of professional services staff in a changing landscape.		
	16	The review team commends the academic and teaching staff commitment to subjects and students.		
	17	The review team commends the School on opening the training day for guaranteed hours tutors to early career staff.		
School of Social & Political Science	1	The review team commends the appointment of a Director and a Professional Services Manager for the RTC .	The review team recommends that the School prioritise the annual PGR Annual review process and actively lead reviewing practice to be redefined as a significant event in the academic cycle across all years of the PhD, implemented robustly and efficiently for all students.	School PG Management Team/ Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
	2	The review team commends the PGR provision at 27/28 George Square	The review team recommends that School management prioritise the dialogue with current students regarding the redeployment of student space within the school estate plan.	Head of School/School PG Management Team
	3	The review team commends the School's investment and enhancement of scholarships, including the Alice Brown Scholarship	The review team recommends that consideration is given to provision of additional staffing within the professional support staff team of the Graduate School.	School PG Management Team/ PGR Director/ Graduate School
	4	The review team commends the development of the Research Training Centre taking forward the School's research provision in cooperation with Q-Step and AQMeN	The review team recommends the School review student representation to give prominence to the role and then ensure effective inclusion on all major school committees.	Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement/ Director of

				Student Engagement & Experience
	5	The review team commends the implementation of mid-semester course unit feedback as an example of good practice and student support	The review team recommends that the School consider the increased involvement of core academic staff in the tutor role to ensure consistency and quality across this provision.	School PG Management Team/ Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
	6	The review team commends that a member of the Graduate School was a trained mental health first aider	The review team recommends further expansion of the Research Training Centre with a more directional suite of training opportunities and a portfolio of courses designed to support diverse student needs in research training	Director of Research Training Centre/School PG Management Team
	7	The review team commends the research seminar sessions as a way of engaging the students and enhancing community among the subject areas.	The review team recommends that consideration be given to the appointment of a dedicated academic to manage performance and development of PGR tutors	School PG Management Team/Head of Teaching & Student Services
	8	The review team commends the practice of completing a Training Needs Analysis for students ensuring that support is available for successful research study.	The review team recommends the process of PGR tutor workload allocation is communicated more effectively to make this more transparent and equitable	Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement/ Director of Student Engagement & Experience
	9	The review team commends the supervisor appointment process leading to the development of mutually positive relationships.	The review team recommend the School make it clear for recipients of the Alice Brown Scholarship that sufficient work exists within the School or if students require external employment.	School PG Management Team/ Director of Student Engagement & Experience
	10	The review team commends the genuine enthusiasm of the School to enhance student experience by further developing community. This is supported by the appointment of a Director of Student Engagement & Experience encompassing UG and PG students.	The review team recommends that the School review the induction process and consider expanding the delivery timeframe beyond Welcome Week to enable a wider volume of information to be disseminated and understood by students.	PGR Director/Graduate School

	11	The review team acknowledge the competing demands for students to be competitively qualified on graduation and commends the School for considering such challenges and developing approaches, such as the 4yr PhD programme.		
	12	The review team commends the professional service staff located in the Graduate School for the significant contributions they make to student experience.		

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2020 – Update

Description of paper

1. An update on preparations, next steps and information on visits for ELIR 2020.

Action requested / recommendation

2. For information.

Background and context

3. ELIR is the method by which the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland) (QAAS) reviews universities and other higher education institutions in Scotland. The University's next ELIR takes place in semester 1 2020/21.

Discussion

Preparation of the Reflective Analysis

4. Drafts of chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, developed using information gathered from colleagues across the University and the Students' Association, were made available to all staff and students in November and December 2019 with accompanying Teaching Matters blog posts. Comments received on the draft chapters were used to develop a first draft of the reflective analysis.
5. The first draft was reviewed by key internal and external stakeholders in the last week of January and the first week of February. Comments received on the first draft are being used to develop a second draft which will be made available to all students and staff to comment on in March 2020¹. A final version of the reflective analysis will then pass through University committees for approval in June 2020.
6. Briefing sessions will be held in early March for staff in roles who may be asked to meet the review team at visits. These briefing sessions will, as well as covering the background to ELIR and our preparations, encourage staff to comment on the second draft. Briefing sessions will be held with students chosen to meet the review team at the planning visit following the appointment of a PhD Intern who will support student engagement with the ELIR.
7. The development of the reflective analysis is being supported by a coordinated communications and engagement plan developed in consultation with Communications and Marketing and the Students' Association. The key elements of this plan are:

¹ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/elir/elir-2020>

- A Spotlight On ELIR series on Teaching Matters publicised to staff and students via email, social media channels and the quality website²
- Group meetings with students
- Engagement with College committees
- Regular update papers to Senate committees
- Senate committee newsletter entries

Visits

8. A review team, comprising three academic reviewers, two student reviewers and one co-ordinating reviewer has been appointed by QAAS to conduct the ELIR and will visit the University twice, meeting with staff and students.

6 August 2020	Deadline for submitting the Reflective Analysis and supporting Advanced Information Set to QAAS
17 September 2020	Early feedback provided to the University by QAAS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions and/or themes for exploration in the planning visit • Any areas where the team think they need additional documentation
1 October 2020	PLANNING VISIT Meeting 1: Senior staff leading preparations Meeting 2: Group of student representatives and students with experience of internal review Meeting 3: Group of staff involved in quality processes
8 October 2020	Deadline by which we will receive (as an outcome of the planning visit): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agreed set of themes to be explored during the review visit • A draft programme for the main visit • A note of additional information requested by the team <p>We will have at most 6 weeks to organise and brief the staff and students who will be meeting the review team. In preparation, during semester 2 2019/20 we will identify staff and students in roles who may be asked to meet the review team at visits.</p>
26 October – 2 November 2020	Earliest and latest deadlines for providing additional information requested by the team (2-3 weeks to gather the information).
Week beginning 16 November 2020	Review visit Meetings with groups of staff and students likely to be held Monday to Thursday (inclusive).

² <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/spotlight-on-elir/>

Resource implications

9. Students and staff are asked to contribute to the development of the reflective analysis and some students and staff will be asked to meet the team during the planning and review visits.

Risk management

10. A successful ELIR is of vital importance to the University.

Equality & diversity

11. No issues are associated with this paper.

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

12. As outlined above.

Author

Nichola Kett, Academic Services
20 February 2020

Freedom of Information

Open

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

27 February 2020

Report from the Knowledge Strategy Committee

Executive Summary

To update SQAC on certain matters considered by the Knowledge Strategy Committee.

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

Not applicable.

Action requested

SQAC is invited to note the report.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Not applicable.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Where applicable, as covered in the report.

2. Risk assessment

Where applicable, as covered in the report.

3. Equality and Diversity

Where applicable, as covered in the report.

4. Freedom of information

This paper is open.

Key words

Knowledge Strategy Committee

Originator of the paper

Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services

REPORT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

24 January 2020

1 Information Services Plan

The Chief Information Officer presented the emerging key components for the Information Services Group's (ISG) annual planning round submission. The submission is being developed around the four Strategy 2030 areas: people; research; teaching and learning; and, social and civic responsibility. A key element within the people strand is to expand workplace experiences within ISG for students. 300 students a year are currently benefiting, with the near term intention to grow to 500 students and a long-term aspiration of 1,000 students. Within the teaching and learning strand, the successful 'makerspace' in the Library could be a model for other parts of the University to establish makerspaces, with a paper to be submitted to the Committee on this topic.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- How to adopt the online/distance learning technologies for the hybrid online/in person approach to be pioneered by the Edinburgh Futures Institute – a course in teaching online courses has been developed and a course in teaching hybrid online/in person courses could be developed in partnership with the Edinburgh Futures Institute;
- Managing the tension between maintaining sufficient recurrent funding for core services and funding digital transformation projects – this will be done in close consultation with the Colleges to ensure that the appropriate balance is met;
- The potential for very different makerspaces in engineering or medicine is exciting – student demand for such provision is likely strong but will need to be considered against other high student demand areas, e.g. refurbishment of audiovisual facilities;
- Avoiding any disconnect between ISG, Colleges and Edinburgh Futures Institute colleagues on Distance Learning at Scale activities – the consolidation of virtual learning environments (see Item 6 below) has helped bring staff across the University together. ISG are working to connect staff specialising in online learning across the University and this will continue.

2 World Class Data Infrastructure IT Equipment Procurement

Following an overview presentation at the previous meeting, the planned procurement of Information Technology equipment for the City Region Deal's World Class Data Infrastructure hub was reviewed. The inclusion of an information security component was welcomed and plans to mitigate software costs by using open source software where possible discussed. Consideration of data ethics was raised, to be overseen on a project by project basis by the City Deal Executive Governance Group and by the AI & Data Ethics Board chaired by Vice-Principal Professor Richard Kenway as appropriate. Provision for long term costs after the end of the 10 year funding period was queried, with the funding provided including a replacement cycle to cover a 15 year period and the intention to move towards self-funding over the period.

Environmental sustainability in relation to high performance computing systems more generally was discussed, noting that the largest system is the ARCHER2 system, which is a UK national resource hosted in Edinburgh and should be considered on a national level. The University uses a green electricity tariff and for the next generation of high performance computing systems is considering novel approaches to cooling and heat reclamation. An initial study is underway and funding to develop this applied for.

The Committee agreed to recommend to Policy & Resources Committee and Court that the University procure the IT equipment using an open procedure through the Official Journal of the European Union. The Committee further agreed to recommend to Court that, following the successful conclusion of the procurement process, contract signature (for an initial period of 5 years) is delegated to the Principal and subsequent to contract signature, authority is delegated to Professor Mark Parsons under the governance of City Deal Executive Governance Group to issue Purchase Orders against the IT Building Block price list.

3 Information Security Update

An update on current and planned work being undertaken to address the ongoing information security threat facing the University was considered. How to effectively publicise the Information Security Guidance for Travel to High Risk Countries was discussed, with the intention for the guidance to be raised automatically when arranging insurance for travel to one of the high risk countries. The Chief Information Security Officer was invited to meet with groups undertaking regular travel to China such as those involved in teaching in collaborative institutes. Information Services Group were encouraged to ensure that a potential unintended consequence of the sustainable IT policy in the form of staff purchases of personal IT devices was avoided and to ensure that the provision of 'clean' University devices for those travelling to high risk countries is made as simple as possible to encourage take up.

4 Data-Driven Innovation: Regional Internet of Things Sensor Network

Following approval of the first phase data platform appliance at the previous meeting, the purchase of the second phase sensor network as part of the City Region Deal's World Class Data Infrastructure Internet of Things service was considered. Ethical and data security considerations in the establishment of a sensor network were raised, with projects to be reviewed by School-level Ethics Committees and the AI & Data Ethics Board as appropriate and an intention to set an exemplar in data security for the sensor network. The Committee approved the investment and delegated signing authority for the purchase to the Vice-Principal & Chief Information Officer.

5 IT Committee: Revised Terms of Reference

Following review by a working group, revised terms of reference for the IT Committee were submitted for approval. The intention to bolster the IT Committee's ability to govern the acquisition and implementation of IT systems with the aim of avoiding proliferation of systems in different parts of the University was welcomed. Adding pre-approval checks to procurement processes as a further safeguard was also suggested. Subject to minor textual amendments in consultation with the

Deputy Secretary Strategic Planning, the revised terms of reference were approved.

6 Virtual Learning Environment Programme Closure Report

A closure report on the four year programme to consolidate the number of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platforms used within the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine was reviewed. The Committee congratulated all those involved in the programme for the success achieved and discussed how to embed findings in institutional memory. It was suggested that ensuring that the main VLE now in use, 'Learn', is sufficiently flexible to incorporate novel uses by teaching staff is key to avoiding the creation of new VLEs within Schools without the support of the Information Services Group.