<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Meeting to be held on 6th March 2023
via Microsoft Teams**

A G E N D A

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

2. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8 December 2022   SQAC 22/23 3A

3. **Matters Arising**

Conveners Update
3.1 Senate Committees External Review
3.2 Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR)
3.3 Enhancement Themes

For Discussion

4. Annual Reports 2021-22:   SQAC 22/23 3B
4.1 Academic Appeals **CLOSED PAPER**
This paper is closed; disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act.

4.2 Student Discipline **CLOSED PAPER**   SQAC 22/23 3C
This paper is closed; disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act.

4.3 Complaint Handling   SQAC 22/23 3D

5. Annual Monitoring and Reporting:
5.1 Annual Review of Student Support Services   SQAC 22/23 3E

5.2 Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy   SQAC 22/23 3F

5.3 Reporting Template Enhancements   SQAC 22/23 3G
     - Programme Annual Monitoring Template
     - School Annual Report Template
     - College Annual Report Template

6. Student Support Model   SQAC 22/23 3H

7. Coordinating Institutional Activities on Assessment and Feedback   SQAC 22/23 3I

8. Schedule for Review of Policies, Regulations and Guidance   SQAC 22/23 3J

9.   Mid-year update on progress against SQAC priorities   SQAC 22/23 3K

     For Information and Formal Business

10.   Internal Periodic Review: Final Reports   SQAC 22/23 3L

11.   **Any Other Business**

12.   **Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 27 April 2023 at 2pm in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House

The University of Edinburgh Senate Quality Assurance Committee

Thursday 8th December 2022 2-4pm

Meeting held in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and via Microsoft Teams

Present:	
Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Brian Connolly	Committee Secretary, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Sinéad Docherty	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Olivia Eadie	Assistant Director and Head of Operations and Projects, Institute for Academic Development
Dr Meryl Kenny	Deputy Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Social and Political Science
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
Sam McCallum	VP Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association Representative
Present via Teams:	
Professor Matthew Bailey	Dean of Quality, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Dr Anne Desler	Director of Quality Assurance & Curriculum Approval, Edinburgh College of Art
Dr Katherine Inglis	School Representative (Literatures, Languages and Cultures), College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Professor Leigh Sparks	Deputy Principal, University of Stirling
In attendance:	
Lisa Dawson	Academic Registrar
Apologies:	
Marianne Brown	Co-opted member with expertise in Student Systems
Dr Gail Duursma	School Representative (Engineering), College of Science and Engineering

Dr Jeni Harden	School Representative (School of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Pia Helbing	Programme Director, Business School

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Convener welcomed the three new members to the committee: Anne Desler, Matthew Bailey and Meryl Kenny.

The Convener extended particular thanks to Katherine Inglis, outgoing member, for her contributions to the committee.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th September 2022.

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

3. Matters Arising
   3.1 Business via correspondence: External Examiners

Paul Norris, Convener of APRC, informed SQAC of the reflections of APRC in relation to the External Examiners policy. The EE policy is unusual in that it sits with both SQAC and APRC and requires concessions from both committees. PN emphasised that the policy needs to include a mechanism to allow concessions. This is covered by regulations but also needs to be addressed and understood in the policy.

PN highlighted that the role of External Examiners is to oversee a process and ensure it is working effectively. Moderation happens internally and earlier in the process; External Examiners are not the first line of defence.

The committee discussed the importance of having a timely process in place that can respond to the pressure of an emergency situation; the nature of a concession is to address something that is not working as intended. However, scrutiny and rigour are still required, and the academic scrutiny of EEs is an important part of their role. OFS changes in England to the perception and role of External Examiners may impact on the role of EEs in Scotland and the availability of EEs from within the UK.

For discussion:

4. Student Support: Monitoring and Evaluation

Lisa Dawson attended SQAC to give an update as the Programme Implementation Lead

LD outlined that the consultation for this project began in 2019, and it led to the preferred model of implementation. The committee were reminded that the ELIR report asked for demonstrable progress in the student support model.

The new model has been implemented for all incoming students, and the School of Economics have piloted the model and have implemented the system for all students in years 1-3 of their UG studies. In total, 8000 students are now supported by the new model.

To monitor and evaluate the model so far, focus groups have been consulted and feedback gathered. LD cautioned that it is expected to take 3-5 years for the new system to be working fully, but early feedback has identified consistency, roles, boundaries and workload challenges (i.e. course enrolment, timetabling) as areas to monitor. The project board is committed to continuing to learn and develop as the model is implemented, and is also mindful of how best to transfer that continuation to SQAC in due course, when the involvement of the project board will cease.

LD noted that the model needs to be underpinned with software and data; there is a pilot with the Solution Path tool, which looks at students who move into a negative trajectory.

The committee questioned how the success of this project will be evaluated. They identified the need for baseline measures to allow for comparison and monitoring; some quantitative measures will be required to achieve this. There will be methodological challenges but the support of Student Analytics, and the changes to EUCLID tools which will gather more student information, should assist in ways to i) evaluate the student support model and ii) evaluate the outcomes of the model. This evaluation should also aim to smooth out any variation in how the model is being implemented.

LD will present to the board in January 2023 on the progress so far, and establish if the University is ready for the full roll out in academic year 2033/24. Consideration will be given to how staff are coping with the new system, and if enough Professional Services staff are in place to properly support students. Results from the Pulse survey will also inform the next phases of implementation; LD is to confirm the number of questions in the survey. Leigh Sparks informed the committee that Stirling University has 4 questions in their survey and are building an engagement dashboard to monitor and support students.

Action: updates on the Student Support model to be added as a standing item to the SQAC agenda. LD will provide an update for each meeting.

5. **College Annual Quality Reports**

    5.1 College of Arts and Humanities – presented by Paul Norris

    CAHSS report highlighted Special Circumstances, assessment and timetabling as areas of concern. PN also noted the report lacked comments on PGR students and the PGR experience. There is a challenge in obtaining PGR information, possibly due to the terminology of the report being more aligned with taught programmes, or possibly because the report is completed at a time when staff are working on research rather than teaching/administrative tasks. Discussion around whether summer is the best time to undertake these QA processes.

    PN queried whether there are any other/further aspects which need attention in College reports e.g. exemplars for promotion. The Committee noted the ELIR recommendation made in 2021 for teaching focussed promotions.

    Action: Academic Services to review template for College quality reports, either to include specific questions relating to PGR students and experience or to create a separate template for PGRs.

The Committee considered whether Schools feel disconnected from PGR/QA information and whether this information can be more visible to academic/quality staff. Quantitative data is more often held by professional services; are the correct mechanisms in place for this to be shared?

The Committee discussed the role of the Doctoral College and its Deans. It was suggested that a representative from the Doctoral College could join SQAC and help to strengthen the quality processes and mechanisms around PGR experience.

Action: SQAC to identify who would be suitable to join the committee from the Doctoral College. Olivia Edie will contact Fiona Philippi at DC to begin this conversation.

5.2 College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine – presented by Matt Bailey

CMVM report highlighted the Student Voice policy and overall response rate by students. The lack of centralised questionnaires is proving a challenge in receiving feedback from students. Furthermore, in instances of a minority of students making comments, how best should the College respond?

EUSA VP asserts that if something will significantly impact even just a few students, it is important for the College/University to do something to facilitate this.

In relation to Student Voice, the College has been holding focus groups and is aware that more work needs to be done to close feedback loops. Major concerns felt by students are around workload and the return to in-person exams.

Leigh Sparks confirmed that the University of Stirling are not automatically going back to in-person exams and are exploring different methods of assessment.

A concern raised by MVM was how to invigilate online/digital exams. Instances of collusion in exams shows this needs to be a consideration of curriculum redesign and programme assessment. The Committee noted that there must also be discussion around AI and its increasing prevalence in higher education. This is causing concern around what is the right type of assessment for programmes, and how to achieve authentic assessment.

5.3 College of Science and Engineering – presented by Linda Kirstein

CES report detailed a positive response to the implementation of the new Student Support model. A particular concern is around Academic Misconduct – there has been a notable increase in cases and the process to deal with cases may need strengthening. It is also suggested that training new/short-term staff will be required.

LK highlighted to the Committee that there are five actions which CES has requested from the University (detailed in Paper E). LK emphasised that there is imbalance between student numbers in recent years and institutional level supports.

LK has attempted to establish who will take these actions forward and how will progress be explained to the School.

Action: SQAC and Academic Services to consider how best to track and escalate recommendations that are made to University services.

6. **Annual Monitoring and Reporting**

This item was moved to the February meeting. The template will be reconsidered in the context of monitoring PGR students and their experience.

7. **External Examiner Reporting System (EERS):**

This item was for noting. Further report is due at a later meeting.

8. **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs):**

The Committee recognised that these are not credit bearing courses but SQAC continues to have oversight (there is a reputational element to these courses).

The Committee considered whether the Senate Education Committee (SEC) should review the MOOC Annual Report and have it inform projects such as Curriculum Transformation. SQAC noted that the MOOC Strategy Group has no representatives from Colleges and consideration needs to be given to where the reporting goes and how actions are taken forwards.

9. **Senate Committees Internal Review Report**

The internal review will be an ongoing discussion and SQAC members are encouraged to continue giving their feedback.

For Information and Formal Business

10. **Enhancement Themes and 3 Year Plan**

Item noted by the Committee. NK highlighted the importance of themes informing the output of activities and evaluation.

11. **Internal Periodic Review – Reports and Responses**

The Committee were satisfied with the report and responses, with the exception of the response from Clinical Education. The Committee noted that the School has not noted any progress against an urgent recommendation of the IPR.

The Committee discussed how best to manage recommendations that are directed outside of the School/College and towards the University. Clarity is required on how feedback is gathered and returned.

Action: Academic Services to formalise the process for directing IPR recommendations outside of the School/College subject to the IPR.

12. **Any Other Business**

The Convener noted thanks to Brian Connolly for his role and work as SQAC secretary. BC is due to leave the University in February 2023 and his SQAC responsibilities will be taken on by Sinéad Docherty in Academic Services.

13. **Date of next meeting: Monday 6th March 2023**

<u>The University of Edinburgh</u>
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

06 March 2023

Annual Report on Complaint Handling, 2021-22

Description of paper

1. In line with the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the University's Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP), this paper reports on the handling of complaints to the University for the academic year 2021-22.

Actions requested

2. College representatives are asked to ensure that the outcomes of the Committee's discussions are made available to and considered by the relevant College committee(s).

Recommendations

3. Efforts need to be made to improve the logging and reporting of complaints received at School, College and support service level; College representatives are asked to reiterate to colleagues the vital role of regular reporting in delivering improvement and learning from complaints. The importance of accurate data collection is discussed further in the attached paper and in section 11 below.

Background and context

4. The CHP has two stages. Stage 1, frontline resolution, should be used in the majority of cases, with likely outcomes being an on-the-spot apology, an explanation or other action to resolve the complaint very quickly (within five working days). Stage 2 Complaint Investigation is appropriate where attempts at frontline resolution have failed, or where the issue is sufficiently complex, serious, or high risk from the outset that Stage 1 would not be appropriate.

5. The CHP specifies that the following will be reported internally:

   i) 'performance statistics detailing complaint volumes, types and key performance information, for example on time taken and stage at which complaints were resolved'

ii)   'the trends and outcomes of complaints and the actions taken in response including examples to demonstrate how complaints have helped improve services'

Discussion

6.   See attached paper.

Resource implications

7.   We recommend that resource is made available for procurement or development of a suitable data management system, for collating and reporting on complaints, as a matter of urgency. Central Complaints has seen a 133% increase in contacts in the last 5 years and from reporting year 2022-23 onwards the SPSO will require additional analysis of captured data; in addition, we are increasingly being asked to supply management with information regarding complaint trends. The University has a basic system to allow Local Areas to log complaints, but it is not fit for purpose and in March 2023 will reach end of life. In recent years the Complaints team have asked for resource be made available to develop a new system, which has not happened. As a result, most areas record and report information via spreadsheets, and from April 2023 all will be required to do so. Whilst existing tools meet the day-to-day requirements of the central Complaints team, insofar as tracking the progress of open cases and investigations, they were not designed with the volume of contacts we now handle in mind, nor are they adequate to the task of meeting the data requests we receive. Challenges associated with data collection are further discussed in the attached paper.

8.   In March 2022, the SPSO confirmed that they would introduce 4 mandatory Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the higher education sector. The KPI's were implemented on 01 September 2022, so will be reported on from academic year 2022-23 onwards; going-forward, a substantial amount of additional analysis will be needed to comply with the SPSO's reporting requirements.

9.   Previous annual complaint reports, and internal audit reports, have highlighted the vulnerability of the 'Complaints Department' due to absence of robust cover arrangements; however, Academic Services have taken steps to address this, and will continue to do so. Complaints was most recently audited during Semester 1 of academic year 2022-23, and the report is due to be shared with senior management in March 2023. Business process analysis is also underway, and recommendations are expected to

be made shortly. It is anticipated that responding to the internal audit report and business process work will require additional resources.

Risk management

10. Risk management is a key element in the successful handling of all complaints, especially those which carry the potential for reputational damage to the University and/or claims for compensation.

11. The absence of systems which enable efficient analysis and quantifying of complaint cases:
    i) inhibits the ability to spot trends and learn from complaints, essential at times of high complaint volumes,
    ii) makes quantification of financial or reputational damage impossible,
    iii) makes it more challenging and resource intensive to comply fully with SPSO requirements on data collection.

Equality and Diversity

12. The SPSO carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) before publishing the original model CHP. This report covers complaints received, some of which relate to matters where equality and diversity is a consideration. An internal EIA was carried out prior to the launch of the updated CHP in October 2020.

Next steps

13. Academic Services will be responsible for taking forward points arising from this report.

Consultation

14. The information in this report is based on data provided by all academic units and support areas. We will consider appropriate mechanisms for sharing learning points from this data with management, taking account of the recommendations from the recent Internal Audit.

Freedom of information

15. This paper is open; data from it will be published on the University's complaint handling webpage.

<u>**Author**</u>
Suzanne Holland, Complaints Officer
February 2023

Discussion of complaint handling, 2021-22

1. Introduction

For the purposes of complaint reporting, the University has around 50 'areas', comprised of the Schools, College Offices, and designated support services. Areas report quarterly on complaints resolved at Stage 1, 'frontline'. All Stage 2 complaint investigations are managed centrally by Academic Services.

2. Overview of Complaint Data

Table 1, below, summarises the number of complaints and contacts about complaints recorded by the University in each of the last 5 academic years.

Academic Year	Number of complaints/complaints contacts	
	Central Complaints (contacts)	Complaint Areas (complaints)
2021-22	1019	430
2020-21	1506	642
2019-20	821	Unavailable
2018-19	531	635
2017-18	437	718

Table 1: Complaints and complaints contacts recorded August 2017 – August 2022.

As noted in the 2019-20 annual report, due to increased workload arising from Covid-19, local areas found it challenging to correctly record complaints, with several reporting that they were too busy to collate and submit data. Consequently, the total number of complaints for academic year 2019-20 is less complete than in other years.

2.1 **Complaint Areas**

During the 12-month period 1 August 2021 – 31 July 2022, areas reported a total of 430 complaints (276 from students, 136 from members of the public and a small number from staff members).

2.2   **<u>Central Complaints</u>**

1019 contacts were received during the reporting period (479 from students, 334 from members of the public and the remainder being from staff).

3.   Data Analysis

3.1   **<u>Complaint Areas</u>**

Of the complaints recorded, 93 (22%) originated from one area, the Principal's Office, which accounts for the large number of complaints from members of the public. It is not uncommon for this area to receive a high volume of contacts, but we note the total number of complaints logged by the areas during this period was the lowest it has been since pre-2017-18. Large service areas such as Accommodation, Catering & Events along with Information Services Group accounted for a further 27% of complaints, and Development & Alumni 6%; therefore, cumulatively, less than 45% of the remaining complaints were recorded by the other 48 local areas. In addition, we continue to see a high number of 'nil returns' and non-returns, particularly at School and College level.

Whilst variability in complaint volumes is to be expected area-by-area, given the upward trend in contacts handled centrally in recent years, we are concerned by the number of Schools and other College areas which advised they did not receive a single complaint during 2021-22: analysis of the area logs show that 25% of CMVM, 55% of CSE and 9% of CAHSS fall into this category. (CMVM, 2 academic units; CSE, 5 Schools/academic units; CAHSS, 1 School).

Due to low rates of complaint recording, opportunities may have been missed to enhance the quality of the student learning experience. We therefore ask that College representatives remind appropriate staff of the valuable role complaints play in service improvement and reiterate the SPSO's requirements with respect to accurate logging.

3.1.2   <u>Complaint Themes</u>

As in 2021-22 the impact of Covid-19 remained a key area of dissatisfaction, particularly in the period from August to December of 2021. Complaints related to building access, student experience and student/parent dissatisfaction at paying full tuition fees for 'online' programmes.

3.2 **Central Complaints**

The overall trend in contacts shows an increase year-on-year, even when adjusting for the significant spike in 2020-21. As expected, in this reporting period there was a decrease in contacts compared to the previous academic year; however, we saw an increase of 25% on 2019-20 numbers. This represents a 91% increase in contacts since 2018-19, and the figure is 133% higher than in 2017-18.

Of the 1019 contacts logged in 2021-22:

- 90 (149 in previous year) cases were referred to the appropriate areas for frontline resolution and are therefore included in the 430 area total for the year.
- In 78 (497) contacts, the 'complaint' was resolved through an explanation.
- 179 (214) 'complaints' were not considered – 141 due to 'unacceptable behaviour' on the part of a single complainant, 14 because they were requests for compensation only, which is not covered by the CHP. 13 were time-barred and 11 because they were attempts to re-open complaints which had already been completed through the University's procedures.
- The SPSO contacted Complaints about 35 individual cases, of which 22 related to appeal matters (including the communication of decisions) rather than complaints.
- Some cases were referred for investigation under another procedure – student conduct (39), staff capability/disciplinary (18), or appeal (27). These numbers, though small, are up on pre-pandemic figures, possibly reflecting a greater awareness on the part of students that they can complain about inappropriate behaviour by other students or by staff.
- 148 (158) cases were referred back to complainants for more information or to request third-party authorisation for data protection purposes.
- 13 (38) complaints were raised about matters which were not the responsibility of the University, most originating from members of the public with the majority coming from just two complainants.
- 30 (29) Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests were received.

A continuing trend has been the number of occasions on which staff members have consulted Complaints for advice on cases at an early stage, either to give a 'heads-up' on an imminent complaint, or to check

that their proposed frontline approach to a complaint seems appropriate. Such approaches account for most cases not specified in the breakdown above and demonstrate the value of the complaints staff as an advisory resource, rather than purely handling final-stage casework.

A significant proportion of the explanations offered to members of the public and students related to policy matters, e.g. tuition fee refunds in relation to Covid-19 and industrial action.

3.2.2   Complaint Themes

Covid-19, and the University's response, continued to be the dominant source of complaint during the early part of the reporting period. Complaints regarding industrial action featured from quarter two onwards.

Themes of complaint can be broadly summarised as:

- **University policy** – There was a significant number of requests for tuition fee reductions again this year, largely due to Covid-19 and industrial action. As the SPSO recognise that policy is set at the discretion of the institution, all responses to these complaints must be co-ordinated and composed by the central Complaints team, so that Completion of Procedures can be issued.
- **Parental concerns** – Value for money, practicalities relating to accommodation and access to University facilities, quality of student experience, quality of teaching and the availability of pastoral support.

4.   Summary of Complaints Managed at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the CHP

4.1   **Complaints Considered at Stage 1**

It is believed that most frontline cases were resolved within the five-day time limit, but data on this was not being recorded consistently by areas. Mechanisms for logging and reporting complaints have still not been improved as we had hoped; however, current business process analysis may result in recommendations for future system enhancements.

4.2   **Complaints Considered at Stage 2**

Despite the upward trend in complaints received, the number of cases progressing to a Stage 2 investigation decreased to 9 (14, 24, 17, 9) this academic year, suggesting the majority of complaints are successfully resolved at Stage 1.

As noted in previous reports, in academic year 2018-19 SPSO guidance changed, which resulted in an increase in Stage 2 numbers. Guidance has remained unaltered since and Table 2, below, summarises the Stage 2 investigation outcomes for the past five academic years.

		Academic Year				
		2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Complaint Outcome	Fully Upheld	0	1	0	2	0
	Partially Upheld	7	4	5	1	2
	Not Upheld	2	7	9	13	7
	Withdrawn	0	0	3	1	0
	Resolved By Other Means	0	0	7	0	0
	Still Under Consideration	0	2	0	0	0

Table 2: Stage 2 investigation outcomes August 2017 – August 2022.

Many complaints cover several issues and where any of these are upheld, the outcome for the investigation is recorded as 'partially upheld'.

4.2.1 Stage 2 Investigation Timescales

Investigations should be completed within a maximum of 20 working days, unless an extension is given for good reason. Previous years have indicated that we are rarely able to complete a full investigation within the time limit specified by the SPSO. Of the 9 cases investigated, zero were concluded within 20 working days, 4 within 40 working days, 5 within 26 weeks and none took over 26 weeks. Delays arise for many reasons, but are often in response to requests by the complainant, who may wish an investigation to be put on hold for a time.

The majority of cases that were significantly delayed this year were complex, often requiring multiple interviews; staff availability was also a key factor, particularly during quarters three and four.

4.3 **Learning from Complaints**

There were no commonalities between the upheld and partially upheld complaints during the reporting period; however, improvements to services may arise due to investigation of a complaint, whether the complaint is upheld or not.

Examples of such improvements in the past academic year include:

- Reduction in bulk e-mail correspondence sent to students by a large service area.
- Recommendation to clarify content of one staff policy.
- Website updates, made by multiple areas, to improve clarity of communication.

5.   Cases considered by the SPSO

55 contacts were made by the SPSO, about 35 cases, of which 22 were appeal related. 13 decisions were made regarding complaint cases, and of those considered, none were taken forward to investigation. Notably, the SPSO have endorsed our approach to several policy issues, such as the University's rejection of requests for refunds in relation to Covid-19 and industrial action; they have also supported our decisions regarding when to exclude matters from consideration via the CHP.

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

6 March 2023

Report on the Student Support Services Annual Review

Description of paper

1. Report on the Student Support Service Annual Review (SSSAR) for 2021/22. The paper highlights areas of good practice and key themes arising from the service reports.

Action requested / recommendation

2. To discuss areas of good practice (section 2) and consider whether any further actions are required in relation to the themes (section 3).

Background and context

3. Student Support Services reporting is part of the University's quality assurance framework. Services report on student-facing activity and its impact on student experience. Fourteen reports were submitted this year.

Discussion

4. The paper, attached as Appendix 1, reports on the 2021/22 review process. The interim, streamlined process (as approved by the Committee in May 2020) was retained for the 2021-22 SSSAR cycle. This approach reduced the reporting burden on services during a challenging period while also fulfilling compliance expectations as set out in the Scottish Funding Council guidance for quality.

Resource implications

5. No resource implications are directly associated with the paper which is a report on activity. Resource implications are implicit in existing planning by support services.

Risk management

6. No risk assessment is included in the paper. Services carry out risk assessment on areas for development.

Equality & diversity

7. No equality and diversity implications are directly associated with the paper. Services consider equality impact as part of the annual reporting process.

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

8. The Committee should consider communication, implementation and evaluation of any actions resulting from the paper.

Author
Brian Connolly,
Academic Services

February 2023

Freedom of Information

The paper is **open**.

Author
Brian Connolly,
Academic Services

Report on the Student Support Services Annual Review

1. Reporting Process

1.1   Annual Reporting Process 2021-22

The interim, streamlined process (as approved by the Committee in May 2020) was retained for the 2021-22 Student Support Service Annual Review (SSSAR) cycle. This approach reduced the reporting burden on services during a challenging period while also fulfilling compliance expectations as set out in the UK Quality Code.

Services were asked to focus on the impact of and learning from the Covid-19 pandemic as well as other aspects of the student experience. They were also asked to reflect on whether the industrial action had impacted the quality of provision and student experience, and if so how this was mitigated.

As last year, no formal SSSAR sub-committee meetings were held for this reporting cycle. The reports were made available to SSSAR sub-committee members via the restricted access [SSSAR SharePoint](#) site. Specific reports were allocated to specific members for review and comment, with particular focus on highlighting areas of good practice for sharing. These comments are compiled and provided to each Service in their individual reader reports.

1.2   Process Review

Academic Services will shortly consider options, in consultation with key stakeholders, for a return to normal annual monitoring, review and reporting processes as we move out of the pandemic period. Any proposals for a change to the interim SSSAR process will be presented to SQAC for approval at a future meeting.

2. Summary of Service Reports

Reviewers identified much to commend across the reports and key commendations and good practice are highlighted below. Services reported little or no impact on the student experience of their provision due to industrial action however the pandemic continued to have an impact on all services.

2.1   Accommodation Catering and Events (ACE)

Reviewers commended ACE for the various innovations pioneered during the pandemic, such the "click and collect" and "click and deliver" services, and its

focus on sustainability. Working with the University Islamic Society to address the needs of Muslim students during Ramadan was commended as an example of student partnership working.

2.2   The Advice Place

Reviewers commended the Advice Place for the flexibility of offering both in person and online appointments, recognising the potential benefits of both modalities, and harnessing opportunities from innovations in delivery through the pandemic.

2.3   Careers Service

Reviewers commended the Careers Service on its proactive work to support the new Student Support model and on its excellent work to engage with students more effectively in the early years, gaining insights and creative input from the students themselves.

2.4   Chaplaincy

Reviewers commended the Chaplaincy on the Herald Higher Education Award for best Student Support Service 2022. The Chaplaincy was also commended on extending the Listening Service and the development of the forum on supporting Chinese students, a timely and great opportunity to bring staff and students together to discuss the needs of a large part of the student population.

2.5   Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS)

Reviewers commended the Disability and Learning Support Service's introduction of online appointments, which prior to the pandemic had been restricted by professional and regulatory requirements. This had enabled more effective and efficient use of resources and greater reach to support more students. The DLSS was also commended for implementing a new approach in determining continuing student requirements which removed the need for undertaking repeat face-to-face appointments, with students simply confirming whether their situation had changed or not and assessing whether such an appointment was required.

2.6   Estates

Reviewers commended Estates for the creation of the Head of University Space, tasked with ensuring that space at the University is used to its best

advantage. This post has a welcome overview of the many different projects around new ways of working and bringing good practice ideas from elsewhere. Estates was also commended on the employment of students, something that should be encouraged across the University.

2.7   Finance

Reviewers commended Finance on the provision of bookable appointments for students. Finance was also commended for the move from Direct Debit (DD) to Recurring Card Payment (RCP), an easier process for fee payers to set up.

2.8   Information Services Group (ISG)

Reviewers commended Information Services Group's contribution to student development through the introduction of Digital Skills and Training's Edinburgh Awards in Digital Skills Specialists and Volunteering with Wikipedia, and the employment of over 300 students (including interns and staff roles) across recent years.

2.9   Institute for Academic Development (IAD)

Reviewers commended the Institute for Academic Development on developing several initiatives to help support a wide range of students and staff, including technicians, PhD examiners, PG tutors and UG students. Many of these developments are based on participant feedback and all align with the University's aim to enhance practice through collaboration and partnership. The IAD was also commended for its commitment to a positive working environment and the inclusion of large number of student interns.

2.10   Student Counselling Service (SCS)

Reviewers commended the Student Counselling Service for initiatives aimed at improving access to the service (such as looking at partnerships with external providers for both counselling and other resources) and timely support for students (such as the provision of same day appointments and the ability to hold evening consultations).

2.11   Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA)

Reviewers commended Student Recruitment and Admissions' new approaches which allowed it to adjust well to not only the residual challenges of Covid but also the introduction of more effective systems to support activity.

For example, the transition to a mix of in-person and digital outreach activity and the introduced of new activities for prospective students with widening participation backgrounds including mentoring and socials as well as providing wellbeing packs and starter kits.

2.12   Student Systems and Administration

Reviewers commended Student Systems and Administration on the successful pivot in provision to digital and online services. Reviewers also commended the work with Disability and Learning Support Service to streamline the approach to extra-time allowance for students sitting exams by introducing a single 1-hour entitlement for all eligible students.

2.13   Study and Work Away Service (SWAY)

Reviewers commended the Study and Work Away Service for its online support, providing an accessible route to support for students who may not be able to attend on campus while also supporting the University's sustainability policy by cutting carbon emissions through not having students using cars or buses to attend in person. The SWAY team was also commended for 'going the extra mile' coordinating support for University students having to leave Russia due the invasion of Ukraine.

2.14   University Sport and Exercise

Reviewers commended University Sport and Exercise on increased delivery in three key areas: participation, performance and business whilst still embedding the fundamental ethos aligned with the University Strategy and behaviours charter.

3. Themes arising from service reports

3.1   Hybrid Working

Services noted the positive impact of the move to hybrid working on staff wellbeing. The impact of pivoting to work exclusively online during the pandemic was initially challenging for many staff. However, as services moved to a hybrid model of working a number of benefits to staff wellbeing emerged, with a key indicator being a reduction in staff absences. Services noted improved flexibility and resilience, with staff better able to continue providing support services in the event of unanticipated occurrences which would have previously limited them (e.g. weather, transport, minor illness). It

was also noted that hybrid working allows areas to maximise the usage of space.

However, some Services noted the negative impact of continuing reduced levels of in-person activity. Services reported that inter-team communication and bonding has been harder to achieve within and between service areas when staff do not share the same physical space. Services will continue to explore options in order to determine the right balance of hybrid and in-person work patterns.

3.2   Digital Provision

Services noted that the pandemic accelerated an existing trend to more digital delivery, stimulated by factors such as student expectations, accessibility and resource limitations. While Services expect these factors to continue to drive hybrid provision, it is also expected that the move back to on-campus activity will result in an immediate relative decline in the popularity of digital delivery. Services anticipate that the forthcoming year will remain a period of considerable uncertainty in terms of student and employer expectations and behaviours. In the short term Services intend to offer and experiment with a mix of in-person, digital and hybrid delivery to gauge impact and inform longer term planning.

3.3   People and Money

Services noted on-going concerns with the significant system, process, and policy change across the University, and in particular with the implementation of People & Money (P&M). For many Services this has meant significant changes to ways of working including Human Resources, Finance, and event booking for staff. While Services have fully engaged in this change it has required a large commitment of staff time, and in some cases the new system brings a long term increase to workload. Concerns were raised in relation to the cumulative impact of multiple system changes on staff productivity and wellbeing.

Action: SQAC to consider any further actions in relation to the themes.

Brian Connolly,
Academic Services
February 2023

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

6 March 2023

**Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy:
Minor Amendments**

Description of paper
1. The paper seeks approval for minor amendments to the Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy.

Action requested / recommendation
2. To approve the amendments highlighted in the appendix.

Background and context
3. All policies, regulations, guidance, and other documents approved by the Senate Standing Committees are required to be reviewed periodically, according to a set schedule, to ensure they remain accurate and aligned with current practice and process.

Discussion
4. The paper proposes minor changes to the Policy to ensure it is accurate and aligned with current practice and process.

Resource implications
5. Academic Services has identified no resource implications related to the proposed changes.

Risk management
6. Academic Services has identified no risks associated with the paper as the proposed changes align with current quality processes.

Equality & diversity
7. Academic Services does not anticipate any equality or diversity implications in relation to the proposed amendments. The proposals do not mean any change of practice, only a reallocation of responsibility so an Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
8. If agreed, Committee members should communicate the change to appropriate College Committees. Academic Services will communicate changes to key stakeholders following approval and through its annual communication on policy and regulations updates. Academic Services does not anticipate any impact from the proposals and considers evaluation is unnecessary. However, if Colleges raise any issues Academic Services will review the need for evaluation.

Author

Nichola Kett,
Head of Quality Assurance and
Enhancement Team, Academic Services
February 2023

Presenter

Brian Connolly,
Academic Services

Freedom of Information The paper is open.

Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy

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	Nichola KettSinead Docherty	Academic Policy ManagerOfficer	nicholasinead.kettdocherty@ed.ac.uk

Document control

Dates	**Approved**: 08.09.16	**Starts:** 08.09.16	**Equality impact assessment:** 25.05.16	**Amendments:** 0627.038.2319	**Next Review:** 202332/243

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	Advice and guidance: 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

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 for Higher Education
- 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

SQAC 22/23 3F

- 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

SQAC 22/23 3F

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 ~~B~~boards of ~~E~~examiners will have met by the time the annual report is being prepared and External ~~E~~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 send them to Academic Services and the college dean for quality.
* Following receipt of the reports the 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.
* College quality committees will consider the report of the sub group.
* 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 at University level. Colleges will similarly report to schools on actions raised for attention at college level.

College Annual Quality Report

SQAC 22/23 3F

Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy

THE UNIVERSITY *of* **EDINBURGH**

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.

6 March 2023~~27~~
~~**August 2019**~~

SQAC 22/23 3F

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

6 March 2023

**Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting:
Reporting Template Enhancements**

Description of paper
1. Seeks approval of changes to the School and Programme annual reporting templates for 2022/23.

Action requested / recommendation
2. To approve the changes to the report templates.

Background and context
3. At the September 2022 meeting SQAC agreed that the streamlined, focused approach to reporting adopted during the pandemic had worked well. However, it also agreed that a themed template would allow for a more standardised approach to reporting while also allowing Schools the scope to expand on specific local issues and activities. It was agreed that Academic Services would explore reporting options, and the plans for the next QA reporting cycle, and discuss with the College Deans during the first semester.

Discussion

4. The templates have been amended to ensure that key institutional issues are reported on where required (by the addition of specific reporting boxes) while also allowing schools/deaneries the opportunity to report on issues specific to the local area (with a free text box). We have also reordered the templates to ensure that local issues/comments are considered first on each template.

5. The amended templates were discussed at the School Directors of Quality Network on Monday 28 November 2022 with no negative comments received.

6. At the December 2023 meeting SQAC agreed that the templates should be amended to ensure that the general reflection (free text) box is placed towards the top of the template and that a box requiring a specific response on postgraduate research provision should be added to the School template. An additional box has also been added to the Programme template requiring a reflection on the impact of the industrial action.

7. We know there is a desire to make further changes to support reflection on postgraduate research provision and we hope to take this forward next year.

Resource implications
8. The changes are relatively minor with the addition of a few extra reporting boxes.

Risk management
9. There are risks associated with ineffective monitoring, review and reporting.

Equality & diversity
10. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the normal process. The templates encourage reflection on key institutional reporting priorities and demographic data is available on these in PowerBI.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
11. Academic Services will work with College Deans of Quality and College quality contacts to continue to communicate with colleagues in key roles at appropriate times.

<u>**Author**</u>
Brian Connolly, Academic Services
February 2023

Freedom of Information
Open

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH - ANNUAL MONITORING 2022/23
Programme/Programme Cluster Report

Guidance:

- The streamlined approach employed during the pandemic has been retained however the template has been slightly adapted with the addition of separate boxes for key institutional priorities in order to ensure that each is addressed explicitly in the report.
- Covers all types of credit-bearing provision: undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research, including collaborations.
- The report should be **brief** (suggested length of no more than four pages). Use bullet points where possible.
- Schools/Deaneries decide on the optimum clustering of programmes to enable effective reflection whilst avoiding duplication of effort.
- Reports should not contain information which identifies any individual – Data Protection Policy
- **Deadline**: to be determined by the School/Deanery.
- **Data:** Insights Hub | Student Analytics, Insights & Modelling SharePoint | PowerBI help videos

Programme(s):	
Report written by (include contributors):	
Date of report:	

1. Please report on progress with actions planned in last year's report.

2. Please use this free text space as an opportunity for general reflection on the past year or other aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience (which are not addressed elsewhere in the report).

3. What has worked well this past year?   This could include: changes to courses, including content, assessment and delivery methods; and changes to processes.

4. What could have worked better/requires further development?   Please identify any actions or areas for improvement.

5. **Please report on the approach and effectiveness of student voice activities in line with the new Student Voice Policy and the move to locally managed course level feedback.**

6. **Please report on activities to align existing practice with the new Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities.**

7. **Has the industrial action impacted the quality of provision and student experience, and, if so, how this has been mitigated?**

February 2023

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH - ANNUAL MONITORING 2022/23 College Report

Guidance:
- The streamlined approach employed during the pandemic has been retained.
- Covers all types of credit-bearing provision: undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research, including collaborations. The report may be split by type of provision.
- The report should be **brief** (suggested length of no more than four pages). Use bullet points where possible.
- Reports should not contain information which identifies any individual – Data Protection Policy
- **Deadline**: TBC

1. Reflection on progress with, and effectiveness of, actions from the last year

2. Changes to/additions made to actions from last year

3. Actions
Actions identified for the College: **1)** **2)**
Actions requested of the University: **1)** **2)**

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH - ANNUAL MONITORING 2022/23
School/Deanery Report

Guidance:
- The streamlined approach employed during the pandemic has been retained however the template has been slightly adapted with the addition of separate boxes for **postgraduate research** and **key institutional priorities** in order to ensure that each is addressed explicitly in the report.
- Covers all types of credit-bearing provision: undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research, including collaborations. The report may be split by type of provision.
- The report should be **brief** (suggested length of no more than four pages). Use bullet points where possible.
- The report will require discussion and input from across the School/Deanery.
- Reports should not contain information which identifies any individual – Data Protection Policy
- **Deadline**:
- **The report should be informed by reflection on the following data and evidence:** Insights Hub | Student Analytics, Insights & Modelling SharePoint (the Team will provide a School Analysis) | PowerBI help videos | updated Data to Support Annual Quality Processes

School/Deanery:	
Report written by (include contributors):	
Date of report:	

1. **Please report on progress with actions planned in last year's report (see Aide Memoire from Academic Services).**

   Commented [BC1]: Six core response boxes (which should remain static from year to year).

2. **Please use this free text space as an opportunity for general reflection on the past year or issues specific to the School/Deanery which are not addressed elsewhere in the report.**

3. **Please provide a specific reflection on postgraduate research (PGR) provision.**
   Consideration could be given to School/Deanery processes for monitoring student progress and identifying issues related to student progress, including issues such as: PGR training and career development; annual reviews (e.g. outcomes – what % have repeat reviews or are downgraded); supervisor training (e.g. % uptake); time to completion and completion rates; community building; and experiences of distance learning.

4. **What has worked well this past year?**
   Please include specific examples (2-3) of good practice for sharing.

5. **What could have worked better/requires further development?**
   Actions for the School/Deanery during the following year.

6. **Tell us about any barriers or challenges from outwith your School/Deanery.**
   Please identify areas for further development or improvement at College and University level (up to 5 bullet points).

7. **Please report on the approach and effectiveness of student voice activities in line with the new Student Voice Policy and the move to locally managed course level feedback.**

   Commented [BC2]: Key institutional issues (which may change in number and topic from year to year).

8. **Please report on activities to align existing practice with the new Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities.**

9. **Please report on the effectiveness of student support arrangements in relation to both the Personal Tutor system and the implementation of the new student support model.**

10. **Has the industrial action impacted the quality of provision and student experience, and, if so, how this has been mitigated?**

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

6 March 2023

Student Support – Evaluation of model

Description of paper
1. This paper provides an update on the work currently underway to evaluate the implementation of the new student support model and key themes which have emerged through evaluation to-date.
2. The paper also updates on on-going discussions regarding the long-term monitoring of the support model as it transitions from implementation to business as usual.

Action requested / recommendation
3. The committee are asked to note and discuss this paper.

Background and context
4. The new model of student support has now been rolled out to c.7000 students across the University. As part of this implementation, Student Advisers, Academic Cohort Leads and Wellbeing Advisers have been appointed to provide an eco-system of support for students throughout their studies.
5. The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling (SAIM) team have worked with the project team, Colleges, Schools and EUSA throughout implementation to undertake a range of evaluation activities which aim to understand how the model is being implemented across Phase 1 Schools focusing on what is working well, and what needs to be developed as the model is rolled out across the institution in 2023/24 academic year. A full outline of what evaluation activity has taken place and what is scheduled across semester 2, is available [here](#).
6. A further piece of work is underway to identify an approach to evaluating the support model in the long term, including how to embed a continuous learning approach within existing quality assurance mechanisms.
7. As part of this work, SAIM have identified existing baselines measures which will enable monitoring of shifts in student support and related activity. Appendix A confirms existing student satisfaction measures gathered through student surveys. Work is currently underway to establish and gather additional baseline data from Phase 2 Schools prior to the full model roll out.

Discussion
Implementation evaluation
8. A paper was presented to the Student Support Project Board in January 2023 providing an update from evaluation activity in semester 1. This included feedback from Student Advisers, Wellbeing Advisers, Cohort Leads, academic colleagues and students. The paper included four recommended areas for enhancement ahead of the full roll out of the model:

- Enhanced training and induction schedule for incoming staff, of both Central and School processes, systems, policies and institutional knowledge;

- Improvements to core processes such as timetabling and course enrolment – these are being addressed through the Student Lifecycle Management Group;
- Clear definition of roles and responsibilities within Schools, in new roles and existing roles to provide clarity and avoid duplication and/or confusion (e.g. between student support teams and teaching offices);
- Clear articulation of the role of the Wellbeing Service in the support model – with a focus on business processes and decision making.

9. The Board approved these recommendations and work is currently underway in each of these areas to ensure readiness for September 2023.
10. Evaluation work continues across semester two, with a focus on student experience and Cohort Lead activity. Data is now available regarding referrals to the Wellbeing Service[1] and student interactions with Student Advisers,[2] providing oversight of support requirement for students.

Continuous evaluation
11. A second paper outlining considerations for the long-term evaluation of the model was presented to the Project Board in January. The Board noted and supported the direction.
12. Early discussions in relation to existing quality assurance processes have begun within Registry Services (between Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling (SAIM) and Academic Services). Conversations with colleagues to develop a continuous learning model will begin across the institution from March. This will include consultation with academic colleagues who specialise in social research, students, professional services colleagues and EUSA.
13. This approach will support understanding of the success of the model as a support structure for students and staff at the University, and should be viewed as a continuous learning model, wherein evaluation, adaption, development and accountability are embedded in institutional practices, and which responds to shifts in student and staff needs and behaviours, technology and infrastructure.
14. The overall aim of this will be to agree a structured approach to evaluation, including a suite of indicators (quantitative and qualitative) to support this work on an on-going basis, and an agreed mechanism for oversight and accountability as the model embeds within the University ecosystem.
15. Early considerations regarding measuring the success of the model are outlined in Appendix B.

Resource implications
16. Resource will be managed through Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team, working in partnership with the student support project, Academic Services, College Implementation Groups and the Student Lifecycle Management Group (SLMG).

Risk management

---

[1] Wellbeing Referrals
[2] Student Support Meetings

17. The University is investing in student support which is part of our drive to mitigate concerns in student satisfaction. Effective governance of evaluation and monitoring seeks to mitigate risks to the success of the new model. Failure to deliver this model caries reputational risk, does not deliver student experience as set out in strategy 2030 and continues to affect the University's standing in national league tables.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

18. This paper would support the SDG "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" as part the strategic objective to improve student experience. The proposals would not hinder the achievement of any other UN SDGs or exacerbate the Climate Emergency.

Equality & diversity

19. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed. The work undertaken will support greater equality, diversity and inclusion for students within our community.

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

20. This paper presents an update for discussion. Action agreed will be shared with the student support project board and the operational management group which links with the College implementation groups.

Author	Presenter
Marianne Brown	*Marianne Brown*
Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling	*Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling*
22 February 2023	*22 February 2023*

Freedom of Information *(Is the paper 'open' or 'closed') open*
Open

Appendix A: Existing student satisfaction measures

Survey	Question
Pulse Survey	I feel like I am part of the University of Edinburgh community
Pulse Survey	I am satisfied with the central support services the University offers e.g., Careers Service, well-being services including Disability and Learning Support, Student Counselling
Pulse Survey	I know there are people and services to support me within my School or Deanery
Pulse Survey	I feel listened to by staff at the University of Edinburgh
Pulse - optional	I am satisfied with the support provided by the student support team in my School
PTES	There is guidance on how to access support
PTES	There are people and services to support me
PTES	The support for my health and wellbeing meets my needs
PTES	The support for academic skills meets my needs
NSS – existing data	I have been able to contact staff when I need to
NSS – existing data	I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course
NSS – existing data	Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course
NSS – existing data	I feel part of a community of staff and students
NSS - institutional	There is sufficient provision of welfare and student services to meet my needs
NSS - institutional	When needed the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful
NSS - new	How well have teaching staff supported your learning?
NSS - new	How easy was it to contact teaching staff when you needed to?
NSS - new	To what extent are students' opinions about the course valued by staff
NSS - new	How well communicated was information about your university/college's mental wellbeing support services?

Appendix B: Measuring success – early considerations

- The *functional specification – student perspective* sets out the principles of the model in relation to student experience, providing a baseline for the support students should have access to. While there will be variation in practical elements of implementation, a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures/indicators will be determined to ensure approaches are effective and meet the baseline requirement.
- There will be a focus on developing measures which assess quality and value, rather than quantity e.g. meetings with students
- Existing student satisfaction (e.g. NSS, PTES, PRES) measures provide a useful benchmark but have limitations. These will need to be reviewed, and any gaps considered as part of the wider strategy on capturing student voices. As part of this, work on understanding (and setting) student expectations will be key.
- Existing data (outwith satisfaction) will be reviewed to understand opportunities and limitations, for example progression, outcomes, interruptions, withdrawals. This will include links to other support services, for example ESC (Extensions and Special Circumstances).
- The model is changing ways of working and the ways in which academic and professional services colleagues interact with each other to support students. An important part of evaluation will be the behavioural and cultural change e.g. new ways of collaboration, shift in utilisation of skillsets. A component of evaluation will be to determine indicators of confidence and trust in the model and these shifts.
- Measures relating to staff and staff experience will continue to play a key role in evaluation and will contribute to the principle of continuous learning and development of the model.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

6 March 2023

Coordinating Institutional Activities on Assessment and Feedback

Description of paper

1. The Senate Standing Committees – Senate Education Committee (SEC), Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), and Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) - and the Curriculum Transformation Programme, have a range of assessment-related activities underway at present. This paper provides an overview of current or planned activities – dividing them into two categories:

   - Activities relating to strategy and policy
   - Activities relating to guidance, procedures, data, systems and evaluation

2. The paper sets out proposals for coordinating and governing these activities – which involves establishing two new groups. Since the governance arrangements will relate to the work of the three committees, they will all need to approve the arrangements. At their meetings in January SEC and APRC confirmed that they supported the arrangements subject to fine-tuning the exact arrangements for the membership of the groups, and making more explicit how the groups will engage with stakeholders and with other strategic institutional projects. We are now seeking SQAC's approval for the relevant aspect of the arrangements – which relate to the second group (whose remit would cover Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group).

Action requested / recommendation

3. The Committee is invited to approve the establishment of the new *Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group,* as set out in paragraphs 12 to 18.

4. If the Committee supports the establishment of this group, we will liaise with SEC and APRC to agree the final version of the membership and remit for the group.

Background and context

5. For a long time, the University has regarding strengthening assessment and a feedback arrangements as a high priority, in the context of persistently low scores for assessment and feedback questions in the National Student Survey. Assessment and feedback is a key theme within the Curriculum Transformation Programme, and the report of the University's 2021 Enhancement-Led Institutional Review highlighted the area as a key priority for development activities, stating that:

   "Over an extended period of time, the University has considered a broad evidence-base which has highlighted concerns about assessment and feedback and this remains an area of challenge for the institution. The

University is asked to make demonstrable progress, within the next academic year, in prioritising the development of a holistic and strategic approach to the design and management of assessment and feedback. The University should also progress with proposals for the establishment of a common marking scheme to ensure comparability of student assessment processes across Schools."

6. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent return of many activities to campus, the University has needed to consider a range of issues regarding the design and practical operation of assessment – for example, the operation of examinations in an online and on-campus format. Developments in artificial intelligence and other technologies have also stimulated institutional discussion and activities about assessment practice – particularly in the context of plagiarism and its detection. In addition, debates at sector level, for example on the topics of 'grade inflation', and the University's commitment to equality and diversity and widening participation, have generated a range of activities relating to understanding student progression and achievement.

7. As a result of these and other drivers, the University has initiated a range of different institutional initiatives on assessment and feedback. However, there is scope to coordinate and govern these activities more effectively, in order to avoid duplication and deliver positive synergies between different strands of work, and to ensure that the institution has sufficient oversight of progress in this area.

8. The Annex to this paper summarises the main activities currently underway (focussing on those that are the responsibility of the Senate Standing Committees). It highlights some outstanding issues (where the relevant committee has agreed that work should take place but no plan of action is in place) and some areas of potential overlap between different strands of activity. Paragraphs 8 to 17 propose the establishment of two new groups to coordinate and govern these activities.

Discussion

Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group

9. SEC plans to establish a strategy group with a remit to address the following:

- Institutional strategy around assessment and feedback
- Institutional strategy around academic integrity in assessment
- Institutional policy around mode of examinations from 2023-24 onwards
- Overseeing Schools' activities to align with the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities, and coordinating management responses where required

10. The group will report to SEC. The membership would consist of:

- Prof Tina Harrison, Vice-Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (Convener)
- Prof Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal (Students)

- Lucy Evans (Deputy Secretary, Students)
- Deans of Learning and Teaching for each College
- One School representative from each College (either a Head of School or Director of Learning and Teaching)
- Students' Associated representative
- Other staff would be invited to contribute on particular issues

11. The Curriculum Transformation Programme established an Assessment and Feedback Group, which led the development of the Assessment and Feedback Principles. One option may be to revise the remit, membership, and reporting lines of that group so that it can cover these proposed activities along with its current remit. However, in practice, that group has not been active since 2021-22, and, while there is overlap between these proposed activities and Curriculum Transformation, it is important that the University makes progress on a range of activities in advance of the timescales for implementing Curriculum Transformation. Therefore, it will be more appropriate to have a newly-constituted strategy group reporting directly to the Senate Education Committee.

Assessment and Feedback Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group

12. We propose to establish a second group with a remit to address the following:

- Develop institutional advice and guidance on the practical management of online and on-campus examinations
- Oversee the development of academic misconduct procedures*
- Coordinate the evaluation of the operation of examinations during 2022-23 and beyond (including the planned evaluation of the Dec 22 diet)
- Coordinate activities to enhance institutional data on student achievement, progression and completion – with a view to providing a single source of truth in a user-friendly format
- Coordinate practical activities (eg development of guidance) to support the implementation of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities
- Develop mechanisms for evaluation and monitoring of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities

* In practice, a separate sub-group would be required for this, with input from College and School Academic Misconduct Officers.

13. The group would report to the three Senate Standing Committees on issues related to their respective remits.

14. The membership would include:

- Lucy Evans (Deputy Secretary, Students) (Convener)
- Lisa Dawson (Academic Registrar)
- Prof Tina Harrison (Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, and convener of SQAC)
- Dr Paul Norris (Convener of APRC)

- Deans of Learning and teaching for three Colleges
- Deans of Quality for three Colleges
- Heads of Academic Administration from each College
- Representative of Strategic Planning
- Representative of Student Systems
- Students' Association representative
- Academic Services representative
- Information Services Group's Learning, Teaching and Web Services team representative
- Curriculum Transformation Programme representative
- Other staff would be invited to contribute on particular issues

Timelines, next steps and reporting arrangements

15. If the Committee supports the establishment of the second group, then we will seek SEC and APRC approval for the final membership and remit of the group (see paragraph 4).

16. Each group will start by developing a workplan, taking account of the planned and outstanding issues set out in the Annex, and the level of professional services resources available to undertake the relevant work (see paragraph 19). They would present their workplans to the relevant Senate Committee(s) for approval. If the groups identify any urgent issues, they would oversee progress on these over the next several months in parallel with developing their workplans.

17. The groups would report to the relevant Senate Committees to provide an overview of progress against their workplan at least once in 2022-23 and once in 2023-24. Where they require formal Committee approval (for example, for a change to policy), they would submit formal proposals to the relevant Committee.

18. The Committees would review the operation of the two groups at the end of 2023-24 and decide whether they should continue.

Resource implications

19. Academic Services and the broader Registry Services will need to assess the resource requirements of supporting these two groups, once the Committees have signalled that they are content with the direction of travel, and the groups have developed their workplans. As part of this, the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team would play a key role in supporting data-related elements of the work. In addition, the Curriculum Transformation Programme have signalled that they may be able to provide some support. The workplan of each group will need to take account of available resources – this is likely to require a degree of prioritisation, and may require the phasing of some activities.

Risk management

20. The recommendations within the paper aim to enhance the assessment and feedback experience for students, reducing the risks associated with poor

performance in assessment and feedback and the likelihood of an unsatisfactory outcome in a future ELIR from not taking action

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals
21. Not Applicable.

Equality & diversity
22. One of the Assessment and Feedback principles directly addresses inclusive assessment practice and equality in assessment outcomes, and it is likely that some of the planned activities of the Guidance, Procedures, Data and Evaluation Group would relate to developing the University's understanding of student progression, attainment and completion for students with different characteristics and backgrounds.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed
23. Academic Services would use the Senate Committees' Newsletter to communicate regarding the establishment of these groups. Paragraphs 15 to 18 set out implementation and evaluation arrangements.

Author	**Presenter**
Tom Ward	Tom Ward
Director of Academic Services	
15 February 2023	

Freedom of Information
Open

Annex - overview of current institutional activities relating to assessment and feedback

1 Activities relating to strategy and policy

1.1 Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities (SEC)

At its 8 September 2022 meeting, the Senate Education Committee (SEC) approved the new Principles and Priorities, and asked Schools to implement them on the following basis:

- 2022-23 implement some specific elements of the document in full, plus review current assessment and feedback practice against the Principles and Priorities, identifying gaps and actions to be taken forward in the second year of operation, 2023-24; and

- 2023-24, demonstrate full alignment with the Principles for all their taught portfolio, ensuring baseline expectations are covered, and demonstrate significant action against the Priorities in preparation for Curriculum Transformation.

Over summer 2022 and Semester One of 2022-23, the University is undertaking the following activities to support the launch of the Principles and Priorities:

- During Semester one of 22-23, Prof Colm Harmon (Vice-Principal, Students), Prof Tina Harrison (Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance) and Lucy Evans (Deputy Secretary, Students) met with the senior leadership team in each School separately to discuss progress with the assessment and feedback principles and priorities as part of a wider discussion on student experience.
- The Directors of Teaching Network meeting on 19 October 2022 focussed on the Principles and Priorities.
- A Teaching Matters series comprising eight blogs has provided further discussion of the Principles and Priorities : https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/assessment-and-feedback-principles-and-priorities-theme/
- A student intern, working as part of the Curriculum Transformation Programme, has developed an initial draft of student-facing guidance that requires some further development before making available to students (aiming to have this available by the end of Semester 2, 2022/23).
- Prof Harrison and Dr Neil Lent (Institute for Academic Development) are coordinating a series of seminar/events with internal and external speakers to support assessment development (linking to the key Principles and Priorities).

1.2 Futures for Assessment and Misconduct (SEC)

At its 10 November 2022 meeting, SEC discussed a paper from Professor Sian Bayne (Assistant Principal, Digital Education), which provided "a brief overview of current trends and trajectories in digital assessment and plagiarism detection, with a particular focus on 1) the implications of AI-assisted text generation and 2) rising concern over routine use of plagiarism detections systems such as Turnitin." The

paper aimed to "inform a wider institutional debate on the future of assessment" – and it proposed "that Senate Education Committee lead on more fully developing a response to these new trajectories, building on the new Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities, and for implementation through the Curriculum Transformation Programme and the Digital Strategy."

While SEC endorsed the paper's analysis, it did not approve specific actions to address the issues highlighted in the paper.

There is potential overlap between any activities that SEC may wish to undertake in response to the paper, and work to support the implementation of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Practices (which includes, for example, a principle around Assessment design to "support and encourage good academic practices and minimise opportunities or incentives for academic misconduct"). There is also potential overlap with the ARPC work on redeveloping academic misconduct procedures (See 2.2).

1.3   Academic Integrity (SEC)

In Spring 2022, SEC held a special meeting with representatives from the University of Sydney, and the College Academic Misconduct Officers, to discuss how to approach academic integrity. While this meeting did not lead to any formal actions, it did highlight various areas for potential development. One potential development was to create a course for students on the topic of academic integrity. The Institute for Academic Development has made progress on this issue – having identified a resource that the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (MVM) digital education team had developed (see separate January 2023 SEC paper on Academic Best Practice).

In its plan for 22-23, SEC agreed to follow up these discussions with Sydney by focusing on academic integrity. At present, SEC has not established a particular plan to address this – although some other activities set out in this Annex (for example, 1.4, 2.2, 2.3) are engaging with aspects of academic integrity.

1.4   Examination formats (SEC)

At its meeting on 10 November 2022, SEC discussed the issue of examination format (whether examinations should be held on-campus or online), and considered a report on the outcomes of a survey commissioned by the Students' Association on the subject of in-person examinations. The Committee agreed to some follow-up actions:

- Prof Colm Harmon to write to Schools highlighting issues set out in the Students' Association report (which he did in December 2022); and

- Setting up a short-life working group to consider the policy on the mode (online or on-campus) for resit exams in summer 2023 – with a view to securing a formal SEC position in Jan 2023 (see separate January 2023 SEC paper on August 2023 resits).

These actions relate to examinations held in 2022-23. If the Committee wishes to determine policy in relation to the format of examinations from 2023-24 onwards, it will need to agree a position on this by the end of session 2022-23.

1.5 Curriculum Transformation Programme

The implementation of CTP will have implications for assessment and feedback practices - the CTP has included a working group on Assessment and Feedback, which led the development of the Assessment and Feedback Priorities and Principles document.

2 Activities relating to assessment and feedback guidance, procedures, data, systems and evaluation

2.1 Examination formats (APRC)

In November 2022, the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) approved some guidance for Schools / Colleges on the practical arrangements for managing online exams in 22-23 (focussing on submission deadlines). The Convener of APRC plans to take a broader look at the practical arrangements for online examinations ahead of 2023-24. APRC has agreed that future guidance would take account of exams for wholly online programmes (a category excluded from the guidance approved by APRC in November 2022).

2.2 Academic misconduct procedure (APRC)

In November 2022, APRC agreed some relatively modest amendments to the academic misconduct procedures. Academic Services plan to communicate these changes in January 2023, with a view to them taking immediate effect.

APRC plans to consider some more substantive changes to those procedures later in 2022-23.

2.3 Own Work Declarations (SEC)

The Institute for Academic Development has worked with Information Services Group on proposals for alternate ways to handle Own Work Declarations. They are presenting a separate paper on this to SEC's January 2023 meeting.

2.4 Evaluation of the implementation of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities (SEC)

When SEC approved the Principles and Priorities, the paper said that: "The Committee will need to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Principles – including determining measures of success, and deciding the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. We will bring proposals to a future meeting for how to approach this."

SEC has not yet discussed how to approach this evaluation. However, at its meeting in December 2022, the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) agreed that the 2022-23 annual School Quality Reports (which they will submit in August 2023) should include the question "Please report on activities to align existing practice with the new Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities". This will provide one element of an overall approach to monitoring and evaluation.

2.5 Evaluation of the operation of examinations in the December 2022 diet (SEC)

At its 10 November 2022 meeting, SEC agreed to conduct a review of the December 2022 examination diet early in 2023. It has not yet considered any proposals for how to approach this review. If it wants to take account of the outcomes of course results from that diet, these will not be available until Boards of Examiners meet in January / early February 2023 to confirm Semester one results (deadline 9 February 2023 for publishing UG course results, and 17 February 2023 for publishing PGT course results).

2.6 Senate Quality Assurance Committee – annual reporting on undergraduate degree award (SQAC)

SQAC has an established practice of reviewing a report of data on UG degree award / classification on an annual basis, based on a detailed analysis (including benchmarking with comparator institutions, plus some analysis by protected characteristic) produced by Strategic Planning. Academic Services circulates this data to Schools and invites significant outliers to provide more detailed reflection. SQAC considers this dataset each Spring, and plans to discuss the next annual report on 27 April 2023. It wants the next report to include additional focus on the following:

> "… a trend analysis excluding data from the 2019-20 and 2020-21 pandemic years. The analysis should also include a comparison of entry qualifications to exit qualifications both at subject area level and institutional level to understand the trajectory of students and the value added by the University. The report should also include analysis of failure rates to understand which groups may need enhanced support."

This work has potential to overlap with the activities set out in 2.7 and 2.8 below.

2.7 Quality Data Task Group (SQAC)

The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team maintains an 'Insights Hub' suite of reports that Schools use for annual quality reporting (and that we use for periodic reviews) includes standard reports covering the following categories:

- Applications
- Course marks
- Progression
- Awards
- Graduate outcomes survey

- National Student Survey results

In 2020, SQAC agreed to set up a task group to explore ways to do more systematic monitoring of retention, progression and attainment data. In practice, due to the pandemic, staff changes, and other factors, this group has not yet made any progress. SQAC considered an update at its meeting in February 2022, and is committed to undertaking more work on this in the current session. However, it has not yet established a workplan. Were SQAC to move forward with this work, it would have potential to overlap with work under 2.6, 2.8 and 2.9, and (depending on the focus of the evaluation, 2.5).

2.8   Equality Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) Committee activities

EDMARC oversees the production of annual equality and diversity reports, which include a detailed analysis of UG / PGT / PGT attainment by protected characteristic (including some data by School):

https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/reports/edmarc

EDIC is undertaking work to understand the underlying causes of the awarding gaps for students from different protected characteristics, and the Convener of EDIC is exploring potential ways to collect more granular and accessible data on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students.

2.9   Research into Undergraduate Non-Continuation (SEC)

In 2018-19, Academic Services and Strategic Planning commissioned two PhD students to undertake a very thorough analysis of non-completion data. The Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (replaced by the Senate Education Committee from 2019-20) discussed the report in November 2018:

https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/agendapapers20181114.pdf

The report include statistical modelling of non-continuation by a range of student characteristics, and identified various areas for further exploration. At its meeting in November 2018, the Committee made various recommendations for follow-up actions, and at its meeting in January 2019, LTC considered a paper setting up proposals for further research into the impact of other factors on non-continuation.

2.10   Curriculum Transformation Programme – work on inclusion and accessibility

The CTP has commissioned Advance HE to deliver a programme of learning and engagement to ensure the Curriculum Transformation Programme embeds ED&I throughout its strategy and implementation. This will include a desk-based analysis, which will include an analysis of:

- **Awarding gaps** by protected characteristics

- **Participation gaps** by protected characteristics

Advance HE is in the process of undertaking this work, and plans to submit an interim report in the near future.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

6 March 2023

Schedule of review for policies, regulations and guidance

Description of paper

1. This paper seeks the Committee's views on proposed changes to the schedule for reviewing policies, regulations, and guidance documents which are the responsibility of the Senate Committees.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The paper invites the Committee to agree to the schedule of reviews set out in the 'proposed new revision session' column in the attached Annex. The Annex sets out the schedule, and the policies, regulation and guidance documents that are the responsibility of QAC are highlighted.

3. The paper below provides reasons for the proposed new revision schedule, and outlines a broad approach to grouping and reviewing policies going forward.

4. The proposals below and the revised schedule in the Annex were presented to APRC on 26 January 2023, and received approval. A version of this paper is also being presented to the March 2023 meeting of Senate Education Committee, to seek agreement on the new review dates that they are responsible for.

Background and context

5. All policies, regulations, guidance, and other documents approved by the Senate Standing Committees include cover sheets which state the date that the Committee will next review the document. Typically, review dates are set three to four years after the initial approval or most recent review.

6. Academic Services oversees the schedule for reviewing these documents, and supports the review process for the majority of the documents. However, due to factors associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, and staff capacity issues in Academic Services over the last two years, there is a significant backlog of documents for review. It is not realistic to address this backlog in full in 2022-23, both because of the limited capacity within Academic Services to support reviews, and capacity for the Committees and stakeholders to engage with reviews. Therefore, this paper proposes a new schedule for reviewing the documents.

7. In proposing a new review schedule we have taken account of the following factors:

   • Whether we are aware of any urgent need to review and revise a document (for example, due to changes in external regulatory context, or internal stakeholder feedback); and

- Whether it will be necessary to review and amend any documents in order to facilitate institutional change projects.

8. The University's suite of academic policies, regulations, guidance and other documents has developed incrementally over a long period of time. As a result, some related and complementary documents have different review schedules. We think it would be beneficial for the Standing Committees to group the policies and other documents in thematic cluster, and where possible to review each cluster in the same year. The paper proposes a way of clustering the documents

Discussion

9. We propose the following broad clusters:

- Casework
- Student support
- Programme and course approval
- Programme and course delivery
- Assessment and progression (Taught and Research)
- Assessment and progression (Taught)
- Assessment and progression (Research)
- Quality assurance
- Staff roles
- Other

10. The attached annex assigns each document to one of these clusters, and proposes a schedule of review.

10. We are proposing the following broad approach to each schedule:

Cluster	Main points
Casework	- Conduct of Student Conduct already reviewed and amended in 2022-23 – review again no later than 2025-26 (probably earlier) - Support for Study Policy and associated flowchart - review in 2022-23 (one year ahead of schedule), subject to current discussions hosted by Deputy Secretary (Students) - Procedure for Dealing with Suspected Academic Misconduct – consider further changes during 2022-23 - Student Appeal Regulations – review in 2024-25 as currently scheduled
Student support	- Academic and Pastoral Support Policy – review later in 2022-23 to take account of implementation of new student support model - Student Maternity and Family Leave Policy – consider technical change in 2022-23 but schedule more substantive review for 2023-24

	• Authorised Interruption of Studies – delay review until 2024-25
Programme and course approval	• UG and PG Degree Regulations – review in 2022-23 • Models of Degree Types, Framework for Curricula, and Degree Programme Specification documentation – review as part of Curriculum Transformation (at present, it appears likely that the relevant work would be in 2023-24) • Consider minor changes to Programme and Course Approval and Maintenance Policy in 2022-23, to address feedback regarding section on timescales for publishing course and programme information, but otherwise do not review until 2024-25 (unless Curriculum Transformation requires an earlier review) • Review the suite of documents related to collaboration with external partners in 2024-25
Programme and course delivery	• Further consultation with stakeholders required regarding timescale for review for many policies in this category
Assessment and Progression (Taught and Research)	• Special Circumstances Policy – currently reviewing this policy as part of the Extensions and Special Circumstances task group • Possible technical updated required in 2022-23. Otherwise, delay review of Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies to 2024-25
Assessment and progression (Taught)	• Taught Assessment Regulations – review in 2022-23 • Review all policies related to External Examiners for taught programmes in 2023-24 (see note below about the committees' responsible for these documents) • Review all other documents in 2024-25 or 2025-26 (unless Curriculum Transformation necessitates an earlier review)
Assessment and progression (Research)	• Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees – review in 2022-23 • Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students – update in 2022-23 • Review other PGR assessment policies (along with associated guidance / forms) as a suite in 2024-25
Quality assurance	• Technical changes to policies around annual review and Student Staff Liaison Committees in 2022-23, with a view to more substantive review (if required) in 2023-24 to take account of SFC Tertiary Quality Review • Student Voice Policy – review in 2024-25

Staff roles	• Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators – review in 2023-24 • School Director of Quality Role – review in 2023-24 • Course Organiser Outline of Role – delay review to 2024-25
Other	• Performance Sport Policy – delay review until 2023-24 • Visiting Student and Non-Graduating Student Policy – delay review until 2024-25 • Further consultation with stakeholders required regarding timescale for review for some policies in this category

Resource implications

11. The process of reviewing and updating regulations, policies and guidelines has significant resource implications for Academic Services, and for stakeholders that would contribute to review processes. This paper seeks to manage these resource implications while meeting internal or external requirements for reviewing and updating the documents.

Risk management

12. The paper seeks to ensure that the University has a fit for purpose suite of academic regulations, policies and guidelines that will assist it to manage risks associated with teaching and research student activities.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

13. Not applicable.

Equality & diversity

14. Academic Services would undertake Equality Impact Assessments when developing new policies or making substantive changes to existing policies.

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

15. Academic Services would take responsibility for coordinating the process of reviewing the documents.

Author

Kathryn Nicol
Head of Academic Policy and Regulations
Academic Services
22 February 2023

Freedom of Information

Open

Category	Title	Document Type	Last Updated	Update Due	Proposed new review session	Notes on proposed schedule	Approval committee
Assessment and Progression (Research)	Lay Summary in Theses - Guidance	Guidance	Jun-22	2022/23	2024-25	Review this suite of PGR assessment documents in the same year.	APRC
Assessment and Progression (Research)	PhD by Integrated Study Guidance	Guidance	Jan-21	2022/23	2023-24		APRC
Assessment and Progression (Research)	Thesis Format Guidance	Guidance	Jun-22	2027-28	2024-25	Review this suite of PGR assessment documents in the same year.	APRC
Assessment and Progression (Research)	Including Publications in Postgraduate Research Thesis: Guidance	Policy/Regulation/Code	Mar-22	2026/27	2024-25	Review this suite of PGR assessment documents in the same year.	APRC
Assessment and Progression (Research)	PhD by Research oral examinations by video link (Videolinked PhD oral)	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-21	2026/27	2024-25	Review this suite of PGR assessment documents in the same year.	APRC
Assessment and Progression (Research)	Handbook for External Examining of Research Degrees	Policy/Regulation/Code	Apr-22	2026/27	2024-25	Review this suite of PGR assessment documents in the same year.	APRC
Assessment and Progression (Research)	Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-22	2023/24	2022-23	It is standard practice to review this document on an annual basis.	APRC
Assessment and Progression (Research)	Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students	Policy/Regulation/Code	Aug-22	2022/23	2022-23	It is standard practice to review this document on an annual basis.	APRC - on an exception basis, only if substantial changes proposed
Assessment and Progression (Taught and Research)	Special Circumstances Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-22	2023/24	2022-23	APRC is in the process of reviewing this policy in 2022-23	APRC
Assessment and Progression (Taught and Research)	Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-19	2022/23	2024-25	Possible technical update required in 2022-23 to bring policy in line with TAR 67 in relation to UG students (being being updated to include 'or award'). Otherwise we are not aware of any urgent need to review.	APRC
Assessment and Progression (Taught)	Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes	Policy/Regulation/Code	Sep-16	2021/22	2023-24	Not aware of urgent need to review, and it would be challenging to review during industrial action.	APRC
Assessment and Progression (Taught)	Taught Assessment Regulations	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-22	2022/23	2022-23	It is standard practice to review this document on an annual basis.	APRC
Assessment and progression (Taught)	Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities	Policy/Regulation/Code	Sep-22	2025/26	2025-26	In line with agreed schedule.	SEC
Assessment and Progression (Taught)	Undergraduate Progression Boards Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Apr-20	2022/23	2024-25	Not aware of any urgent need to review this policy - so propose to delay until 2024-25 unless Curriculum Transformation requires an earlier review.	APRC

Category	Title	Document Type	Last Updated	Update Due	Proposed new review session	Notes on proposed schedule	Approval committee
Assessment and Progression (Taught)	External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-19	2023/24	2023-24	Review at the same time as the Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes.	QAC
Casework	Code of Student Conduct	Policy/Regulation/Code	Dec-22	2025/26	2025-26	Likely to require earlier review (feedback from General Council)	Court (following resolution process, and recommendation by APRC)
Casework	Support for Study Policy and flowchart	Policy/Regulation/Code	Jan-22	2023/24	2022-23	APRC set it as a priority for 22/23 to review the Policy	APRC
Casework	Procedure for dealing with Suspected Academic Misconduct	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-19	2023/24	2022-23	Committee has already agreed some changes in 2022-23. Planning to introduce more substantive proposals later in 2022-23	APRC
Casework	Student Appeal Regulations	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-20	2024/25	2024-25	We are not aware of reasons to bring forward a review, other than a minor technical amendment to the list of areas subject to Fitness for Practice.	APRC
Casework	Expected Behaviour Policy in relation to Appeals, Complaints, Student Conduct and Related Procedures	Policy/Regulation/Code	Aug-20	2023/24	2024-25	We will make some minor technical changes in 2022-23 to reflect the changes in titles within Academic Services (it is not necessary to seek APRC approval for these). Other than these technical changes, we are not aware of any urgent need to review this policy.	APRC
Other	Performance Sport Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Jun-15	2018/19	2023-24	We are aware that a review is well overdue. While it is functioning it needs a coherent approach and refresh. CAHSS want more guidance (Education) on what a national sport is.	APRC
Other	Visiting and Non-Graduating Student Policy and Procedure	Policy/Regulation/Code	Mar-19	2022/23	2024-25	No urgent issues to be addressed, so we propose to delay until 2024-25	APRC
Other	International Student Attendance and Engagement Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Aug-21	2022/23	TBC	We will consult the Student Immigration Service to clarify requirements for a review.	APRC
Other	University use of email as method of contacting students	Policy/Regulation/Code	Dec-21	2026/27	2026-27	We are not aware of any urgent reason to review this at earlier point.	APRC
Programme and course approval	Degree Programme Specification Guidance	Guidance	Aug-20	2023/24	2023-24	Review as part of Curriculum Transformation - for now, plan to do this work in 23-24	APRC
Programme and course approval	SCQF Third Party Credit Rating	Policy/Regulation/Code	Dec-19	2019/20	2024-25	We propose to review suite of documents related to collaboration with external partners as a suite in 24-25. We are not aware of any need to review this policy earlier than that.	QAC
Programme and course approval	Models for Degree Types	Policy/Regulation/Code	Jun-17	2021/22	2023-24	Review as part of Curriculum Transformation - for now, plan to do this work in 23-24	APRC
Programme and course approval	Dual, Double and Multiple Awards Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Mar-16	2023/24	2024-25	We propose to review suite of documents related to collaboration with external partners as a suite in 24-25.	APRC
Programme and course approval	Framework for Curricula	Policy/Regulation/Code	Jun-17	2021/22	2023-24	Review as part of Curriculum Transformation - for now - assuming this will happen in 23-24	APRC
Programme and course approval	Programme and Course Design, Development, Approval, Changes and Closure Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-22	2024/25	2024-25	Aim to make minor updates to section relating to course annd programme publication dates in 2022-23 . We propose a more substantive review in 2024-25 (or earlier, if Curriculum Transformation, or other developments such as the Degree Finder replacement, require it)	APRC

Category	Title	Document Type	Last Updated	Update Due	Proposed new review session	Notes on proposed schedule	Approval committee
Programme and course approval	Programme and Course Handbooks Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-22	2022/23	2022-23	Technical update only - we are not aware of any need for a more substantive review at this stage.	APRC
Programme and course approval	Degree Regulations -UG	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-22	2022/23	2022-23	It is standard practice to review this document on an annual basis.	APRC
Programme and course approval	Associated Institution Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Dec-19	2022/23	2024-25	Review suite of documents related to collaboration with external partners as a suite in 24-25.	QAC
Programme and course approval	Degree Regulations -PG	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-22	2022/23	2022-23	It is standard practice to review this document on an annual basis.	APRC
Programme and course delivery	Work-Based and Placement Learning Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-22	2022/23	TBC	Checking with Study and Work Away team on whether updates required this year.	QAC
Programme and course delivery	Accessible and Inclusive Learning policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Jan-13	2018/19	TBC	LTW are currently leading a review, in consultation with DLSS.	SEC
Programme and course delivery	Open Educational Resources Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Sep-21	2024/25	2024-25	ISG have confirmed no reason to bring this review forward	SEC
Programme and course delivery	Academic Timetabling Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-18	Not specified	TBC	Consult with Timetabling Unit to clarify requirements for review.	APRC
Programme and course delivery	Learning Analytics Policy and Procedures	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-18	2019-20	TBC	Consult with Prof Sian Bayne and with ISG regarding requirements for review.	SEC
Programme and course delivery	Learning Analytics Principles and Purposes	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-17	2019-20	TBC	Consult with Prof Sian Bayne and with ISG regarding requirements for review.	SEC
Programme and course delivery	Lecture Recording Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Sep-18	2020/21	2022/23	ISG currently leading review of the Policy and expect to report to SEC in March 2023	SEC
Programme and course delivery	Virtual Classroom Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-22	TBC	2022/23	ISG currently leading review of the Policy and expect to report to SEC in March 2023	SEC
Quality assurance	Guidance for Schools regarding communication between student representatives and students	Guidance	Jul-19	2019-20	2022-23	Already planning to update in 2022-23	QAC
Quality assurance	Student Support Services Annual Review (SSSAR) Guidance	Guidance	Nov-16	2019/20	2022-23		QAC
Quality assurance	Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Aug-19	2022/23	2022-23	We plan technical changes in 2022-23 to ensure it reflects current processes, then will have more substantive review in 2023-24 if required to take account of external developments. Will be presented to SQAC in March 2023.	QAC
Quality assurance	Student Voice Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-21	2021/22	2024-25	Policy updated recently, and we are not aware of any need for a review in the near future.	QAC
Quality assurance	Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Sep-21	2021/22	2022-23	We plan technical changes in 2022-23 to ensure it reflects current processes.	QAC
Quality assurance	Student Support Services Annual Review (SSSAR) Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-17	2022/23	2022-23	We plan light-touch review to learn from practices during the Covid pandemic and take account of views of Deputy Secretary (Students).	QAC
Staff roles	School Director of Quality Role Outline	Guidance	May-21	2023/24	2023/24		QAC

Category	Title	Document Type	Last Updated	Update Due	Proposed new review session	Notes on proposed schedule	Approval committee
Staff roles	Course Organiser Outline of Role	Guidance	Jun-21	2023/24	2024/25	We are not aware of any urgent need to review this, so propose to reschedule to 2024-25	APRC
Staff roles	Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators	Policy/Regulation/Code	Sep-17	2021/22	2023-24	Prof Antony Maciocia is leading a strand of work on tutors and demonstrators in response to the ELIR. It is possible that this will lead to recommendations for changes to policy.	SEC
Student support	Academic and Pastoral Support Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Sep-22	2023/24	2022/23	Technical review undertaken Sept 22. Fuller review planned by end 2022-23 to take account of new student support model.	SEC
Student support	Authorised Interruption of Study Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	May-18	2022/23	2024/25	We are not aware of any urgent need to review this policy.	APRC
Student support	Student Maternity and Family Leave Policy	Policy/Regulation/Code	Jun-17	2020/21	2023-24	While we are aware that some stakeholders would like us to review this, we are not aware of any urgent need to amend the policy. We propose to review in 2023-24.	APRC

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

06 March 2023

Mid-year update on progress against
SQAC priorities 2022-23

Description of paper:
1. This paper provides an update on progress towards SQAC's priorities agreed at Senate in September 2022.

Action requested / recommendation:
2. For information.

Priorities:

3. **Develop and oversee the implementation of a plan of action in response to the 2021 Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR).**

   The University's ELIR follow-up report, on actions taken or in progress to address the outcomes of the review one year after the publication of the final reports, was submitted to the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) on 14 July 2022. The Committee will continue to receive regular updates on the ELIR Action Plan in preparation for the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) due to be held in November 2023.

4. **Implement the recommendations from the Digital Maturity report and consider how quality processes and the data that they produce can support the Curriculum Transformation programme.**

   Academic Services is currently examining options for utilizing SharePoint to optimize the presentation of quality data/evidence to Schools/Deaneries and encourage greater engagement and traction with quality processes.

5. **Continue to examine data and methodological options for the systematic monitoring of retention, progression, and attainment data.**

   The Committee agreed to implement a new system for monitoring retention, progression, and attainment data in response to recommendations relating to attainment/awarding gaps from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 Thematic Reviews. The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC), also in response to recommendations from these reviews, is undertaking work to determine the underlying causes of the attainment/awarding gaps with the aim of identifying and sharing good practice with Schools to help them address these gaps. SQAC and the EDIC will collaborate to determine work streams for each committee to help address the awarding gaps across the University.

6. **Continue to monitor the implementation of the Student Voice Policy via annual quality assurance processes.**

   The first year of operation of the new Policy, with a move from centralised to localised management of Course Evaluation Questionnaires (CEQs) (in response to requests from Schools/Deaneries) was welcomed, but it was acknowledged that this increased flexibility had created additional work for Schools. Schools took varying approaches to implementation with a number of Schools taking a School-wide approach. Further monitoring will continue to ensure effective approaches are taken in Schools and effective approaches are shared.

7. **Engage with the QAA and Universities UK review focused on strengthening the external examining system.**

   The Committee will continue to engage with the outcomes of the review to ensure that the external examiner system at the University is robust, independent and effective in ensuring academic standards.

Resource implications:
8. None.

Risk management:
9. The paper is for information and risk assessment is not required.

Equality & diversity:
10. The paper is for information and equality impact assessment is not required.

Communication, implementation and evaluation of the impact of any action agreed:
11. Committee Secretary will feedback comments to relevant areas.

Author
Brian Connolly, Academic Services
Sinéad Docherty, Academic Services

Presenter
Brian Connolly, Academic Services

February 2023
Freedom of Information: Open