



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Enhancement-led Institutional Review:
Reflective Analysis

August 2020





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Principal's foreword



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MBBS, PhD, FRCP, FRCPE, FMedSci
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Our students and learning and teaching are at the heart of what we do. We are committed to delivering a high quality and relevant learning and teaching experience, and improving and sustaining our students' satisfaction and their wellbeing. We are working hard to ensure that our teaching will match the excellence and reputation of our research.

Since the last Enhancement-led Institutional Review, we have made significant investment in the student experience and the teaching and learning environment that is documented in detail throughout this Reflective Analysis. One key aspect of our commitment to students has been the recent appointment to a new post of Vice-Principal Students, reporting direct to me but with overall leadership of learning and teaching and the student experience.

Under the leadership of Vice-Principal Students, we have committed to undertake a review and reform of our curriculum, consistent with our values-led Strategy 2030. Our aim is to offer an undergraduate curriculum that supports breadth and choice, and prepares students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, as well as multidisciplinary postgraduate education pathways that support flexible whole-life learning.

In common with the rest of the higher education sector, the coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on our activities in recent months, accelerating some and inhibiting others. We have made significant strides in recent months in the way our University community has embraced technology-enhanced learning and online education both at scale and speed. We were already well-placed to respond to this challenge having invested many millions of pounds in establishing infrastructure and expertise in digital education in recent years, but we also needed to scale that up dramatically in response to the pandemic.

To focus on the key priority of providing continuity of education to our students at the current time, we have had to pause some of our ambitious plans aimed at improving the student experience, and we had to suspend certain elements of our building programme. We did, however, complete and open the new Health and Wellbeing Centre that is proving valuable to our students at the current time.

Our plan to provide a hybrid model of education in 2020/21, with as much in-person contact as could be safely planned, was based on a conviction that this was in the best interests of our students for their education and for their university experience. We have been, and continue to be, challenged to meet the expectations of our students within the ever-changing restrictions of public health advice and regulations.

We have been in constant conversation with our students to understand their concerns and identify and implement solutions as best we can. Our effective partnership with our Students' Association continues to be key to our efforts in delivering a high quality student experience: we have worked closely with them throughout this challenging period, and we will continue to do so as we move forward.

There are many lessons to be learnt from our, and the sector's, response to the pandemic. We want to take the time to reflect on the adaptations we have made to our learning and teaching and assessment to ensure that our curriculum transformation builds on the many positive changes we have had to make.

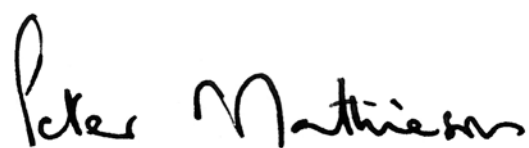
Whatever we do, we remain committed to equality and diversity and providing accessible and inclusive learning opportunities underpinned by personal, pastoral and professional support. We are committed

to widening participation and increasing the diversity of our student population, ensuring that we continue to recruit the most promising students regardless of their background and maximising their potential to achieve success in whatever they do.

We also remain committed to supporting and developing our staff to achieve our goals of excellence in teaching and learning, and also recognising teaching excellence in a number of ways. Our Institute for Academic Development remains central to our efforts in supporting the professional development of our teaching colleagues, and has been at the forefront in supporting colleagues in adapting and sharing learning and teaching practice in response to the pandemic.

We now face a significant financial challenge as a result of the pandemic, which we expect to remain real for the next four to five years. We must make significant changes to the ways in which we deliver on our core mission of excellence in teaching and learning and in research, within the context of continued uncertainty. Our University community has responded exceptionally well to this challenge, and I am confident that we will continue to develop and adapt well going forward.

The Enhancement-led Institutional Review occurs at a significant point in time for us. It has provided us with the opportunity to reflect on what we do well and where we can make further enhancements. Over this period of reflection, much has changed and continues to change. We look forward to engaging in conversation with the review team and welcome feedback on the significant developments we have made since the last review, on the adaptations we have made in response to the pandemic, and on our plans to re-shape our teaching for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Mathieson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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This first chapter of the RA is a broad overview of the University's structure, governance, and population. For this chapter, I selected this photograph of Edinburgh, with McEwan Hall prominently displayed in the heart of the city's landscape. This is representative on two levels – first, this chapter is an aerial look at the University much in the same way the photograph is. Also, McEwan Hall is, in my eyes, the ubiquitous symbol of the University. This is the place I take visitors when I want to inspire awe. In this picture, McEwan Hall is instantly recognisable, asserting the University's place in the city's iconic landscape.

Vesna Curlic

PhD Intern

1. Contextual information about the institution, student population and the review

1.1 Summary information about the institution, including strategic framework, organisational structure

Overview

1.1.1 The University of Edinburgh is a large and diverse research-intensive University with a clear commitment to excellence in learning and teaching. Since our Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) in 2015, we have invested heavily in learning and teaching, and the student experience via a systematic programme of enhancement activity and senior appointments. This section provides an overview of our University, its structure, governance and strategy in support of learning and teaching; a discussion of major developments since ELIR 2015; a forward look to the major projects currently in development; and a reflection on actions taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The University

1.1.2 The University of Edinburgh is one of Scotland's ancient universities. We are the largest Scottish University with a population in 2019/20 of 44,510 matriculated students comprising 26,785 undergraduate students, 11,975 taught postgraduate students, and 5,750 research postgraduate students.¹ We have over 15,000 staff of whom around half (7,656) are categorised as academic.² We are a distinctly Scottish University but our reach and aspirations are global: over 45 per cent of our student population are from outside the United Kingdom (UK) from over 180 nations.³ Our international affiliations include membership of Universitas 21 (U21) and the League of European Research Universities (LERU).

1.1.3 We provide an extensive range of courses and programmes at all levels. We teach across the most comprehensive range of subjects in Scotland and the third most comprehensive in the UK (after Leeds and Manchester universities). In 2018/19 our students studied in 116 of the 164 principal subjects defined by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Our breadth is one of our great assets and appeals to potential and current students. Our four-year undergraduate degree articulates well with national and international qualifications' frameworks and affords significant flexibility for our students. We offer an extensive range of postgraduate masters programmes, both on campus and online, and we provide excellent and extensive opportunities for postgraduate research students including substantial access to research funding and research training.

1.1.4 As a research-intensive University, we aim to ensure our students benefit from our research activity. Our position as one of the UK's leading research universities was reflected in the results of the last Research Exercise Framework (REF) held in 2014, which placed the University among the top four in the UK and number one in Scotland by volume of designated 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent' (4* and 3*) research. Our submission was one of the largest and most comprehensive in the UK, and each of our three Colleges has at least one area ranked top in the UK. We are currently preparing our submission to REF2021.

1 www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/gasp/factsheet/Student_Factsheet_31072020.pdf

2 www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/StaffNumbers.htm

3 www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/gasp/factsheet/Student_Factsheet_31072019.pdf

- 1.1.5 In 2018/19 the University had a total income of £1,102 million.⁴ Of this, income from teaching (comprising tuition fees and educational contracts) made up 31 per cent at £347 million, and research income comprised 26 per cent at £286 million. Of the tuition fees income, £59.5 million was from Scottish and European Union (EU) students, £65 million from rest of UK (RUK) students, and £198.5 million from non-EU students.
- 1.1.6 We have a large and diverse estate ranging from historic iconic buildings to state-of-the-art laboratories, teaching spaces and library and learning facilities. Our research and teaching spaces span more than 250 separate buildings within our estate and a total area of 305,324m². Teaching is organised across a number of campuses. The Central and Moray House campuses primarily serve the Schools in the College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences. The King's Buildings campus mainly serves the Schools in the College of Science and Engineering. The Little France campus (comprising the Medical School) and the Easter Bush campus of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies together make up the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.
- 1.1.7 Since the last ELIR, we have made some significant developments to our estate to provide new and upgrade existing learning and teaching spaces, and provide expanded space for student support services. Section 2.5 provides further details on the estates development.

Academic structure

- 1.1.8 The academic structure of our University is based on three Colleges: College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS), College of Science and Engineering (CSE), and College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM). Each College is led by a Vice-Principal responsible for the delivery of College plans, including learning and teaching. Colleges vary in size by student numbers. In 2019/20, there were 25,815 students in CAHSS (accounting for 58 per cent) of the total student population), 11,445 students in CSE (accounting for 26 per cent), and 7,250 students in the CMVM (accounting for 16 per cent). Appendix A shows our organisational structure.⁵
- 1.1.9 Colleges are organised into Schools (see Appendix A). We have 20 Schools in total: 11 Schools in CAHSS, plus the Centre for Open Learning (COL); two Schools in CMVM; and seven Schools in CSE. In CMVM, the Edinburgh Medical School comprises three Deaneries that effectively operate as Schools. Schools are the core units for both teaching and research.
- 1.1.10 Colleges and Schools have devolved powers to develop local practice, but operate within overarching institutional regulations, policy and structures agreed at University level. All Colleges and Schools work towards the overall University Strategy and work within the University regulations and policies and frameworks for learning and teaching and research. Heads of College are part of the University Senior Leadership Team.⁶
- 1.1.11 Since the last ELIR, we have established the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI), a major interdisciplinary institute (the largest of its kind in the UK) bringing together leading academic staff across the arts, humanities and the sciences with external partners from government and various sectors of industry, from technology to finance and consulting.⁷ EFI staff (academic and professional services) are largely seconded from other areas of the University.

4 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/201908_uoe_annual_accounts_2019_29_online.pdf

5 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/orgstruct_0.pdf

6 www.ed.ac.uk/principals-office/vice-principals-senior-leadership/senior-leadership-team

7 <https://efi.ed.ac.uk>

- 1.1.12 EFI has a particular mission to undertake education, research and external engagement activities in collaboration with industry, communities and government, opening up new ways of working to tackle real-world issues of global scope at a time of rapid technological, demographic, economic and ecological shift. We currently expect that from 2023 EFI will be housed in a landmark building, the redeveloped Edinburgh Royal Infirmary Building on Lauriston Place, in the central campus.
- 1.1.13 EFI will provide an opportunity for us to explore innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment that can be a catalyst for educational developments across the broader University (for example, by generating ideas for a wider curriculum review). Its educational portfolio is planned to cover undergraduate and postgraduate taught and research programmes as well as non-credit bearing activities. The primary focus in this early stage is on the development of postgraduate taught programmes. EFI launched its first postgraduate taught programme (MSc in Finance, Technology and Policy), hosted by the Business School, in September 2019, and a second MSc (in Leading Major Programmes, a collaboration between the Schools of Engineering and Business) is due to launch in September 2021.
- 1.1.14 EFI is also planning a major suite of future-focused postgraduate taught pathway programmes, with the first due to launch in September 2022. These are aligned to key challenge areas such as democracy, sustainability, and education. They will be highly flexible (supporting lifelong learning models as well as full-time study), interdisciplinary and project-led, and will provide opportunities for students to partner with external organisations to help solve their challenges. They will include some core elements (for example, data skills, creative methods), along with a range of optional courses offered with input from across the University.
- 1.1.15 EFI's first major programme of teaching and research activity is linked to the City Region Deal – a major investment in the Region (including the University) over 10 years. Data Driven Innovation (DDI) is a key component of the City Region Deal – harnessing the revolution in digital data and artificial intelligence to promote social benefit and inclusive economic growth. EFI's educational provision will make a major contribution to Edinburgh's DDI activities, for example by covering data skills and the social implications of the data revolution within the curriculum of the programmes offered by EFI.

Support structure

- 1.1.16 The University's support structure comprises three professional services groupings: University Secretary's Group (USG), Corporate Services Group (CSG), and Information Services Group (ISG); each one led by a Vice-Principal (see Appendix A).
- 1.1.17 USG is led by the Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance and University Secretary.⁸ This group provides a wide range of services in support of the University's academic mission. It is organised into eight departments, including: Academic Services, Careers Service, Institute for Academic Development (IAD), Student Disability and Counselling Services, and Student Systems and Administration.
- 1.1.18 CSG is headed by the Vice-Principal Business Development and Director of Corporate Services.⁹ CSG provides the physical, operational and commercial environment and professional expertise

8 www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group

9 www.ed.ac.uk/corporate-services

to underpin the University's activities. It comprises 11 departments, including Accommodation, Catering and Events, Estates, and Sport and Exercise.

- 1.1.19 ISG is headed by the Vice-Principal and Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University.¹⁰ ISG comprises nine departments which, among other things, are responsible for the information technology infrastructure, user support, the libraries and learning and teaching technology.

Leadership and governance

- 1.1.20 Since ELIR 2015, there has been significant change to our leadership. Our Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Mathieson, joined in February 2018. To support our strategic approach to learning, teaching and the student experience, the previous role of Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching was re-shaped into the role of Vice-Principal Students and a new appointment was made at the start of academic year (AY) 2019/20. The Vice-Principal Students has strategic oversight of learning and teaching across the University including undergraduate and postgraduate taught and research responsibilities and is a member of the University Senior Leadership Team (Appendix A shows the University Senior Leadership Team and reporting structure).
- 1.1.21 The role of Vice-Principal Students and the existing roles of Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, overseeing the University's quality assurance framework, and Assistant Principal Academic Support, overseeing the curriculum framework, regulation and assessment, encompass the range of student academic experience and provide the strategic leadership for the three standing committees of Senate (see 1.1.41).
- 1.1.22 The University's governing body is the University Court,¹¹ which has ultimate responsibility for the deployment of resources and for strategic plans, and a monitoring role regarding the overall performance of the University. Court members include the current President and a Vice President of Edinburgh University Students' Association (formerly known as EUSA). The Rector, who is elected every three years by students and staff, presides at meetings of Court. The Rector cannot be a student of the University or a member of staff. Court receives regular reports from Senate. Appendix B shows the reporting relationship between Senate and Court committees.

Strategic framework

- 1.1.23 Since the last ELIR, we have refined our strategic focus through our strategic planning process. Our Strategic Plan 2016, *Delivering Impact for Society*, set out our aspirations against a challenging external backdrop.¹² With the arrival of our current Principal, we embarked on a strategic refresh and a lengthening of our planning horizon and, in September 2019, we launched our current Strategy 2030¹³ for the next 10 years and beyond.
- 1.1.24 Our Strategy 2030 sets out the vision for our University, which is led by distinctive, honest and realistic guiding principles and goals. Among our priorities for delivery over the next decade are goals to strengthen interdisciplinary research, improve student satisfaction and foster a welcoming community. Our Strategy highlights our values-led approach to teaching, research and innovation, to address tomorrow's greatest challenges through the strength of our relationships, both locally and globally.

10 www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/about

11 www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/governance/university-court

12 www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-plan

13 www.ed.ac.uk/about/strategy-2030

1.1.25 The following values underpin Strategy 2030:

- We aim to achieve excellence in all that we do, always being principled, considerate and respectful;
- Our teaching and research is relevant to society and we are diverse, inclusive and accessible to all;
- We are ambitious, bold and act with integrity, always being willing to listen;
- We foster a welcoming community, where staff, students, alumni and friends feel proud to be part of our University;
- We celebrate and strengthen our deep-rooted and distinctive internationalism, attracting the world's best minds and building innovative global partnerships for research, teaching and impact;
- We sustain a deep allegiance and commitment to the interest of our city and region in which we are based, alongside our national and international efforts, ensuring relevance to all;
- We are a place of transformation and self-improvement, driven to achieve benefit for individuals, communities, societies and our world.

1.1.26 To allow us to have the greatest impact possible, our ambitious Strategy 2030 builds on our 2016 Strategic Plan and is focused on delivering excellence in the four key areas of: People, Research, Teaching and Learning, and Social and Civic Responsibility.

1.1.27 We also demonstrate how we will measure the success of our strategy by setting ourselves key deliverables for 2030 which include offering an undergraduate curriculum supporting breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it. We remain committed to leading Scotland's efforts in support of widening participation (WP), we will be a global leader in artificial intelligence and the use of data with integrity, and we will become the Data Capital of Europe. We will continue to be a destination of choice, based on our clear educational proposition, and we will see integrated reporting of our whole organisational impact against the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals.

1.1.28 To realise these deliverables, we will build on the work of the 2016 Strategic Plan Performance Measurement Framework, which laid the foundations for a whole-University approach to performance management.¹⁴ Our current approach provides the flexibility in what and how frequently we use the information we gather to report to our Court and University committees to assess our progress against our agreed performance measurements. Our Strategic Performance Framework has the ability to be modified in response to changes in our operating environment. Underpinning our ability to implement our Strategic Performance Framework are the plans of our various business areas which provide further detail on how the University will implement the focus areas set out in the Strategy 2030.

1.1.29 Our strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching and the student experience has been further underpinned by our Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS) and a small number of strategic enhancement projects. Since the last ELIR, these have included the Service Excellence Programme (SEP) and the Student Experience Action Plan (StEAP), some elements of which have been paused due to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and some of which are still ongoing. Further details are provided throughout Chapter 2.

14 www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-plan/measuring-success

- 1.1.30 Our LTS was developed in 2017 to provide a consistent set of principles and aims across our provision. This strategy promoted partnership working with students to enhance learning, teaching and the curriculum. It articulated our commitment to using the flexibility of the undergraduate degree structure for a rounded learning experience and providing postgraduate taught students with opportunities to develop advanced, cutting-edge skills. With the development of Strategy 2030, marking a values-led approach to what we do, and the arrival of a new Vice-Principal Students at the start of AY 2019/20, we decided that 2019/20 would mark the final year of the LTS as we move towards a new phase of learning and teaching and a curriculum review led by the new Vice-Principal. The plans have been somewhat affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, although our response to the pandemic is providing valuable learning for future curriculum development. Chapters 2 and 3 contain further details on the achievements of the LTS since the last ELIR and outline forward plans.
- 1.1.31 The SEP comprises a major review of key professional services functions and core systems to ensure we get the best from the sum of our efforts by building effective and efficient services. Among the several strands of work the programme covers, two are particularly important to the student experience: (1) the Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA) programme and (2) the Student Administration and Support (SA&S) programme. Both programmes are aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of processes and systems to provide a smoother and consistent service to students and staff that support students.
- 1.1.32 In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, those parts of the SRA programme that are helping the University respond to the impact have been aligned with the work of the University's Adaptation and Renewal Team (ART) (see section 1.1.53 onwards). Additionally, those elements of the SA&S programme designed in the short to medium term to support students and the staff who work with them are being prioritised and aligned with wider adaptation efforts, while some longer-term work has been paused. The primary focus for SEP is now on delivering a transformation in the way Human Resources (HR) and finance services are delivered, underpinned and enabled by People and Money, a new web-based system for HR and finance tasks, live from October 2020.
- 1.1.33 The StEAP set out a holistic programme of work to improve the student experience at Edinburgh. Despite much good work by many colleagues across the University in recent years, the results of major surveys such as the National Student Survey (NSS) confirm that too many students at the University do not rate their experience as highly as we would wish. At undergraduate level in particular our relative NSS position (compared to our peers and the wider sector) is disappointingly low. Satisfaction with teaching and with learning opportunities at Edinburgh is only slightly less than at Russell Group peers, however satisfaction with assessment and feedback, academic support and student voice are significantly lower.
- 1.1.34 In response to these ongoing concerns, in 2018/19 the University's governing body, the University Court, committed £15.3m towards an ambitious three-year StEAP.¹⁵ StEAP marked a serious, strategic commitment to addressing the student experience holistically. It was not a plan to directly address the NSS or any other student survey *per se* but was instead based on a logic model that set out six major strands of work to support our goal to enhance the student experience, the pillars of which comprised:

- Consistent excellent teaching;
- An inspiring curriculum;
- Excellent student support and customer service;
- Excellent facilities (physical and virtual) and inter-campus transport;
- A strong sense of belonging and community, underpinned by a strong student voice in University decision making; and
- An environment in which “things run smoothly” when it comes to the organisation and management of learning and teaching.

1.1.35 A new standing committee of the University Executive, the Student Experience Standing Committee, was set up to oversee progress on StEAP, and regular progress reports were also submitted to the University Court.

1.1.36 In 2019/20, prior to the onset of Covid-19, the Standing Committee had approved 16 bids totalling just under £3 million, with larger investments approved in areas including:

- student mental health and wellbeing;
- tackling sexual violence on campus;
- student support;
- student hubs;
- specialist teaching spaces and support for teaching spaces more generally.

1.1.37 The Standing Committee was poised to consider and authorise a further range of projects when the pandemic lockdown began. The financial consequences of Covid-19 on the University have meant that there is no longer any certainty that the funding can continue as originally envisaged. The Standing Committee therefore met in May 2020 and recommended pausing or cancelling a number of projects subject to further discussions on funding for 2020/21. These recommendations were discussed at University Executive in June 2020 and a revised, significantly smaller budget was approved to take forward work on:

- a) A small number of projects which it was strongly believed should continue to be funded in 2020/21 and 2021/22 precisely because of the impact of the pandemic. These projects are:
- Student mental health & wellbeing;
 - Enhanced peer support;
 - Sub-titling;
 - EdHelp (student support hubs).
- b) A number of projects where existing contractual commitments mean we must continue with at least some aspects of project delivery:
- Sexual Violence on Campus;
 - British Sign Language;
 - Interdisciplinary Shared Courses.
-

- 1.1.38 Further details of the various strands of StEAP and the work achieved to date are detailed throughout Chapter 2.

Executive committees

- 1.1.39 The Senior Leadership Team consists of the Principal, eight direct reports and the Director of Finance¹⁶ (see Appendix A). It meets regularly to provide a confidential space where matters of significant strategic importance to the University, usually at an early stage, are discussed. Regular meetings also give the opportunity to air operationally focused items where a shared agreement among the senior leadership of the University is beneficial, often in “pre-decision” mode.
- 1.1.40 The University Executive is chaired by the Principal and is the main executive decision-making forum for the University.¹⁷ Membership includes the major budget holders in the University, Vice-Principals (including all Heads of College), senior professional services staff, the Students’ Association President and representation from Heads of Schools. It brings together the academic, financial, HR and accommodation aspects of planning and it is responsible for managing the University’s performance and for assisting the Principal in delivery of the University’s strategy. The University Executive also provides advice and views on proposals and reports and ensures a consistent approach to activity across the University.

Senate and committees

- 1.1.41 The supreme academic body is Senatus Academicus. It is chaired by the Principal. Senate meets three times per academic year. Each meeting is preceded by a set period of electronic business (‘e-Senate’). The e-Senate deals with the majority of routine formal business, thus freeing up time at meetings for the discussion of high level academic issues. Any formal business not resolved via the e-Senate is referred to the next Senate meeting. The outcome of electronic business is reported at the next Senate meeting. Senate has ultimate responsibility for the University’s academic standards.
- 1.1.42 Senate meetings begin with a presentation and discussion session on an issue of strategic importance, which is open to all members of the University community. Over the last two academic years, topics related to learning and teaching have included: teaching and academic careers, accessible and inclusive learning, StEAP, WP and student support and wellbeing.¹⁸ Following the open session, Senate members meet for consideration of formal business. Senate committees identify potential topics for discussion at the main Senate meetings, which the Principal and University Secretary approve.
- 1.1.43 Senate retains strategic oversight while devolving the practical operation of its powers to three standing committees with specific remits. Since ELIR 2015, we have undertaken a review of Senate and its committees, conducted by an external consultant.¹⁹ The external review was conducted in response to the 2017 version of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance, which requires us to undertake an externally-facilitated review of Senate and its committees every five years. The review made proposals concerning the role of Senate, the remit of its committees, and the way in which they link to University governance structures more generally. In response, we have streamlined our Senate membership, reducing it from over 800 members to 300 members,

16 www.ed.ac.uk/principals-office/vice-principals-senior-leadership/senior-leadership-team

17 www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/governance/university-committees/othercommitteesandgroups/university-executive

18 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/senate/presentation-and-discussion

19 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/senate/membership/higher-education-governance-scotland-act

increased the proportion of elected non-professorial staff and increased the proportion of elected student members to 10 per cent of the overall Senate membership.²⁰ The change took effect from AY 2020/21. It is expected this will improve Senate's operation and ensure a more motivated, effective and influential academic governing body.

- 1.1.44 In preparation for the externally-facilitated review we conducted an internal review of our Senate committees. In response to this review, we reduced the number of Senate committees from four to three, with effect from 2019/20. Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) retains the remit of the former Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC), but is more appropriately named to reflect the nature of the remit. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) remains largely unchanged. Senate Education Committee replaced the former Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) with an expanded remit to include strategic consideration of postgraduate research student matters that were previously the business of the former Senate Researcher Experience Committee (REC). Other non-student REC business, such as early career researcher matters, is now part of the remit of the Research Policy Group (RPG). ARPC is convened by the Assistant Principal Academic Support; Senate Education Committee is convened by the Vice-Principal Students; SQAC is convened by Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance.
- 1.1.45 The operation of the Senate committees is further strengthened by their membership, which includes key posts of responsibility in Colleges (such as the College Deans) along with key roles in Schools (such as School Directors of Learning and Teaching/Directors of Quality). Such membership provides opportunities for dissemination of good practice and identification of common issues. Detailed remits, membership and overviews of achievements by the committees are available on the Academic Services webpages²¹ and in the annual Senate committees' report to Senate.
- 1.1.46 Following each round of Senate committee meetings, we publish a Senate Committees' Newsletter. The newsletter includes items of interest discussed at each committee as well as decisions taken at the meetings. Electronic circulation covers a much wider audience than just Senate committee members and colleagues can ask to be added to the distribution list. Our evaluation shows that the newsletter is appreciated by colleagues across the University who find it useful and informative. Current and archived newsletters are published on the Academic Services website.²²
- 1.1.47 We instituted a Senate Committee Conveners' Forum in January 2020 in response to recommendations made in the External Effectiveness Review of Senate and its committees. The Forum is not a formal decision-making body; it supports Senate Committee conveners in their roles and contributes to effective committee planning by facilitating communication between committees, reducing duplication of effort, and providing an opportunity for an overview of committee business and priorities, and mapping of the flow of business between committees. It also contributes to the annual planning and prioritising of committee business for Senate. The Forum will meet three times annually going forward, and the members are the Conveners of the three Senate standing committees, the Director of Academic Services, the Deputy Secretary Student Experience, and the Secretary of RPG (representing the Convener of RPG). Academic Services provides support to the Forum.

20 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/senate/higher-education-governance-scotland-act/recommended-senate-model

21 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees

22 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/newsletter

Response to Covid-19 pandemic

- 1.1.48 Like all providers of higher education, the University has had to respond to the significant challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic. We have sought to respond to these challenges in a manner that balances appropriately the need to make agile decisions in a rapidly changing environment with the need to ensure we consider the unintended consequences of any significant changes. In developing our approach, we have taken account of guidance provided by sector bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency, as well as harnessing the experience of other institutions via sector organisations such as Universities UK, Universities Scotland, and the Russell Group. We have also shared our own experiences and contributed to guidance developed across the sector.
- 1.1.49 Our initial response to the pandemic with regard to teaching and learning was led by an Academic Contingency Group (ACG) that focused on the immediate impact on teaching, assessments and examinations during the latter half of semester two 2019/20. Membership comprised representatives from each of the three Colleges, the Students' Association, and relevant support departments. Where the Group proposed significant changes which would impact upon the University's academic policies and regulations, these were considered and approved by the relevant committees of Senate, operating remotely. Information was shared with staff and students through the University's website²³ and a dedicated staff SharePoint site.²⁴
- 1.1.50 We suspended all face-to-face teaching on 16 March 2020 and moved to digital delivery of teaching from 23 March 2020, allowing one week for colleagues rapidly to convert teaching materials. Teaching material was delivered primarily asynchronously. Our focus was not on replicating like-for-like teaching that students would have experienced on campus, but on providing the material needed to support students in meeting the learning outcomes to complete their courses.
- 1.1.51 We made some pragmatic changes to assessment, in order to focus efforts on students at crucial stages of their programmes. We cancelled scheduled final examinations for pre-honours stages of undergraduate programmes (at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels seven and eight) for those courses where outcomes could be determined based on completed in-course assessment. This applied to the majority of pre-honours courses. For students at honours stages of undergraduate programmes (SCQF levels 9 and 10), and students on postgraduate master's programmes, we replaced scheduled examinations either with additional coursework assessment, or "take-home", open-book examinations. Open-book examinations were open for a 48-hour period, with the exception of those in some, primarily quantitative, subject areas where they were open for a shorter period (two hours, with an additional hour for submission of work) to mitigate the risk of students finding solutions to questions online.
- 1.1.52 In order to take account of the profound impact of the pandemic upon students' ability to study as they would normally, we provided assurances to students that their assessments undertaken during the pandemic would not have a detrimental impact on their programme outcomes. We produced detailed guidance for Boards of Examiners, which provided them with a range of options to ensure that the impact of the pandemic on students' degree outcomes was mitigated appropriately, while maintaining the integrity of our awards. As ever, students are required to demonstrate substantial evidence of performance at a certain level in order to qualify for an award of a particular class.

23 www.ed.ac.uk/news/covid-19

24 <https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/Covid19>

Adaptation and Renewal Team (ART)

- 1.1.53 Following our immediate response to the Covid-19 pandemic in semester two, 2019/20, via ACG, we established ART, led by the Principal, to oversee the work needed to respond to the short, medium and longer-term challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.²⁵ ART was set up to enable us to take swift but well-informed decisions in a number of time-critical areas to ensure that we continue to deliver against our overall strategy. ART has four main strands:
- Research
 - Students
 - Estates and Infrastructure
 - Re-shaping
- 1.1.54 ART reports to the University Executive. However, the ‘Students’ strand (led by the Vice-Principal Students) is also closely aligned with the work of the Senate committees. Senate Education Committee is responsible for overseeing and approving all work relating to proposed adaptations to learning and teaching arising from ART, while APRC and SQAC consider potential adaptations to regulations, policy and quality as required. We established consultation and communication mechanisms for staff and students, including a discussion at the open section of Senate in May 2020.
- 1.1.55 The work under the Students strand has focused on delivering a hybrid model of teaching and support to students during the 2020/21 academic session. This would encourage students to attend the University where it is possible and safe for them to do so, but ensures that they can fully engage with their studies digitally, should they need to. While all large-group teaching is being offered digitally, we are providing teaching in smaller groups (tutorials, seminars etc.) either in-person or digitally, depending on where students are located. The emphasis is on providing high-quality face-to-face interactions whether they are in-person or via digital means. In order to ensure parity for students, all assessment for courses offered in semester one has been designed to work remotely/digitally.
- 1.1.56 In redesigning assessment for AY 2020/21 we have reflected on students’ experiences of taking open-book assessments. We conducted a survey of undergraduate students after the exam diet, of which 3,670 responded (representing 15 per cent of all matriculated UG students in 2019/20). Results were shared with staff in a blog by Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance and Vice-Principal Students²⁶ that highlighted that open-book, remote exams were positively received, but students raised some concerns (such as academic integrity) which, among other issues, was subsequently considered by the Online/Remote Examination and Assessment (OREA) task group.
- 1.1.57 We are also keen to ensure that we seize opportunities to consider the potential benefit of more permanent changes to assessment structures, for example, where it may be appropriate to reduce the volume of high-stakes final examinations. There are numerous other areas where the pandemic has forced a rapid trial of new ways of working, which should prove beneficial in the longer-term, for example in operating Boards of Examiners remotely. As such, we are using our Annual Quality Monitoring to reflect broadly on the impacts and lessons from Covid-19, as well a broader lessons-learned evaluation as part of ART.

25 <https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/ART>

26 <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/learningexchange/2020/07/10/covid-19-survey-lessons-for-hybrid-teaching/>

- 1.1.58 To support colleagues in making the shift to hybrid teaching, we provided a range of training and development options. These included a Learn course - The Edinburgh Model for Online Teaching – (taken by 665 staff by August 2020) and various courses and information provided by IS and Schools in the use of learning technologies to enable colleagues to record and deliver lectures and classes remotely from home. In early June 2020, we launched The Edinburgh Hybrid Teaching Exchange,²⁷ an internal website designed as a space where colleagues can share work in progress, learning, insights, ideas, plans and resources as we prepared for the move to hybrid teaching for 2020/21. IAD sends a fortnightly digest to a wide range of stakeholders to highlight new and existing content.
- 1.1.59 To support students in studying in a hybrid context, we curated a suite of courses and resources (some new and some repurposed). These include courses on preparing for study, using the library and information sources, academic literacy, digital skills awareness, and career planning.

1.2 Composition, key trends and anticipated changes in the student population, including information on retention, progression and outcomes

Overview

- 1.2.1 In 2019/20 our total student population (by headcount) was 44,510, comprising 60 per cent (26,785) undergraduate and 40 per cent (17,725) postgraduate students. Since the last ELIR in 2015, our overall student population has increased by 34 per cent; our undergraduate student numbers have increased by 23 per cent and our postgraduate student numbers have increased by 56 per cent. The growth in postgraduate student numbers is largely due to an increase in taught postgraduate students. Within our overall postgraduate student population, since the last ELIR, the proportion of taught postgraduate students has increased from 58 per cent to 68 per cent (11,975), relative to the proportion of research postgraduate students, from 42 per cent to 32 per cent (5,750).
- 1.2.2 There has been a marked change in the domicile proportions within each level of study since the last ELIR. Whilst overseas and EU students account for the main increase in student numbers, the growth is particularly evident among undergraduate and taught postgraduate students where the numbers of overseas students have increased by 20 per cent and 37 per cent respectively compared with a 16 per cent increase in overseas postgraduate research students. Over the same period, the number of Scotland domiciled students has decreased slightly by three per cent for undergraduate and almost six per cent for postgraduate research students, but has increased by 14 per cent for taught postgraduates.
- 1.2.3 The number of students registered on online programmes has increased by 42 per cent since the last ELIR to 3,620. These are mostly online masters programmes with some Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Many online students study on a part-time basis, so these numbers represent approximately one third of the full-time equivalent.
- 1.2.4 In our Strategy 2030, we have made a commitment not to grow our student numbers for growth's sake, and by doing so we aim to improve our student experience by offering exceptional teaching

27 <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/learningexchange/>

which is inclusive to all whilst keeping our undergraduate population stable. Over the next decade we expect to expand our interdisciplinary, postgraduate and digital education offerings through the new EFI.

Key trends (retention, progression and outcomes)

- 1.2.5 There is significant variation in retention rates for different student cohorts and between different Colleges and Schools within the University, and our performance is below that of our UK comparators (for example Russell Group). Following a consideration of analysis of non-continuation data at LTC in January 2018, the Committee agreed a more detailed analysis was needed to understand better the drivers of non-continuation. Two projects were carried out. The first, as part of the Enhancement Themes funding, involved two PhD student interns working closely with a member of staff in Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP). The second, undertaken by Academic Services, involved an analysis of Schools' insights into the reasons for patterns of non-continuation amongst students on their programmes.
- 1.2.6 In November 2018, the Committee recommended that findings be taken into account as part of some specific existing and planned work packages. It was also recommended that good practice be gathered and disseminated and an event was held in May 2019. Finally, the Committee recommended that GaSP scope out and cost proposed further research in this area.
- 1.2.7 In response, GaSP have obtained Universities and Colleges Admission Services (UCAS) entry tariff data to enhance the analysis of non-continuation patterns using this additional factor, as well as incorporate other entry qualifications data/measures where possible. Discussions are ongoing with the Students' Association regarding the use of peer support and societies data for analysis of any correlation between these activities and non-continuation rates. In addition, GaSP are developing a model to allow for the analysis of undergraduate progression from Years 1–2, 2–3, and 3–4.²⁸
- 1.2.8 Since the last ELIR, overall progression rates show a positive trend from 88.38 per cent of all students favourably progressing in 2014/15 to 93.6 per cent of all students favourably progressing in 2018/19. Whilst we have made gains in progression in both undergraduate and postgraduate students, the greatest improvement can be seen in the favourable progression of students in years one and two of their undergraduate studies. In 2014/15, 84.77 per cent of students in year one and 86.93 per cent of students in year two of their programme progressed favourably. By comparison in 2018/19, these proportions had increased to 91.09 per cent and 91.11 per cent respectively.
- 1.2.9 Progression rates differ by mode of study, age at entry, gender, disability, ethnicity, WP and fee status. Part-time, younger, male, disabled, black and minority ethnic (BME) and WP students are less likely overall to favourably progress. However, we have seen some marked improvements since the last ELIR, particularly in relation to a narrowing of the gap between part-time and full-time students (from a 41 per cent point gap in 2014/15 to a 16 per cent point gap in 2018/19) and undergraduate BME and white students (from a 3-4 per cent point gap to 2.72 per cent point difference in 2018/19). Favourable progression rates for Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD20) students stood at 83.18 per cent in 2018/19 compared to 91.93 per cent for non-SIMD20 students, and is a particular focus of our work under our WP Strategy.

1.3 Commentary on the preparation for the ELIR, including confirmation of the nature and rationale for the contextualised range of topics included in the self-evaluation

Overview

- 1.3.1 The Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance is responsible for leading the University's preparation for and coordination of activities leading to ELIR, supported by Academic Services. SQAC oversees the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including ELIR.
- 1.3.2 Rather than establish a separate ELIR Steering Group for ELIR 2020 (as was the case for ELIR 2015), we set up a small team, comprising the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, staff from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team in Academic Services and the Students' Association Vice President Education, to lead the preparations. This small team engaged widely with staff and students across the University to secure input to the preparations and to consult on developing drafts of the Reflective Analysis (RA) (detailed from 1.3.8 onwards).
- 1.3.3 Initially, during 2018/19 the Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG), which coordinated and prioritised areas of work relating to learning and teaching, acted as an advisory group to the ELIR team, and received regular updates on progress. This Group played a major role in initial discussions around the nature and rationale for contextualised topics. In early 2019/20, LTPG was disbanded following the review of the Senate committees. At this point the contextualised topics had been agreed and drafting of the RA had begun. From this point onwards, Senate committees continued to receive updates and to advise on progress, and a coordinated communications and engagement plan ensured input from across the wider University community.

Contextualisation

- 1.3.4 Early consultations with stakeholders on potential contextualised topics were held with the (previous) Senior Vice-Principal and other senior colleagues (including via LTPG); College Deans for Learning and Teaching and Quality, the Director of IAD, and Students' Association representation. From these discussions, four areas were proposed for wider discussion: teaching and academic careers; student voice and community; student support; and student skills and employability.
- 1.3.5 In February and March 2019 views on the proposed four themes were sought from colleagues at a meeting of Senate, the (then) four Senate committees and at several sessions with staff and students. Senate suggested the addition of WP as an explicit focus, rather than an implicit element within the other topics, which made sense within the context of the non-continuation data. This was supported by SQAC. Through discussion at Senate LTC, CPSC, and REC it was agreed that all themes should, where relevant, apply to all undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research students. We decided that this was preferable to focusing on cohort-based topics. The proposed topics were also discussed at the annual meeting with Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Scotland in March 2019. The final contextualised topics were approved by LTPG in April 2019 (after having been discussed and agreed with the Students' Association Vice President Education):
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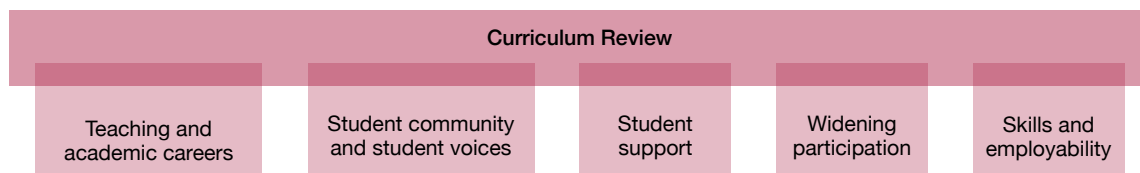
- Teaching and Academic Careers
 - Includes the academic development work provided by IAD and the work of the Teaching and Academic Careers Task Group that has sought to increase the priority of teaching in academic careers and support for high quality teaching.
- Student Community and Student Voices
 - Includes work to strengthen student voice mechanisms and the Sense of Belonging strand of the StEAP.
- Student Support
 - Includes an update on developments since the last ELIR and outline plans arising from the Personal Tutor (PT) and Student Support Review, as part of StEAP.
- WP
 - Includes work in support of WP, including the WP Strategy,²⁹ aimed at increasing WP student entrants and improving their progression and attainment.
- Student Skills and Employability
 - Includes work related to supporting the development of students' skills and attributes for employability.

1.3.6 Since these early discussions, and with the appointment of a new Vice-Principal Students, the University has committed to undertaking a major curriculum review of our undergraduate provision. This is currently at a very early stage, and has been delayed by the need to respond and adapt to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The curriculum review and potential reform is central to the other contextualised topics, will be guided by the values-led approach of Strategy 2030, informed by the recent developments through EFI, the Near Future Teaching project, Distance Learning at Scale, and lessons learnt from our move to hybrid teaching in response to Covid-19.

1.3.7 In the course of our discussions across the University, and in discussion at the annual meeting with QAA Scotland in March 2019, we debated whether assessment and feedback should be a separate contextualised topic. In discussions with students, this did not emerge as a key priority. Students were mostly concerned with student support, skills and employability and student voice. We have given considerable attention to assessment and feedback, under the direction of Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback, as part of our follow-up to the previous ELIR (detailed in Chapter 2). The National Student Survey (NSS) results have not shown an improvement in assessment and feedback over the last three years, which is a concern to us. Turnaround times continue to be a key issue. In order to make a significant improvement, we feel that we need to consider assessment and feedback holistically, rather than in isolation, and the planned curriculum review provides an opportunity for us to do this. In response to Covid-19, we have made some significant changes to our assessment, notably examinations, and, over the course of 2020/21 we are taking time to learn from this experience for staff and students as we consider assessment within the broader context of curriculum review. Figure 1.1 shows the contextualised topics.

29 www.ed.ac.uk/student-recruitment/widening-participation/about/widening-participation-strategy

Figure 1.1: Contextualised topics



Production of the RA

- 1.3.8 The ELIR team created draft chapters of the RA, using content invited from colleagues across the University and the Students' Association. A SharePoint site was used to create a first draft of chapters, with access restricted to the team, the Students' Association Vice President Education and members of staff from the Students' Association. Rather than wait until a draft of the entire RA had been produced, we decided to release chapters separately to the University community of staff and students for their comment and input as the chapters were being developed. We wanted staff and students to feel that they were able to play an active role in the development of content, rather than be presented with a complete document. This also meant that we were able to target specific individuals and roles in relation to each chapter for their specialist input.
- 1.3.9 The production of the RA has been supported by a coordinated communications and engagement plan developed in consultation with Communications and Marketing and the Students' Association. The key elements of this plan comprise:
- **A 'Spotlight on ELIR' series** on Teaching Matters, publicised to staff and students via email, social media channels and the quality website.³⁰ The 'Spotlight on' series continued beyond the production of the RA to keep staff and students engaged in preparations for the review visit and, in due course, will include outcomes from ELIR. To date, there have been 1,031 views of the RA Chapters through this channel, with Chapter 2 receiving the highest number of views at 321.
 - **Group meetings with students.** We held three meetings in November 2019 (14 participants) (including one well-attended student representatives' lunch) and two meetings in March 2020 (17 participants).
 - **Engagement with College committees.** The Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance attended all relevant College committees providing updates and an opportunity for committee members to engage.
 - **Regular update papers to Senate committees.** ELIR formed a standing item on the agendas of Senate Quality Assurance and Senate Learning and Teaching Committees.
 - **Senate committee newsletter entries.**³¹ The newsletter goes out to a distribution list of over 530 members of University staff and Students' Association contacts. The newsletters have contained an update on ELIR in all but one of the editions since January 2019.
- 1.3.10 Early drafts of Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 were all made available for comment to the wider University community between October and December 2019, each with an accompanying Teaching Matters blog post. Three student group meetings, one of which was a Student Representatives' lunch,

³⁰ www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/spotlight-on-elir/

³¹ www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/newsletter

were held in late November 2019. Comments received were incorporated into a first draft RA which was shared with two external reviewers, a member of Court, the Principal, Vice-Principal Students, Students' Association President and Vice-Principal Education in late January/early February 2020 for their comment. Comments received from this group were incorporated into a second draft which was shared with all students and staff in late March/early April 2020 for final comment. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, our ELIR was rescheduled and a process of updating the near-final second draft of the RA was undertaken by the ELIR team during May – August 2020.

- 1.3.11 The content of the RA was recommended by SQAC on 9 September 2020 for approval by eSenate which ran from 15-23 September 2020. eSenate approved the content and Court approved the final version of the RA on 28 September 2020. As far as possible, the RA captures the University's actions and intentions up to August 2020.

1.4 Summary of the institution's follow-up to the previous ELIR

Overview

- 1.4.1 We took a themed approach to implementing actions from the previous ELIR to ensure broad alignment with existing learning and teaching priorities and Assistant/Vice-Principal roles and responsibilities as part of an integrated planning process. SQAC received and gave feedback on quarterly progress reports during the first year after ELIR, then six monthly until February 2018, with one final update presented in February 2019 which marked our transition to preparation for ELIR 4.
- 1.4.2 Reports to and responses from SQAC are available on the Committee's SharePoint site.³² A report summarising the actions taken in response to all recommendations from the previous ELIR is available in the Advance Information Set. Additionally, we also discuss actions to key recommendations throughout the RA.

1.5 Impact of the institution's approach to engaging students in ELIR preparations

Overview

- 1.5.1 Our approach to engaging students in ELIR preparations has mirrored the approach taken for engaging staff in that students have been equally included in preparations. All students were given access to the developing, draft chapters of the RA for comment at the same time as staff. Additionally, we held a number of discussions with students throughout the process. Initially, we held discussions with groups of students to discuss potential contextualised topics. Further discussions were held with other groups of students to gather feedback on the developing chapters (especially Chapter 2) to ensure that the content highlighted issues of interest to students. The discussion meetings have been particularly effective and resulted in a number of students asking to be further involved in the preparations and in the review visit.
- 1.5.2 Our approach to preparing for ELIR has resulted in far greater engagement from across the University, both students and staff, than the approach taken in the previous ELIR. The Teaching

Matters blogs have been received positively. Student Partnership in Quality Scotland (sparqs) retweeted our blog as an example of positive practice in engaging students in shaping reflective analyses.³³

- 1.5.3 The Spotlight on ELIR series was selected as the Editor's Choice in the top ten most read Teaching Matters blogs of 2019.³⁴ The Editor, Jenny Scoles, highlighted her rationale for this choice, indicating our positive engagement with students:

"By openly blogging about the ELIR process that will be taking place in autumn 2020, all staff and students have been invited to comment, and thus contribute to, the chapters that comprise the RA component of ELIR. This is an innovative (and already externally commended) approach to compiling an important quality assurance process, which I have really enjoyed working on and helping share with others across the University."

- 1.5.4 From May to July 2020, we appointed a PhD intern to support our preparations for ELIR and to provide a student perspective to the process. The intern developed resources to engage students with the review process. Outputs from the internship were:

- A briefing video for students with accompanying PowerPoint presentation;³⁵
- An ELIR "quick facts" document;
- Teaching Matters blog posts;^{36, 37}
- Pictures selected to accompany each RA chapter and an accompanying reflection.

33 https://twitter.com/sparqs_scotland/status/1193848342855307264

34 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/top-ten-most-read-teaching-matters-blog-posts-of-2019/

35 https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Enhancement-Led+Institutional+Review+%28ELIR%29+Student+Briefing/1_r9o9c3np

36 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/spotlight-on-elir-new-dates-confirmed/

37 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/spotlight-on-elir-reflections-on-student-engagement/



Chapter two of the Reflective Analysis is about the student learning experience. For this chapter, I selected a photograph of a group of students standing outside the Main Library. With such a wealth of knowledge and resources within its walls, the library is a key part of the student learning experience. But this picture also shows that the student learning experience is so much more than what happens in the classroom. These students seem to have gathered outside the library for a brief respite from a long study session, or they've bumped into each other walking through George Square. Chapter Two considers the learning experience holistically, including wellbeing, belonging, peer support, and community. This picture represents this balance between learning and life that marks the student experience.

Vesna Curlic

PhD Intern

2. Enhancing the student learning experience

2.1 Student representation and engagement, including responding to student views

Overview

2.1.1 The ELIR 2015 Report confirmed: “The University is committed to student engagement and has a positive and constructive relationship with Edinburgh University Students’ Association (EUSA)” (paragraph 34). We have continued to work in partnership with the Students’ Association to strengthen student representation, engagement and the student voice. A number of developments since ELIR 2015 have served to strengthen this, including:

- A new student representative structure;
- Development of our first Student Partnership Agreement (SPA);
- Review and enhancement of Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) principles and operation;
- Improved access and understanding of data for student representatives;
- Introduction of mid-course feedback (MCF).

Student representation

2.1.2 The ELIR 2015 Report confirmed: “The University has a positive and constructive relationship with EUSA” but encouraged us “to continue working in partnership to ensure there is more effective student representation at College and School level” (paragraph 75).

2.1.3 We have worked with the Students’ Association (formerly EUSA) to make significant changes to ensure we have consistent and effective student representation across the University. We have moved from a Class Representative system to a Programme Representative system. This is a relatively recent development and is still bedding down. However, initial feedback indicates that this structure is more efficient and effective, in terms of the number of students who are acting as representatives and in terms of the escalation of issues.

2.1.4 The reduction in the number of local level student representatives (from 2,260 in 2017/18 to 1,467 in 2018/19) had (prior to Covid-19) allowed the Students’ Association to return to an in-person training model and “provide more effective training and preparation for the roles” (paragraph 75) as recommended in the ELIR 2015 Report. A team of Programme Representative Trainers provide the training with support from the Students’ Association’s Academic Representation team and student partnerships in quality Scotland (sparqs).

2.1.5 The Students’ Association piloted the training in 18 Schools in 2018/19, and saw an increase both in completion of the training (from 68.5 per cent completing online training the previous year, to 83.5 per cent completing in-person training) and satisfaction with the training (93 per cent of participants in the in-person training said they would recommend it). In 2019/20, the Students’ Association recruited 1,381 Programme Representatives, of which 80.5 per cent completed training. 73.8 per cent of representatives completed in-person training, with 23 per cent completing online training.

- 2.1.6 Prior to Covid-19, the Students' Associations' preferred training format was in-person sessions, with online training available for those who needed it, such as online learners, and students on placement. However, the context in which Programme Representatives will be operating is different for academic year (AY) 2020/21, and this is being addressed through revised training delivered fully online through both asynchronous, interactive modules completed in students' own time, and live online sessions to consolidate knowledge and skills. Fundamentally, the Programme Representative role has not changed for 2020/21. Representatives continue to be responsible for gathering feedback from their peers on their student experience, and communicating this feedback to the relevant staff members within their School.
- 2.1.7 The Students' Association is also developing additional guidance regarding the use of online platforms to gather feedback and to help build community. The Students' Association is continuing to provide development opportunities for Programme Representatives throughout the year including skills-based training workshops, and online forums where they can discuss the role with each other. This year, the Students' Association are also working to enhance feedback mechanisms and ensure that issues can be escalated appropriately, by bringing together each School's Programme and School Representatives on Microsoft Teams. We would expect Programme and School Representatives to communicate feedback directly to relevant staff with their School either directly or through SSLCs. However, these online forums will also enable our Sabbatical Officers and Students' Association staff to monitor issues and, where appropriate, share them with School contacts.
- 2.1.8 The Students' Association continues to deliver a wide range of development opportunities to student representatives, particularly Programme Representatives. In non-Covid circumstances these include regular lunches during term-time where representatives can network, discuss their work, learn about and provide feedback on the University's work around student engagement, and access support from staff within the Students' Association's Academic Representation team, as well as access to the Students' Association's workshop calendar. The network provides a valuable forum for communication between the University and students, and many of the workshops have been delivered and supported by staff from across the University, including Information Services, the Careers Service, and Edinburgh Global. The lunch meetings provided an opportunity to engage student representatives in ELIR discussions.
- 2.1.9 In 2019/20, the Students' Association received funding as part of Student Experience Action Plan (StEAP) to deliver a conference primarily for Programme Representatives. The aim of the conference was to provide student representatives with the opportunity to reflect on their roles, share best practice, and offer constructive feedback to the University on student engagement. In light of Covid-19 and revised priorities, the Student Representative Conference, originally scheduled to take place in AY 2019/20, is currently under review by the Students' Association. Subject to staff capacity to plan and deliver the Conference, as well as health and safety considerations, we anticipate the Conference taking place in semester two of 2020/21, providing student representatives with the opportunity to reflect on their roles, share best practice, and offer constructive feedback to the University on student representation and engagement.
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- 2.1.10 The Students' Association continues to support a system of School Representatives, with each School having an Undergraduate and Postgraduate Representative at School-level. These student representatives are supported by the Academic Representation team and work closely with Programme Representatives and the Students' Association Vice President Education to ensure that issues are escalated effectively. Each semester, School Representatives from across the University come together in a School Representative Forum, chaired by the Vice President Education, where they have the opportunity to discuss their work, share best practice, and hear from the University about opportunities for further engagement.
- 2.1.11 For the last two years, the Students' Association has prepared School Reports giving an overview of student engagement in Students' Association activities for each School across the University. These reports include details of student engagement in elections, student representation, peer learning and support activity, and student-led societies, as well as usage of the Students' Association's Advice Place. These reports have provided valuable insight for staff across the University into the work of the Students' Association, and have formed the basis for introductory meetings between Schools, Colleges and the Students' Association over the summer. These reports may also help Schools to appreciate activity that might be relevant to support at a local School-level, and may help in building or strengthening School community (such as academic societies).
- 2.1.12 The Students' Association continues to support the recruitment of student representatives on College and University committees from a pool of School Representatives. As the system becomes embedded, the Students' Association is now looking to enhance the support these students receive to ensure they are able to make the most of the opportunities that being a committee member offers. The ELIR Report 2015 encouraged us to "consider the best ways of providing feedback to the wider student body about the action that is taken in response to matters raised through School and College-level committees" (paragraph 76). The following two key developments are designed to support this.
- 2.1.13 The first comprises a collaboration between the Students' Association and the University's Information Services team to pilot a number of options through Learn (our Virtual Learning Environment) and Microsoft Teams with the aim of improving communication between Programme Representatives and the students they represent, and supporting the escalation of issues through the varying levels of the academic student representation system. Following the completion of this project, the pilot group published a series of recommendations.³⁸
- 2.1.14 In light of Covid-19, a second pilot is running in 2020/21 this time allowing Programme Representatives to volunteer to take part and select the platform they feel will best suit their cohort. Those taking part in the second pilot will continue to be supported by Students' Association staff and the University's Information Services team, and we hope that this revised approach will ensure high levels of engagement with the project, allowing us to identify best practice and support the roll-out of this approach across the University in coming years.
- 2.1.15 The second development comprises a collaboration between the Students' Association and Academic Services colleagues to enhance the operation and effectiveness of SSLCs. This has led to the development of a more robust set of guidance for Schools in the running of SSLCs, providing

38 www.projects.ed.ac.uk/project/hss030/pilot-recommendations-report

greater consistency across SSLCs, as well as acting as a catalyst for Schools to share their own best practice of SSLCs (see sections 2.1.22 – 2.1.26).

- 2.1.16 Responding to the ELIR 2015 recommendation to provide more effective School level representation, we engaged with the Enhancement Theme, “Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience”, to improve students’ access to and understanding of data. The Students’ Association has been working closely with colleagues in the University’s Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team to explore the impact of giving School Representatives access to University survey data (see sections 3.2.16)
- 2.1.17 Student Council continues to be the Students’ Association’s primary decision-making and policy-setting body. All students are able to attend, submit motions, and vote on proposals. Following a referendum in March 2016, the Elected Representatives – including Sabbatical Officers, Liberation Officers, Section Representatives, School Representatives, and Activities Representatives – have a weighted vote of 1.5 to signify the responsibility they hold to represent their constituents. Student Council meetings are also an opportunity for students to hold the Sabbatical Officers to account for their work by listening to their monthly accountability reports and asking questions regarding upcoming projects and campaigns.

Student-led teaching awards

- 2.1.18 Since their launch in 2008/09 as the first student-led Teaching Awards scheme in the UK, the Students’ Association’s Teaching Awards³⁹ have been a huge success, and they represent an extremely positive partnership with the University. The Teaching Awards scheme allows students to nominate teaching staff, support staff, and courses for awards, which are assessed by a student panel of judges. In 2018/19, students made over 2000 nominations over 11 categories.
- 2.1.19 In 2019/20, 1,511 nominations were made over 11 categories. While this reduction in nominations is disappointing, the quality of nominations remains high and it is clear from feedback that staff greatly appreciate the opportunity to hear directly from students about the positive impact their teaching and support has had.
- 2.1.20 The Teaching Awards scheme provides an opportunity for students to express their appreciation of staff and recognise their contribution to the student experience. The Students’ Association hosts a high-profile awards ceremony at the end of each academic year to recognise the award winners and runners-up. Due to Covid-19, the 2020 Teaching Award Ceremony was live-streamed through a series of videos on the Students’ Association Facebook page, rather than in person. Collectively, the video announcements received over 10,000 views, showing the high levels of engagement from both students and staff.
- 2.1.21 The Students’ Association continues to place an emphasis on the quality of nominations, as opposed to the quantity, and has worked to demonstrate the impact of nominations on staff.⁴⁰ We are proud that the University continues to recognise the student voice through Teaching Award nominations as an indicator of teaching excellence. Receiving a Teaching Award or multiple nominations for an Award are recognised within our Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education⁴¹

39 www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/campaigns/teachingawards/

40 www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7AwUEBAnpk

41 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/exemplarsofexcellenceinstudenteducation.pdf

that are used in grading/re-grading and promotion for academic staff at grades nine (for example, Senior Lecturer) and 10 (for example, Professor).

Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC)

- 2.1.22 SSLCs are held in every School and provide a formal mechanism for communication and discussion between student representatives, academic and administrative staff relating to all matters connected with improving the degree programmes (at all levels of study including undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research). Schools determine the most effective organisation of their SSLC, which may be by subject, programme and/or School level, depending on the number of students.
- 2.1.23 In addition to discussing course and programme matters, SSLCs provide an opportunity to escalate issues (to the School, College or University) associated with the wider student experience that may be outside the control or remit of the programme to resolve. We have been exploring ways in which escalation of such issues can be achieved efficiently and plan to do more in this area.
- 2.1.24 Academic Services has worked in partnership with colleagues in the Students' Association to develop a more robust set of guidance for Schools in the running of SSLCs.⁴² Principles for SSLC meetings have been added to the Student Voice Policy for 2020/21. Staff and Student Representatives are responsible for ensuring that students are aware of the response or action taken following their feedback at the SSLC meeting.
- 2.1.25 Colleges have also been conducting work to strengthen the effectiveness of SSLCs at the College level. College of Science and Engineering (CSE) has introduced a College level SSLC, split into specific postgraduate research and taught (undergraduate and postgraduate) committees, both chaired by the Students' Association Vice President Education. The College intends that meetings will take place once per semester and items will be referred to College Learning and Teaching Committee and College Quality Committee.
- 2.1.26 College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) is focusing on improving SSLCs for postgraduate research students. The College is auditing SSLCs for postgraduate research students in all its Schools, Deaneries, Institutes and Centres to ensure appropriate information exchange between the relevant decision making bodies (for example, College Postgraduate Research Management Committee, College Postgraduate Board of Examiners and College Researcher Experience Committee (REC)) and the postgraduate research student body. It is also seeking to improve interactions with, and support for, postgraduate research societies, which currently represent different Deaneries and different locations in the College. A postgraduate research student representative (also a committee member of one of the College postgraduate research student societies) is a member of the College REC. This individual contributes to discussions and reports to the College Postgraduate Societies on activities and developments. All three Colleges have been actively involved in establishing a Doctoral College (see 2.4.34 onwards) which will coordinate and enhance postgraduate research student activities and experience across the University, and will be a place for postgraduate research students to discuss institution-wide matters of the postgraduate research experience.

Student surveys

- 2.1.27 The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team manage our student surveys and also provide a central point of contact for information on student surveying in the University, as well as analysis and reporting on data from student surveys. Details on the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) surveys are provided in the Advance Information Set (AIS). In addition to these external surveys, all students are provided with the opportunity to give feedback on their course experience via Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs). Students are notified of the surveys towards the end of the course. CEQs operate to a standard core set of questions that are used consistently across all courses, but may also be supplemented by additional question sets according to the specific context of the course. The core question set provides an opportunity for benchmarking within and across subjects and Schools.
- 2.1.28 Our current system of CEQs has been in operation since the last ELIR. The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team led a review of CEQs during AY 2018/19. The review was prompted by year on year decreases in response rates and suggestions of 'survey fatigue'. The decision to anonymise the survey data has limited the amount of usable insight we can garner from the data, in relation to other student characteristics for example. CEQs are resource intensive to run, both for the central team and Schools. A Task and Finish Group was created to address how to improve staff and student engagement with CEQs (in an attempt to improve student response rates) and increase efficiency in the process. A number of recommendations were made to improve efficiency, but it was agreed that a more fundamental reflection on the purpose of CEQs was required. A task group, led by Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, was established to conduct a more fundamental review of the operation and purpose of CEQs throughout 2020, alongside other student voice mechanisms, such as the recently introduced Mid-Course Feedback (see 2.1.30 onwards). University Executive Group approved proposals presented in June 2020 to move to locally managed end of course feedback and an institution-wide enhancement-focused undergraduate student survey. Due to Covid-19, the intended implementation for these proposals has been pushed back from AY 2020/21 to 2021/22 and the Task and Finish Group's lifecycle has been extended to work on delivering these recommendations.
- 2.1.29 The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team have been working to improve the analysis of student survey data and access to the data. Towards the end of 2018/19 new reports were launched in Power BI which provide all members of the University with trends and data visualisations alongside data tables and survey comments with a key word search functionality. Moving to this software has allowed us to release analysis of survey data as soon as surveys close or on results day for the NSS. The survey reports are some of the most used in the University, with the NSS report ranked first.

Mid-course feedback (MCF)

- 2.1.30 Since the last ELIR we have added (MCF) to our student voice mechanisms. We introduced MCF in 2016/17 for undergraduate honours courses, reflecting good practice already in operation in
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a number of Schools. We then extended MCF to all undergraduate courses in 2017/18, and it became policy in 2019/20 for all our undergraduate courses that run for 10 weeks or longer and in 2020/21 for all postgraduate taught courses that run for 10 weeks or longer. Quite simply, mid-way through the course, students are given the opportunity to provide feedback on how the course is going, and staff are expected to respond to the feedback while the course is running. We feel such feedback is crucial to:

- Promoting constructive dialogue between staff and students at an early stage;
- Allowing staff to identify and respond to student concerns about a course in a timely way (ideally in a way that resolves the matter for the current cohort);
- Providing staff with an opportunity to explain to students why the course is structured in the way it is, and outlining changes that have evolved in response to feedback from previous cohorts.

2.1.31 Importantly, existing students on the course can benefit from any actions we may be able to take, which helps to reinforce to students the value of giving feedback. All of this contributes to the ongoing enhancement of the quality of the educational experience for students.

2.1.32 Unlike CEQs, that are centrally managed and standardised, Schools are free to determine the best way to conduct MCF for their course, but are encouraged to discuss options or co-design approaches with students. Importantly, MCF should not be viewed as ‘another survey’, but provide an opportunity for discussion and dialogue with students.

2.1.33 We have evaluated the effectiveness of MCF over the last two academic years, via an online survey of undergraduate Course Organisers and through consultation with Schools. Overall, responses are very positive. Key findings from almost one third (31 per cent) of the 1,355 Course Organisers invited to take part in the most recent evaluation carried out during semester two, 2018/19 are that:

- Use of MCF is high – 87.5 per cent of respondents reported using MCF in their 2018/19 courses;
- MCF is valued by staff – 78 per cent of respondents considered MCF to be useful;
- Low-tech options involving postcards, or other paper-based approaches, are the most popular method for gathering feedback;
- Most issues identified through feedback are being resolved within the course timeframe and typically communicated to students in class;
- MCF highlights issues that Course Organisers may otherwise be unaware of;
- Where colleagues report not using MCF, the reasons are primarily due to confusion and lack of perceived value – there is some lack of clarity about the way in which MCF relates to other student voice mechanisms.

2.1.34 In response to the final point above, we identified a need to communicate further guidance to staff to highlight the role and purpose of MCF alongside other student voice mechanisms and to share examples of how to conduct MCF. We have curated many positive examples of the use of MCF on the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) website to help staff in using it,⁴³ as well as a good practice resource for staff on closing the feedback loop.⁴⁴ Background information and examples for students on engaging with MCF are available on the Student Voice webpage.⁴⁵

43 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/teaching-feedback/mid-course

44 <http://edin.ac/2wqzrew>

45 www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-voice/enhancing-courses/mid-course-feedback

We also produced a student voice graphic to explain the various student voice mechanisms to students (and staff) as both an interactive pdf version⁴⁶ and a print-friendly pdf version.⁴⁷ We have reminded colleagues of these resources and the value of MCF via Teaching Matters blogs.^{48, 49}

Student Partnership Agreement (SPA)

- 2.1.35 Senate approved our first SPA on 4 October 2017. The SPA replaced our joint Students' Association/University student engagement statement that already recognised students as active partners and co-creators of their learning. The SPA was therefore a natural extension of this joint statement and provided an opportunity to develop our partnership in a more planned approach around a set of agreed priorities, and to extend the partnership beyond the Students' Association to the wider community of students and staff.
- 2.1.36 In developing our SPA, we were clear that we did not want it to become a high-level document that had no relevance to students and staff across the University. We wanted it to reflect the priorities of both sides and to serve as a framework for action. We engaged in extensive joint consultation to identify and agree our key priorities. This was informed by:
- Feedback from students through the main institutional/national surveys;
 - Consultation with students via the Students' Association Representative Forums;
 - Consultation with staff via key committees and groups;
 - Alignment with the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS) and the Students' Association's Strategy.
- 2.1.37 The themes for the SPA are reviewed annually following the election of student Sabbatical Officers and outcomes from the major student surveys, allowing key priorities for the subsequent academic year to be identified. Themes are agreed in consultation with the Students' Association and the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance. The themes are approved by the Senate Education Committee and noted by Senate. If the themes remain relevant they may continue for a further academic year to allow for greater continuity and impact.
- 2.1.38 The priorities we agreed to work on together during AY 2017/18 were Student Voice, Academic Support and Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing. Based on feedback from students, the three key themes remained as priorities for 2018/19, although with specific sub-priorities under each theme. Continuity of the broad themes allowed us to build on the success of the previous year and created potential for greater impact, with key outcomes being taken forward by IAD (see 2.1.41). The three priority themes agreed for 2019/20 were: Community, Student Voice, and Social Justice (see Box 2.1). These themes are also reflected in our contextualised topics.

46 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback.pdf

47 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback_printversion.pdf

48 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/what-is-mid-course-feedback/

49 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/valuing-and-supporting-mid-course-feedback/

Box 2.1: SPA priorities 2019/2020**Community:**

- Supporting staff and students to develop, enhance, and support effective communities that promote a sense of wellbeing and belonging

Student Voice:

- Continue working to enable student feedback to be shared and addressed, in particular exploring innovative ways to use the new student voice feedback diagram or enhancing aspects of existing mechanisms to close the feedback loop.

Social Justice:

- Exploring issues of diversity, sustainability and justice with the aim of empowering students and staff to engage critically and sensitively with the challenges of our contemporary world. This includes engaging with discourses of liberation or embedding sustainability within the curriculum.

- 2.1.39 We wanted to enable students and staff to work together to address the priorities in a meaningful way. Each year since its inception we have made small project funding of approximately £7,000 available and invited proposals for joint (student-staff) projects to address the priorities.⁵⁰ The project proposals must involve both students and staff, and link to one of the key priorities of the SPA. In the first year, we received 27 applications of which 14 received funding. In the second year, we received 12 applications of which 10 received funding and in 2019/20, we received 13 applications and funded 11 projects.
- 2.1.40 Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of the projects funded during 2019/20 were unable to complete. It was agreed that these projects could conclude during semester one 2020/21 if feasible. In addition, it was agreed to suspend funded projects for 2020/21, recognising the additional pressures on students and staff with the move to a hybrid teaching model, although the SPA and the themes remain as a key reference point for the student experience. Instead, an evaluation of previous projects is being undertaken to review impact and identify where practice can be shared across the institution. We expect to return to funded collaborative projects from 2021/22.
- 2.1.41 The funded projects have been diverse in nature, from a student-hosted podcast to a student-staff sports day. Others have created wellbeing resources and School-based community events. Successful applications have come from all three Colleges across the University. At the end of the first year we held a showcase event and produced a booklet designed by a student⁵¹ to highlight the work of the projects and share the learning. This was distributed to all Schools and School Representatives. A collection of projects focused on ways to build community, and the learning from these is being taken forward by IAD as part of the Edinburgh Network: Growing Approaches to Genuine Engagement (ENGAGE) Network.⁵² Other project outcomes have been shared via Teaching Matters.⁵³

50 www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-voice/partnership-agreement/spa-small-projects

51 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/spa-booklet.pdf

52 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/student-engagement

53 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/student-partnership-agreement/

2.1.42 Our SPA is a living, working document⁵⁴ that we review annually, with the newly elected Student Association Sabbatical Officers, taking account of student feedback, to agree and approve the priorities for partnership working in the coming year.

2.2 Recognising and responding to equality and diversity in the student population, including widening access and mode and location of study

Overview

2.2.1 The ELIR 2015 Report commented: “The University has an effective approach to supporting equality and diversity” (paragraph 27). We are committed to embedding Equality and Diversity (E&D) across all our work, and developing a positive culture that supports inclusion, celebrates difference, challenges prejudice and promotes fairness. Within this context, we are committed to increasing diversity and providing equality of opportunity for all prospective and current students.

2.2.2 E&D is an integral aspect of our Strategy 2030, which emphasises the values of diversity and inclusivity. Our Equality and Diversity Strategy⁵⁵ makes clear our guiding principles for integrating E&D in policy and practice, which is complemented by our Equality Outcomes and Actions Plan.⁵⁶

2.2.3 Since ELIR 2015, we have focused on:

- Continuing to promote gender equality through the Athena (Scientific Women’s Academic Network) SWAN charter;
- Promoting a culture of dignity and respect through a revised policy, awareness raising campaigns in collaboration with the Students’ Association, and provision of staff and student training in preventing and addressing bullying and harassment;
- Improving the accessibility of our estate for disabled students and staff;
- Reviewing and updating our Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy;
- Considering inclusivity in the curriculum;
- Reviewing our support for BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) students;
- Developing a new Widening Participation (WP) Strategy and increasing the range of access opportunities and support for students from WP backgrounds.

Equality and diversity

2.2.4 We have recently appointed an Executive level University wide lead for equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I), replacing the outgoing Vice-Principal People and Culture. This visibly and firmly restates our commitment to leadership in this area and to mainstreaming ED&I across the University. As a member of the University Executive, and reporting directly to Vice-Principal Students and Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance, this new appointment signals senior leadership support in ensuring our commitments to ED&I are met. A new University level ED&I Committee contributes to strategic development, action planning and the promotion of best practice for and beyond protected groups.

54 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studentpartnershipagreement.pdf

55 www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/Strategy.pdf

56 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/equality_outcomes_2017-2021_action_plan_final.pdf

- 2.2.5 Our Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) reports annually on student and staff ED&I.⁵⁷ The ethnic diversity of our student population is enriched by the high proportion of international students that we attract. However, UK-domiciled BME students are underrepresented in our community and we are addressing this.
- 2.2.6 The overall proportion of UK-domiciled BME students has increased steadily over the last five years from 8.4 per cent in 2014/15 to 12.8 per cent in 2018/19. The greatest proportion of BME students enter College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) and the lowest proportion in College of Arts Humanities and Social Science (CAHSS), which reflects the UK wide pattern of higher BME participation in science, engineering and technology (SET) subjects than non-SET subjects overall. To set this into a wider context, the 2011 UK Census reports 12.9 per cent of the UK population to be of ethnic minority and 4.1 per cent in Scotland. These figures rise to 20.0 per cent in the UK and 6.2 per cent in Scotland for the under 25s, who make up 95 per cent of our undergraduate entrants.
- 2.2.7 The proportion of UK-domiciled postgraduate taught entrants from an ethnic minority background has varied between 10.8 per cent and 14.3 per cent over the last five years, with the proportion much higher in CMVM than in the other two Colleges. The proportion of UK-domiciled postgraduate research student entrants from an ethnic minority background has risen gently year-on-year over the last five years from 10.4 per cent to 12.7 per cent. The variation between Colleges in the proportion of UK-domiciled BME postgraduate research students is much smaller compared with UK-domiciled BME undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.
- 2.2.8 Analysis of comparative ethnicity data (at 2017/18) from peer group institutions shows that we have a slightly higher proportion of UK-domiciled BME entrants at all levels of study in comparison to other institutions in Scotland (the overall proportion of UK-domiciled BME students in Scottish institutions was 8.8 per cent) although we are some way off the proportion of BME entrants compared to other Russell Group institutions.
- 2.2.9 EDMARC also reports on the diversity among staff of different categories and grades and highlights the need to improve the ethnic diversity of our staff, especially those of black and minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 2.2.10 With some evidence of an attainment gap at undergraduate level for UK-domiciled BME students, we conducted a Thematic Review of BME student support throughout 2018/19 (see Box 2.2). We published the report in October 2019, during Black History Month. The report makes a number of recommendations around four key areas: racial literacy and awareness gap, sense of belonging, accessing support services, and curricula and learning. The recommendations are being taken forward under the oversight of Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) and are embedded in the Race Equality and Anti-Racist Action Plan, which has a broader focus.

57 www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/edmarc

Box 2.2: Thematic review of BME student support

As part of our commitment to creating an equal, diverse and inclusive environment for all students and staff, we regularly carry out reviews into the needs and experiences of different groups. SQAC agreed that the 2018/19 Thematic Review of Student Support would focus on BME students' experiences of support at the University. The thematic review panel, including an external member, held consultation sessions with BME students and key stakeholders from across the University, providing an opportunity to discuss how ethnicity, colour, religious, cultural and linguistic issues matter within a university environment.

The review confirmed an attainment gap between BME and white students at the University. The review panel acknowledged that the reasons for the attainment gap are complex, and will encompass a wide range of factors such as qualifications on entry and intersecting factors such as gender and class. A key recommendation from the review was a more systematic approach to monitoring retention, progression and attainment data for BME students to better understand key failure points as well as a greater understanding of the impact and effectiveness of support provided. This data will be monitored at an institutional level and by subject areas, weighted by qualifications on entry, to determine if the differential is actually evidence of systematic disadvantage or whether pre-existing disadvantage is exacerbated or mitigated whilst at Edinburgh. It will also be important to monitor the reasons why BME students decide to withdraw. This new approach will enable the University to better understand and evaluate the individual context and challenges of each subject area and School.

2.2.11 In terms of gender, our proportion of female entrants regularly exceeds 60 per cent, placing us in the top three Russell Group universities. We are a proud holder of an Athena SWAN Silver Institution Award (awarded 2015 and renewed in 2018). All of our Schools hold departmental awards (22 awards over 20 Schools): 12 Bronze, nine Silver and one Gold award. STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines hold one Gold, eight Silver and two Bronze awards; Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law (AHSSBL) disciplines hold one Silver and 10 Bronze awards.⁵⁸

Supporting the development of an inclusive curriculum

2.2.12 Our Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS) includes a commitment to "Using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity". Over recent years, many of our Schools have undertaken a range of positive activities to open up our curricula to a broader range of different cultures, backgrounds and identities and to make it more relevant to an increasingly diverse student body and society. In order to build on these initiatives, Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) established a task group in 2018/19 to explore how institutional action can assist in promoting inclusion, equality and diversity in the curriculum.

2.2.13 The task group consulted with students and staff from across the University and noted a consensus on the importance of finding ways to have ongoing, open conversations about what a diverse and inclusive curriculum would look like and how this may mean different things in each College, School, and subject area. The task group developed a set of principles for promoting inclusion, equality and diversity in the curriculum and some relatively modest potential steps at institutional level to support

and add value to local discipline-specific projects (including benchmarking, practice sharing, and training and development for key staff involved in curriculum development).

- 2.2.14 While the task group's recommendations make a valuable contribution to this agenda (in conjunction with local disciplinary activities, see Box 2.3), institutional success in developing a curriculum that delivers the principles is dependent on broader institutional change, for example as part of a wider curriculum review. It is also important that our staff profiles are diverse. We had planned to take forward the principles and implementation plan during AY 2019/20, with oversight of the Senate Education Committee, but this has been delayed due to Covid-19. They will now feed into the planned curriculum review and reform as soon as that can continue.

Box 2.3: Diversifying reading lists

A team of colleagues in Philosophy is leading a major project to diversify reading materials used in course syllabi.⁵⁹ The project is hosted and supported by Edinburgh Centre for Epistemology, Mind and Normativity (EIDYN) and School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (PPLS), with additional support from our University, the University of Leeds, the British Philosophical Association, the Society for Applied Philosophy, and the American Society for Aesthetics.

Women and non-white persons are significantly underrepresented in modern Philosophy. The project is helping to decolonise the reading lists used to support the teaching of Philosophy, by including philosophical writings by authors from under-represented groups.

The impact of the project is much broader than the subject of Philosophy. In addition to building a diverse reading list for the subject area, other key outcomes include practical guidance and principles for diversifying reading lists that can be applied in any subject-area.⁶⁰

Supporting students with disabilities

- 2.2.15 Overall, 11.5 per cent of our undergraduate students have declared a disability. Through our analysis of progression and attainment data, we have identified an attainment gap for students with a declared disability, and are putting in a number of steps to address this. Students have raised concerns about our arrangements for supporting disabled students, in particular the implementation of adjustments. This issue had been highlighted in previous reviews, but had not been fully acted on. In response, the (former) Principal instigated a review in May 2016 and tasked a review panel to scrutinise priority areas, including the accessibility of the estate and the implementation of adjustments, and recommend options for enhancement. Central Management Group (CMG) endorsed the recommendations of the report in April 2017 and a group was established to oversee their implementation. The group met regularly to consider reports from each area with remitted actions and to determine whether sufficient progress had been made towards the completion of each action/recommendation, providing formative feedback comments where an action was progressing and confirmation when an action/recommendation had been completed. The group reported regularly to CMG until its last meeting in January 2018 and thereafter reported to University Executive until May 2019 when the final recommendation had been completed.

59 <https://eidyn.ppls.ed.ac.uk/project/diversity-reading-list>

60 <https://diversityreadinglist.org>

2.2.16 The key outcomes of the review included:

- A move from adjustments being recommended to a mandatory requirement, with a change to the academic regulatory framework to reflect this;
- Disability systems were integrated into EUCLID, the student record system, to improve the communication and monitoring of adjustments;
- A major review of accessibility was undertaken across approximately 300 buildings and 600 teaching spaces to guide a programme of improvement works. This resulted in online access guides and mobile apps being made available for each building. A new Estates accessibility policy,⁶¹ and accompanying guidance,⁶² was approved which establishes a framework to monitor, maintain and improve accessibility across the University estate through development, refurbishment and maintenance activities, with £5 million committed over the next five years specifically to improve accessibility.

2.2.17 In addition to the support provided by the Student Disability Service and the Counselling Service to students with a declared disability, other student services also support students with declared disabilities in various ways. The Careers Service, for example, provides a priority access period for students with specific needs (for example, autism, mobility). The Careers fair included an accessibility early entry period for students with additional support needs. This facility was promoted to final year students who had disclosed a disability. Attendance at the event by students reporting a disability increased by six per cent on the previous year.

Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy

2.2.18 In 2018/19, we took the opportunity to review and benchmark our Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy⁶³ across the UK and to explore good practice elsewhere to help develop further the core content of our policy. We continue to be one of a handful of universities that has implemented a formal Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy and continue to be an exemplar to other universities.

2.2.19 We used feedback from student forums, a benchmarking exercise, student surveys and feedback from academic staff to consider which elements of the plan worked well and which elements needed further embedding or enhancement. Significant improvements in the use of learning technologies have meant that elements of the policy are now more consistently delivered and are measurable, particularly in relation to the use of microphones and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and the development and consistent delivery of a new Lecture Recording Policy.⁶⁴ Also, in response to Covid-19 and the move to hybrid teaching we developed a Virtual Classroom Policy. Given these developments, the Policy is currently being reviewed to ensure alignment with these developments and is expected to be completed by the end of 2020 calendar year.

2.2.20 The planned curriculum review and reform presents a prime opportunity over the coming years to promote and further embed accessibility and inclusivity in the design of courses and programmes.

61 www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EstatesBuildings/Policies/UoEAccessibilityPolicy.pdf

62 www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EstatesBuildings/Policies/UoEAccessibilityPolicyGuidance.pdf

63 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible_and_inclusive_learning_policy.pdf

64 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/lecture_recording_policy.pdf

Students' Association's work to support equality and diversity

- 2.2.21 The Students' Association supports five student-led Liberation Campaigns representing marginalised communities of students (BME students, disabled students, LGBT+ students, Trans and Non-Binary students, and women students). Each Campaign is led by an Officer elected by self-defining students in a cross-campus ballot. The Liberation Officers lead on projects and campaigns, building a sense of belonging for students and working to improve the student experience, as well as the Students' Association's programme of Liberation History Months (Black History Month, Disability History Month, and LGBT+ History Month).
- 2.2.22 Alongside these campaigns we have a number of Section Representatives who represent communities of non-traditional students including mature students, part-time students, student parents and student carers, many of whom are also online students. The Students' Association's Vice President Welfare is also currently exploring establishing a student-led community of low-income, first-generation, and care-experienced students, in partnership with the University's WP team.
- 2.2.23 In 2018/19, the Students' Association participated in a national Student Representative Diversity project initiated by sparqs, which involved asking all Programme Representatives to complete a survey as part of their induction to the role. The data gathered enabled us to better understand the experiences of our Programme Representatives, benchmark against other institutions in the sector, and in many cases represents a significant quantity of new data on student demographics which has informed the Students' Association's wider work on addressing E&D.
- 2.2.24 Through the Students' Association's Global Students work, including the Global Buddies and Tandem programmes, the Students' Association provides support to international students, ensuring that they feel a sense of belonging to the wider University community and are able to fully participate in student life. Global Buddies⁶⁵ is a peer support programme specifically for visiting students coming to the University for one or two semesters. The aim of the programme is to support visiting students' transition into a new academic and cultural environment. The Tandem Language Programme⁶⁶ is essentially a language exchange run by a committee of University students who organise and run language cafes and themed events that help students meet and engage in language exchange with one another, to learn another language or improve their language ability and make new friends in the process.

Widening access through admissions

- 2.2.25 We are committed to fair and transparent admissions policies and practices which value the wide range of academic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of our students and which enhance the applicant experience. Recognising the benefits that a diverse student population brings to our University, our admissions policies and practices are designed to value diversity. Our policies on the admission of students with disabilities, students with criminal convictions and adult returners are designed to remove barriers, and our policy on the recognition of prior learning in admissions allows us to value experience beyond traditional academic qualifications.⁶⁷

65 www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/global/buddies/

66 www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/global/languages/tandem/

67 www.ed.ac.uk/studying/admissions/policies-procedures

- 2.2.26 We took an active part in the Commission on Widening Access review during 2015, and have reflected the recommendations of A Blueprint for Fairness in our WP Strategy. We have revised our contextual admissions policy to increase offer chances to students from the 20 per cent most deprived postcodes in Scotland, and we have expanded our offer guarantee to all care experienced students.⁶⁸ We have developed an online contextual data checker⁶⁹ that enables prospective applicants to find out whether they are likely to be considered for a contextual offer, and what this means for them. We have also developed systems to offer additional support to refugees and asylum seekers who apply to the University.
- 2.2.27 We were an active participant in the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funded Attracting Diversity project delivered by the Equality Challenge Unit, and created a pilot project to increase interest in computer science among S1-S3 girls from local schools.⁷⁰
- 2.2.28 We have increased transparency for all applicants with the introduction of an English language policy to clarify our requirements. This is reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure that we are reflecting on new information and changes in requirements. We are carrying out a project to monitor the outcome of requests for English language flexibility. This will allow us to have clear parameters for considering future flexibility requests to ensure fairness across all parts of the University.⁷¹
- 2.2.29 With the increase in our postgraduate student population we have introduced a range of on-campus and online opportunities to support postgraduate student recruitment and admissions. Our postgraduate Open Day is now among the most extensive in the UK, and this has been supported by the development of a virtual Open Week for online students.
- 2.2.30 Using a gathered field for selection to high demand postgraduate programmes has allowed us to ensure that all applicants can be fairly considered even if they apply later in the year, while an increased emphasis on relevant knowledge and experience has expanded opportunities for applicants from less traditional backgrounds.
- 2.2.31 We have increased our postgraduate recruitment presence in the UK and the EU, and are working closely with colleagues to prepare for the possible outcomes of Brexit. We have developed an initiative to engage our current students with opportunities for postgraduate study – the Postgrad Launch Pad – and we have increased our online portfolio to provide postgraduate study opportunities for students from across the world. These changes have been underpinned by a new postgraduate admissions policy and procedure, and improved communications.⁷²

Widening Participation (WP) strategy

- 2.2.32 The ELIR 2015 Report confirmed: “The University has an effective approach to WP that encompasses a range of activities, including innovative outreach; contextualised admissions; bursary provision; and flexible entry and exit routes into and through the University’s degree programmes” (paragraph 24).
- 2.2.33 For decades the University has taken a leading approach to WP and has helped pioneer many different types of access programmes, including the Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS) in the 1990s, which are now common across the higher education sector.

68 www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/access-edinburgh/widening-access-offers

69 <https://admission-checker.is.ed.ac.uk/>

70 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/equality_outcomes_and_mainstreaming_progress_report2019-final.pdf

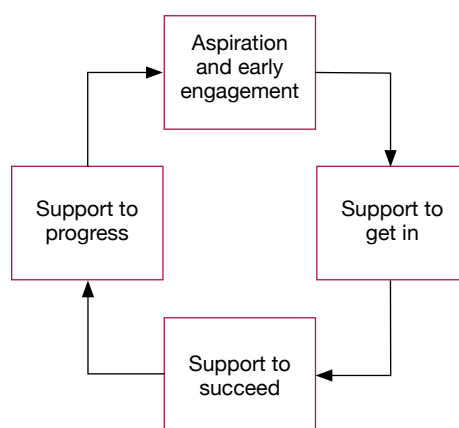
71 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/october-2018-english-language-policy_0.pdf

72 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pg_admissions_policy.pdf

2.2.34 We have also exceeded our initial Commission on Widening Access target that 10 per cent of new full-time Scottish degree students are from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD20) by 2021, due to our longstanding outreach programmes, scholarships and support throughout the application process and students' transition into the University. We cannot however be complacent about our role in WP and we developed a WP Strategy 2018-2021 to guide our approach in this area. The Strategy is the starting point in a process of developing a campus of belonging; a University where we do not simply focus on representation or under-representation, but more importantly upon a sense of community.

2.2.35 Our WP Strategy⁷³ not only strengthens our efforts to widen access to our institution even further, but also ensures that students, once they gain access, are supported in their transition, their academic journey, and their progression onto a career or further study of their choice. We are doing this through four mutually supportive strands of the strategy (see Figure 2.1). This strategy is accompanied by a three-year implementation plan.

Figure 2.1: **WP Strategy**



2.2.36 Recent developments include working to develop partnerships with key regional college partners to develop new access and articulation routes for target WP groups including mature students, students from Scotland's most deprived communities and those who have care experience. Currently, the majority of students accessing the University with a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND) qualification have to repeat at least one year. Our initial objective for these college partnerships is to agree formal articulation agreements for a 1+3 model (HNC to Year 2 entry) in a small number of subject areas. The expectation is that the first of these new formal articulation agreements will enable entry for students from Edinburgh College to the University in 2020/21 or 2021/22 to programmes in Health in Social Science and Edinburgh College of Art (ECA).

2.2.37 The potential for new foundation routes to CSE and CMVM are currently being scoped. Discussions around access routes are concentrating on developing new routes and reviewing existing routes to ensure they still meet students' needs to make a successful transition into the University. One new route that opened in 2019/20 is the Scottish Wider Access Programme Access to Medical Studies programme at Edinburgh College, with students beginning their Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB) with us in AY 2020/21. At March 2020, seven offers had been made to students for 2020/21 entry.

2.2.38 As well as the new articulation routes, we are developing pre- and post-entry support to enable students to negotiate a successful transition into and through the University. This support has three strands comprising: generic transition experiences; discipline/programme specific support; and integration or belonging. Generic transition support will focus on key academic skills and the differences between college Higher National Study (HN study), and the University culture. Discipline/programme specific initiatives prepare students for their academic curriculum, ensuring that they have pre- and post-entry opportunities to engage with key areas or threshold concepts that have not been covered in the HN. The final strand acknowledges that a sense of belonging and community is vital to ensure all students succeed and benefit fully from their time at the University.

Flexible routes via Centre for Open Learning (COL)

2.2.39 Centre for Open Learning (COL) has grown in its offer since the last ELIR. As well as providing a large continuing education programme, the International Foundation Programme, Seasonal Provision and English language support, it now provides a part-time access programme for adult returners, focusing on those from a WP background. The programme launched in AY 2018/19 with a cohort of 50 of which 80 per cent (41) completed the two semesters of study. This completion exceeds those of other programmes of its nature (for example, University of Glasgow 45 per cent). All completing students received conditional offers for undergraduate study, 39 students secured places on undergraduate degrees in CAHSS. Students who did not complete the programme continue to be supported and sign-posted to alternative academic provision wherever appropriate. A planned increase in the size of this cohort is expected in response to demand.

2.2.40 While a significant number of students enrolled on the access programme are from SIMD20 areas (40 per cent), all of these adult returner students have faced significant obstacles in achieving their academic goals. Over the course of their year on the programme, many manage their studies alongside full-time employment and family and caring responsibilities.

2.2.41 The English Language Education unit (ELE), an integral part of COL, continues to provide in-session and pre-session English language teaching to students across the University. In AY 2018/19, ELE worked with 4,027 undergraduate and postgraduate students who required tuition to further their language proficiency, either for admission or on-course purposes.

2.2.42 ELE numbers are expected to grow year on year in response to an increased student population. To ensure we keep pace with demand, a number of proposals have been put to the University Executive, focusing in particular on in-session provision. The paper set out a vision for contextualised and embedded English language support across the University's student population, mapped to the student life cycle, both online and on-campus. It also proposed a top-slicing funding model to facilitate sustainable growth. While the Executive endorsed the academic model proposed, COL has been asked to provide more detail of and rationale for the funding model proposed. In the meantime, ELE is working on 'flagship' contextualised and embedded courses, for example, with the Schools of Law and Engineering.

2.2.43 The ELE unit is also responsible for the Summer Pre-Sessional programme, required by many students progressing to postgraduate study. The Pre-Sessional programme is validated by The

British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP) every four years; the last inspection took place during the summer of 2019, and was successfully re-validated. In order to meet increasing demand for pre-sessional places, a review of the provision is currently underway, looking at course structure and timetable, use of technology-enhanced learning, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and staff experience, as well as curriculum design and assessment.

- We had 815 students on ELE's summer pre-sessional in 2019/20 – 97 per cent progression onto programmes across the University;
- As well as the postgraduate pre-sessional, we have an undergraduate pre-sessional specifically for 2+2 students entering CSE programmes (81 students in 2018; 64 students in 2019). This course is run in conjunction with the Schools of Engineering, Mathematics, Chemistry and Biological Sciences;
- For student support, ELE also runs the Graduate Writing Centre for all postgraduate students;⁷⁴
- In terms of outreach and WP: Open Studies offer courses run in city venues such as the Parliament, National Museums, National Library of Scotland; CARA- ELE provides online Academic English language support for displaced Syrian Academics.⁷⁵ We have 14 tutors across the University, including 11 in ELE.

2.2.44 In a recent Internal Programme Review of COL several issues were highlighted with a view to creating closer alignment and embedding of COL with the wider University. Under normal circumstances, access to appropriate teaching spaces during the summer months whilst the Fringe Festival is operating is becoming an issue that requires attention. Summer 2020, though, was affected by Covid-19 and adaptations were made to deliver content remotely/digitally. Crucially, in order to track student success and the impact of COL on students' subsequent academic achievement requires some internal join up between systems to track students from COL through to programmes and monitor their performance.

Scholarships and bursaries

2.2.45 Financial support is essential to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access a university education and fully participate. Our central Scholarships and Student Funding Services department provided scholarships of over £16.7 million in 2019/20. This includes support to undergraduate widening participation scholarships of over £10 million, supporting 3,063 students. Postgraduate research funding through the Principal's Career Development Scholarship and Edinburgh Global Research Scholarship was in excess of £2.8 million supporting 226 students.

2.2.46 In 2019/20, we received £887,610 from the Development Trust towards scholarships. This crucial funding helps fund some of our international partnership scholarships, including Chevening, Marshall, and Commonwealth Scholarship programmes as well as offering financial support to students seeking asylum.

2.2.47 To support integration and a sense of belonging, especially for those students for whom finance is a barrier to participation in extra-curricular activity, we have introduced a Participation Grant⁷⁶ (see Box 2.4).

74 www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching/ele-courses/graduate-writing-centre

75 www.cara.ngo/who-we-are/partners-and-supporters/cara-scholars-at-risk-uk-universities-network/

76 www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/pageassets/about/findfunding/studentlife/Participation-Grant-Guidance-2019-20.pdf

Box 2.4: Activities and Sports Participation grant

The Participation grant aims to support students to take part in extra-curricular activities by reducing financial barriers. The Sports Union and Students' Association together assess grant applications in liaison with the University Scholarships and Student Funding team and against a set of eligibility criteria linked to the Bursary scheme. This ensures that students most in need are able to access the funds.

In 2019/20 we received 277 applications and held two rounds of applications; one in each semester. Working together, the Sports Union and the Students' Association assessed the applications and approved funding of up to £200 each for 253 students totalling £42,634.06.

Of the total applications:

- 142 of these applicants were in receipt of a University of Edinburgh Scholarship.
- 115 were in receipt of a University of Edinburgh Scotland Scholarship.
- Three students indicated they had been in receipt of a University Scotland Bursary as an undergraduate, indicating they are postgraduate students.
- 10 applications were ineligible because they did not receive a University scholarship.
- Seven students applied that did not receive a scholarship but did identify into our extended criteria.
- 114 applicants identified as female; 157 as male; four as non-binary and two preferred not to say.
- 277 applicants were full-time students, one was a part-time student.
- 273 applicants stated they were undergraduate students, four stated they were postgraduate students (three stated they were postgraduate taught students, one stated they were a postgraduate research student).
- 60 were in Year 1, 67 in Year 2, 79 in Year 3, 59 in Year 4 and 12 in Year 5.
- 87 applications were for society, or society and sports-related activity.
- 189 applications were for sports activities alone.

A follow-up survey and interviews with successful students highlights the positive impact that the Participation grant has on the student experience. The evaluation surfaced considerations for the future operation of the scheme, including capacity of the scheme, the possibility of extending the eligibility criteria and how to prioritise the available funds to achieve greatest impact.

As the current funding stream will come to an end in 2020/21 and we are now considering the legacy planning and future opportunities to extend the grant.

Supporting students to gain study and work away experiences

- 2.2.48 We continue to diversify our portfolio of study and work away experiences for our students. There has been increased participation and interest in student study and work away opportunities internationally. Demand from our students is particularly noticeable with regard to short-term mobility opportunities and work placements. A key area of our activity in this area is our continued support to increase access and inclusion for all of our students. We have focused support on providing opportunities for students from less advantaged backgrounds, those less well represented in learning abroad, and delivering increased options for short-term and virtual mobility. We remain the UK's leading University for securing competitive external Erasmus+ funding to support student and staff mobility across the University. The current impact of Covid-19, however, has had an adverse impact on study and work away opportunities. International study and work away opportunities are currently suspended for 2020/21. As far as possible, opportunities will be made available to students at other points in their programme.
- 2.2.49 As part of our focus on providing greater access we have introduced an innovative 'Global Insights Programme'⁷⁷ that enables students from WP backgrounds to travel in small groups, both in the UK and internationally, over one week to meet with alumni of the University to build their networks and experience of working and living overseas. The programme has been very well received by the 141 students and 131 alumni who have taken part; stimulating greater interest in working or studying overseas, engaging in further work experiences and making connections between students and alumni along the way. Participants reported an average 65 per cent point increase in considering applying for internships, work experience and other volunteering opportunities, and a 43 per cent point increase in understanding of career options open after university.
- 2.2.50 In 2019, students visited alumni in Scotland, London, Boston, Brussels, Hong Kong, New York City, San Francisco, Singapore and Washington DC. The generosity and support of the University's alumni community is central to the programme. The scheme is fully funded by donors, in partnership with the University, and a growing cadre of alumni volunteers host the students in their workplaces. Our intention was to double engagement year on year; approximately 200 students were offered places for summer 2020, but, due to Covid-19, the Insights Programme has been suspended for 2020 and will continue when it is safe to do so. Case studies of participants' typical experiences can be seen on our website.⁷⁸
- 2.2.51 Recognising that not all students are able to go abroad for a variety of reasons including disability, caring responsibilities, work commitments and financial issues, we are piloting virtual student exchanges through the Network for Intercultural Competence (IC) to facilitate Entrepreneurship (NICE) project, a European Commission Key Action 203 funded project coordinated by the University.⁷⁹
- 2.2.52 The project aims to develop key skills, specifically IC and Entrepreneurship (ENT), in European students to help them successfully gain employment in their chosen field upon graduation. The NICE project acts as a value-add to traditional courses for students who wish to graduate with a well-rounded suite of skills. The majority of the learning students undertake within the NICE project

77 www.ed.ac.uk/careers/employers/advertise-your-job/employ-edinternshipsprogramme/insights-programme

78 www.ed.ac.uk/students/careers/insights/case-studies

79 www.nice-eu.org

is virtual, resulting in an international experience that is available to all students, including those who may not be able to undertake the standard semester or year-long exchange. The learning is based on a Student-led Individually Created Course (SLICC)⁸⁰ in which students from the seven European partners work in interdisciplinary and cross-cultural teams on a project based around the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Students from Edinburgh and the other partner universities are awarded academic credit on successful completion of the SLICC.

2.2.53 Recognising the importance of learning abroad to the student experience, whether through study, volunteering or internships, the University has created a new Study and Work Away service (SWAY) to improve the management and student experience of organising such activity (see 2.3.56 – 2.3.59 for further details).

2.3 Supporting students in their learning at each stage of the learner journey from pre-admission to post-graduation, including outreach, admissions, articulation, graduate attributes, assessment, employability, and enterprise and entrepreneurship

Overview

2.3.1 Since the last ELIR, we have made a number of developments to the way in which we support students in their learning at each stage of the learner journey, taking a complete student life-cycle perspective from recruitment to post-graduation. Significant developments include:

- Continued enhancement to admissions policies and practices to recognise diversity and improve access;
- Development of our WP strategy;
- Extension of pre-arrival and induction support;
- Development of the Student Experience Action Plan (StEAP) aimed at significant improvements to the student experience and student support;
- Development of a new Wellbeing Centre, bringing student counselling, disability support, health and wellbeing services under one roof and increasing the capacity of support;
- Review of student support arrangements;
- Implementation of the Service Excellence Programme (SEP);
- Expansion of peer support and learning;
- Increased support for personal, professional and career development;
- Increased alumni support.

Pre-arrival and induction

2.3.2 Since the last ELIR, in response to the work of the Student Experience Project in operation at that time and the more recent StEAP and SEP, the Pre Arrival and Induction team have worked with colleagues across the University to improve the pre-arrival information and induction experience for all new students. These improvements include:

- **A new webpage⁸¹ for all new students.** This includes online learners, providing key information. A particularly successful section of this webpage is the ‘top six tasks’⁸² which takes students through the key administrative tasks they should complete before they start and during Welcome Week. The ‘new student’ webpage also includes content from current students on the Student Voices pages.⁸³ In response to the recent Thematic Reviews of Mature Students, Student Parents and Carers (2018) and BME Students (2019), we are in the process of including the voices and experiences of a more diverse group of students for 2020, including, but not limited to, BME home and international students, commuter students, students living in University accommodation and mature students.
- **The University of Edinburgh events app.** This lists all Welcome Week events, including all central administration, programme/School/College, and Student Association activities. In 2019, the events app was used almost 1 million times and was downloaded on over 19,000 devices. This was a hugely successful tool in helping students to navigate through all of the activities offered during Welcome Week and received very positive feedback from students and staff. With the impact of Covid-19 and a move to hybrid teaching for AY 2020/21 we will use the app to highlight all of the induction activities of Welcome Week and beyond, up until at least week five, to capture a more extended induction period and the opportunities presented within this time. It will also be available to use for all ‘welcome back’ activities for 2020/21 to ensure that our returning students also have a way of finding opportunities to help them feel connected, wherever they may also be in the world at the start of semester.
- **The New Student Facebook group.** This is a student led activity that was launched in 2018. In both 2018 and 2019 it was developed and moderated by a student intern working in the Pre Arrival and Induction team. In 2018 there were over 4,900 student members, 2,890 of whom were “active”, and by September 2019 almost 7,500 new students had signed up. For AY 2019/20, these Facebook groups remained open from mid-June to enable a longitudinal approach to sharing timely, transition-related information with new students, for instance support for academic skills development, wellbeing information, or highlighting specific events such as Mental Health & Wellbeing Week.
- **The New Student Getting Started Guides and Checklists.⁸⁴** These enable new students to negotiate the first few weeks of transition to the University and City. For AY 2020/21 we are launching ‘How-To’ online sessions that are being coordinated by the Pre Arrival and Induction team and are on topics delivered by all central student support services. These will be a mix of practical guides like ‘how to find a flat’ and ‘how to manage your money’ but also more community focused ones like ‘how to live sustainably’ ‘how to get involved in your local community’. These are presented live and recorded before students arrive and then will be repeated or signposted to throughout the longer induction period (from Welcome Week up to at least Week four). This is to ensure that all students, no matter where they start their studies this year, will have multiple opportunities to learn more about what to do and the support available to them to help them to transition.
- **Making Transitions Personal Pre-Arrival Reviews.⁸⁵** Our Making Transitions Personal (MTP) Pre-Arrival Reviews build on sector activity around career readiness, learning gain, pre-arrival

81 www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students

82 www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/getting-started-resources/top-6-tasks

83 www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/new-student-life/student-voices

84 www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/getting-started-resources/getting-started-guides

85 www.ed.ac.uk/employability/staff-information/making-transitions-personal

and induction. Three-quarters of our Schools now use these self-reflective reviews with incoming undergraduate and/or postgraduate taught entrants to surface their aspirations, expectations and concerns, to create a more personalised experience, and to enable targeted and tailored support based on individuals' responses. We plan to expand this initiative into further years of study and integrate into our strategy for graduate careers support.

- **Moving On programme.**⁸⁶ Moving On is part of our WP strategy which aims to increase the number of students in higher education from under-represented groups. Moving On aims to give students from WP backgrounds the best start at university. WP students from the local area holding an offer from us are invited to visit us in advance of joining to experience lectures and tutorials, find their way around the University's campuses, learn how to use the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and libraries, meet other new students and make new friends. The programme is organised by COL.
- **Induction guiding principles.**⁸⁷ For AY 2020/21 the University has designed six Induction Guiding Principles that will improve and underpin all of the induction activities and programmes that welcome new and returning students at any point after a break in studies. This work developed from the Sense of Belonging Task Group that identified that to ensure all students have a good sense of belonging to University, they must feel part of a community. To help all students to feel part of a community, we need to ensure that students feel included, that they are introduced to peers and the support available to them and that they are given the right information at the right time to help them realise that they are capable and can succeed at University. The six Induction Guiding Principles are - Inclusion, Needs, Community, Capability, Support and Purpose – all brought together with evidence from our own research and from various theories and practice across the HE sector.

2.3.3 In response to Covid-19 and the move to a hybrid mode of delivery for AY 2020/21, we provided a longer induction and orientation period commencing two weeks before the semester started to four weeks into the semester. This ensured students not only receive a warm welcome but also have a shared experience whether they are on campus or not. A longer induction and orientation period supports the recommendation from the student support and personal tutor (PT) review and the Sense of Belonging Task Group that a single welcome week is not enough time for students to feel confident and ready to study. The extended induction and orientation period also enables Professional Services along with Students' and Sports' Association events to be spread across a longer period and for Schools' induction activities to be prioritised along with key events such as the Principals' Welcome during Welcome Week. Support for Schools is provided by the Induction Coordination Network.

2.3.4 With the move to hybrid teaching and the constraints of space utilisation on campus, students, both new and returning arrived on campus when they were able or felt comfortable to do so. Students typically are in one of three groups: on campus, off campus in the same time zone, or off campus in a different time zone. For all students, a hybrid delivery is a new experience. This year we have also used Welcome Week to induct students into hybrid learning; to provide information and guidance on looking after their mental health, and to provide all students with a basic grounding in equality and diversity.

⁸⁶ www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/access-edinburgh/settling-in-at-university/moving-on

⁸⁷ <https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/new-students/SitePages/Induction-Guiding-Principles.aspx>

- 2.3.5 College, Schools and Deaneries can adapt the induction to best fit their programme. For the larger events (Principals Welcome, Parents and Supporters Welcome, Postgraduate Welcome and the Course Options Fair) alternatives have been offered to ensure these activities are inclusive and accessible to all.
- 2.3.6 Accommodation services also moved from a welcome weekend to a phased accommodation entry to accommodate physical distancing restrictions. The students and sports associations also offered an extended programme of welcome events throughout semester one.

Gearing up for induction

- 2.3.7 Gearing Up for Induction is an annual event aimed at helping staff that run or support induction and welcome activities. 2020 would have been the eighth year of running, but due to Covid-19 the large annual event was replaced with a series of resources and remote workshops to support colleagues in preparing for hybrid induction activities. Up until 2017, Gearing Up was a one-off annual conference, with an internal focus and limited places for external speakers. Over the last two years and in response to participant feedback, Gearing Up has developed from an annual conference, to a series of events and resources.⁸⁸
- 2.3.8 The Gearing Up events⁸⁹ are timed with the recruitment, admissions and induction cycle to run throughout the year, enabling staff to:
- Reflect on the previous year's induction activities;
 - Hear from students' about their personal experiences and work together to develop new or improve existing induction and transition activities;
 - Share good practice from across the University and the sector; and
 - Prepare for the next induction event.
- 2.3.9 Across, 2015, 2016 and 2017, 398 individuals engaged with Gearing Up for Transitions. The impact of the events in sharing practice has been significant: 82 per cent of respondents to the feedback survey for the 2017 event said they were considering implementing enhancements aimed at student transitions as a result of the event (an increase of two per cent from 2016). As a result of attending a previous year's Gearing Up event, 85 per cent of the 2017 attendees who completed the feedback survey said they had implemented enhancements aimed at student transitions (up seven per cent from 2016).
- 2.3.10 Gearing Up benefited from the QAA Enhancement Theme of 'Student Transitions' by broadening its focus to include transitions into, through and out of the University. Discussions and sharing of practice with colleagues from universities across Scotland now happens via the Scottish Induction Professionals Network, which allows for engagement with a much wider community of external colleagues.

88 <https://uo.e.sharepoint.com/sites/new-students/SitePages/Resources-for-colleagues.aspx>

89 <https://uo.e.sharepoint.com/sites/new-students/SitePages/Gearing-Up-Home.aspx?web=1>

Student support

- 2.3.11 The ELIR 2015 Report commented in relation to our PT system: “it was evident that the system was not working effectively for all student groups and there would be considerable benefit in the University revisiting the way in which Schools are implementing the system to ensure all students are able to benefit from the arrangements as intended” (paragraph 44).
- 2.3.12 There has been a steady decline in student satisfaction with our PT system as measured in surveys such as the NSS, where satisfaction has dropped from 68 per cent in 2017 to 61 per cent in 2019. In response, we initiated a fundamental review of student support⁹⁰ across the University in 2018/19, including the PT system, the School-based Student Support teams and the wider student support eco-system. An evolved model of support was presented to the February 2020 meeting of Senate that set out proposals for an approach based on four key pillars of support comprising a strong cohort approach, aligning with our wider approach to supporting and developing belonging. As a result of Covid-19, this project is currently paused.
- 2.3.13 We provide a wide array of centrally managed high-quality professional support services.⁹¹ These include: Academic Services, Accommodation Services, Careers Service, Chaplaincy, Centre for Sport and Exercise, Development and Alumni Edinburgh, Global, IAD, Library and Information Services, Student Counselling Service (SCS), Student Disability Service (SDS), Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA), Student Systems and Administration (SA&S), University Health Centre, and the Students’ Association-run Advice Place.⁹²
- 2.3.14 Our centrally provided student support services are available to all students (undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research and visiting students) throughout their programme of study on campus or at a distance. A key challenge for several services is accommodating the increasing demand for support, particularly for student counselling and wellbeing services. Despite continued, increased investments in services, such as the Student Counselling Service (SCS), mental health and wellbeing issues continue to be hugely important to our students, as they are across the higher education sector, and we have seen rapid year on year growth in demand for related services. For example the number of students disclosing a mental health disability has risen over the last five years by over 400 per cent to 1,445 students in 2018/19; while the numbers coming forward for support from the SCS have increased by almost 300 per cent over eight years.
- 2.3.15 In response, we have developed a new Health and Wellbeing Centre in the central campus, bringing together the University’s Health Centre, Pharmacy, and the Student Disability and Counselling Services in one place and significantly increasing the capacity available for the counselling and disability services by 30 per cent. The new building was due to open in March 2020, coinciding with the Covid-19 lockdown, consequently the opening of the centre was postponed until September 2020.
- 2.3.16 The new Health and Wellbeing Centre has also been accompanied by £2 million investment in delivering the University’s Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy over the next three years. Box 2.5 details our proposed approach to enhance student mental wellbeing and wellbeing services.

90 www.ed.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/personal-tutor-and-student-support-review

91 www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/students/student-services

92 www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/

Box 2.5: Approach to enhance Student Mental Wellbeing and Wellbeing Services

Additional posts in the Student Counselling Service – To ensure that projected demand can be met (further 12 per cent increases are projected during the next three years) additional posts were planned. We are currently reviewing how available funding will be utilised, given changes to levels of funding and the financial situation. The Scottish Government have provided funding for an additional three years for 3.72 fte counselling posts.

Additional posts in Student Disability Service – In order to meet demand three additional posts were planned to assist with undertaking assessments with high numbers of students who have mental health conditions, and also carry caseloads of students with complex mental health conditions. Only one of these posts has been filled and we are reviewing how we utilise available funding, given changes to levels of funding and the financial situation.

Mindfulness Provision – The Edinburgh Mindfulness Initiative has been scaled up through the recruitment of a Mindfulness Practitioner in December 2019 to enable the initiative to deliver mindfulness programmes more comprehensively across the University. 233 staff and students attended mindfulness courses in 2017/18, and this rose to 352 in 2018/19. As of August 2020, 136 students had participated in mindfulness courses; 115 on day retreats, 63 one-to-one sessions were delivered to 37 individuals; 505 attended drop-ins.

Listening Service – The Head of Listening Service post was recruited to in December 2019 to ensure that the Chaplaincy Listening Service has a more focused and strategic approach to service planning, growth, delivery, performance management and service improvement. The Listening service gives same or next day response to students and staff. Listening Service activity has grown from 47 referrals in 2016/17 to 225 in 2018/19, and more than doubled from April to June 2020 and are expected to continue rising. International student referrals increased from 16 per cent to 33 per cent of total referrals. There has also been a marked increase in high achieving BAME female students from both UK and abroad. Staff referrals increased from 16 per cent to 33 per cent of total referrals.

Training programmes – Work is being undertaken to scale up and diversify the mental health training programme provided for staff at the University. Staff within SDS and SCS will continue to lead on delivering training on mental health, with support from wellbeing practitioners to deliver a strategic approach to the training. For students, training will be targeted at student leaders from student societies, peer learning/ support programmes, sports clubs and Residence Life, with the aim of training an initial cohort of 300 student leaders in 2018/19, scaling up to 600 student leaders in 2019/20 and beyond. Given changes to levels of funding and the financial situation, the planned post will not be recruited to. Work continues on refreshing and diversifying training for staff on student mental health.

Continued overleaf

Box 2.5: Approach to enhance Student Mental Wellbeing and Wellbeing Services (contd.)

Digital Solutions – The University has designed a strong set of evidence-based, on-line interventions for students, and it is proposed that these continue to be funded. Uptake of these interventions is strong, and outcomes are positive. Big White Wall (online community of support and self-help resources) has over 3500 members within the University; almost 3000 people have downloaded the Feeling Good app (app to support people with anxiety and depression); and over 250 people have already used SilverCloud (online cognitive behavioural therapy), which was only introduced into our suite of interventions in August 2019. Uptake of platforms continues to increase.

Student-Led Mental Health and Wellbeing Activities – A pilot wellbeing peer-support project started in October 2018/19, and was evaluated at the end of AY 2019/20. Initial feedback from the first nine months of operation was positive: seven student-led schemes participated, and there were 902 student contacts. This project provided training and supervision for student ‘wellbeing leaders’ within peer-learning and support schemes. We had hoped to scale up this initiative, but given changes to levels of funding and the financial situation, funding is no longer available for this.

Research Project – As part of work undertaken on logic modelling of the action plan for the implementation of the Student Mental Health Strategy, it was identified that one area where the University experiences challenges is evaluating the overall impact of the strategy and the range of interventions delivered by the University on improving student mental health and wellbeing. Funding was utilised in 2019/20 for a user research project working with academic colleagues to enable us to understand better where resources can be targeted most effectively and efficiently in order to improve the student experience. The aims of this project were (a) to review what frameworks and tools we currently have in place across the University to measure mental health interventions; and (b) to develop an evaluation framework for the Student Mental Health Strategy which contains a comprehensive suite of metrics. Discussions continue with academic colleagues regarding the ongoing utilisation of funding for research focused on developing an evidence base for enhanced/ improved service delivery within the University.

Pathways to Specialist Service: Partnership with NHS and Other Edinburgh Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)

A significant volume of planning work is required in order to develop a solid platform from which to drive forward the collaborative work with the NHS and other HEIs in Edinburgh, but costs of this work, if agreed, are not yet clear. This work continues, and there will be a focus this year on whether funding is required across Edinburgh HEIs to deliver.

Student belonging and community

- 2.3.17 We were one of the first universities in the UK to develop a Residence Life programme which aims to create a residential community that welcomes and supports all students living in our accommodation. The “ResLife” team operates across all University-owned and a number of privately run accommodation sites where our students reside, with over 200 wardens and Residence Assistants whose priority is to welcome and support students throughout the year. This

support is essential to the many students who are away from home for the first time, but also helps students to build connections, forge friendships and build a sense of belonging and community.

2.3.18 In addition, many students tell us that they find themselves at home in one or more of the large number of student-led societies and sports clubs available. However the distributed nature of our estate, and the flexibility of the curriculum, mean that in some areas of the University it can be hard to foster academic community between staff and students.

2.3.19 A task group, jointly led by Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance and the Chief Executive of the Students' Association, was established in 2019 as part of StEAP to develop an evidence base and a practical plan to enhance student community and a sense of belonging across the University. Based on extensive research and benchmarking, the task group developed a logic model that set out four key areas associated with belonging: belonging at the University; belonging in the classroom; belonging in our social networks; and belonging within our places. The task group engaged in a number of activities and pilot projects under each of the areas. Key outputs from the task group included:

- Throughout 2019/20 we ran a series of 'We Belong' events with the core purpose to make students feel more connected to the University. In total, 2,300 students attended one of the events. Only six per cent of students attended more than one event, highlighting the need to offer a diverse range of events to cater to different student needs. The events included:
 - A series of festive events (e.g. Christmas lunches/dinners). In an evaluation survey, 68 per cent of respondents said, as a result of taking part in the festive events, they felt more part of the University community, 64 per cent felt the University cared more about them, and 95 per cent would recommend the event to other students.
 - The Welcome to the Roaring 20s event, held in the McEwan Hall to celebrate the New Year, sold out with 1,100 in attendance and over 700 on the waiting list.
 - Subsidised entry to the Edinburgh Winter Run for 748 runners from the University (students and staff). We achieved 14 winners across the 10 categories of the run, creating a huge sense of camaraderie and pride. In the post evaluation survey, 89 per cent reported satisfaction with the event, 91 per cent satisfaction with the achievement and challenge and 99 per cent voted yes to the University subsidising more University-wide participation in events like this.
 - Due to Covid-19, we had to cancel the Exam Breakfast Club and a Postgraduate Summer Programme. With the ongoing restrictions due to Covid-19 and the lack of funding, these events will not take place during AY 2020/21, but we hope to be able to hold the same or similar events in future.
- Work to develop Induction Guiding Principles, subsequently taken forward as part of the Adaptation and Renewal work for implementation at the start of AY 2020/21.
- Various work to support belonging among our BME students.
- A practical guide for Schools on fostering a sense of belonging at our University.⁹³

2.3.20 In a hybrid teaching context in which a large part of our students' learning will be delivered digitally, fostering a sense of belonging is even more important. In recognition of this, we established a theme around belonging and community on the Edinburgh Hybrid Teaching Exchange to support colleagues with hints and tips on how to foster a sense of belonging.⁹⁴

Student administrative support

2.3.21 While the evidence from surveys, such as the NSS, is that “organisation and management” does not correlate strongly with overall satisfaction, we know from analysis of free text comments that administrative inconsistencies, errors or changes can create real issues for students. In 2017, we launched an ambitious programme of work to redesign Student Administration and Support (SA&S) as part of the wider Service Excellence Programme (SEP). Focused on the systems, structures and processes that underpin student administration and support across the University, the programme of work aimed to:

- Simplify and improve the consistency and accessibility of student administration and support, making it easier for students to access support;
- Reduce administrative burden for both professional services and academic staff;
- Generate savings that can be reinvested in other areas of strategic importance.

2.3.22 Early “wins” have included bringing together all student-focused immigration advice and support in one professional team (2018) and providing personalised exam timetables and comprehensive student timetables for all students on the Office 365 platform (2019) (see section 2.5.3 and 2.5.34). Other ongoing projects at various stages of development include:

- Delivery of one stop “hubs” on each campus that will provide easy to access services across a range of areas such as library, IT support, student finance and administration;
- Centralising the administration of the special circumstances process to ensure greater consistency of decision making in this highly sensitive area (further information in section 4.1.66 – 4.1.69);
- Development of a single SWAY team to administer the majority of “study away” opportunities across the University, including overseas exchanges, professional and industrial placements, providing a better service for students and a better ability for the University to manage the risks in all such cases (see section 2.3.56 -2.3.59).

Peer learning and support

2.3.23 The ELIR 2015 Report recognised that “the University’s promotion of peer-assisted schemes represents positive practice” (paragraph 45) and noted that these schemes are “valued by those who use them and also provide mentors with effective opportunities to develop transferable skills” (paragraph 76). We were encouraged “to continue supporting staff and students in the embedding of peer-assisted learning and to continue working with EUSA to deliver appropriate training for peers” (paragraph 45).

94 <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/learningexchange/category/building-community-belonging/>

- 2.3.24 The Students' Association continues to run successful peer learning and peer support schemes across the University⁹⁵ and we have continued to work with the Students' Association to support the expansion and embedding of such schemes. Peer learning and peer support schemes allow trained student volunteers to offer academic and pastoral support for newer students, to supplement the teaching and support offered by their School and the wider University.
- 2.3.25 There are currently 62 peer learning and support schemes across the University, all running in partnership between the Students' Association, students, and University staff. Each scheme is specific to the needs of the students in each School. Box 2.6 provides an insight into the peer learning and support arrangements in the Business School as an illustration. As of September 2020, projects are running in every School, except the School of Divinity and the Centre for Open Learning. The Students' Association is exploring options for ensuring peer learning and support are available in all Schools. These Schemes will focus on providing support to incoming first years, transitions to honours and postgraduate students. Due to the impact of Covid-19, these programmes have now been pivoted to provide a substantive online provision, in addition to in person sessions.
- 2.3.26 The majority of peer learning and support schemes are delivered by students in their second, third or fourth year of undergraduate study for students in their first year. Work is underway to explore suitable peer learning and support models for postgraduate students (detailed in Section 2.4).
- 2.3.27 The scale and success of the peer learning and support work at Edinburgh has achieved both national and international recognition, as follows:
- Receiving a National Union of Students (NUS) and The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) Award for Excellence in International Student Support;
 - Being shortlisted for a NUS UK Academic Representation Award 2014;
 - Winning the University Impact category in the 2019 sparqs' Student Engagement Awards;
 - The peer learning and support team have been recognised as a best practice case study in an Higher Education Academy (HEA) report on Mapping Peer-led Student to Student Learning;
 - Invitations to present at a number of international conferences including in Sydney and Missouri;
 - Requests for advice and guidance on setting up and running peer support projects from the universities of Glasgow, Stirling, Strathclyde, Napier, West of Scotland and Skyline Dubai.

Box 2.6: Peer learning and support in the Business School

The main schemes, BizPALS, incorporating AccountingPALS, and BizBuddies, focus on encouraging Year 1 undergraduate students to make the most of their University experience. About 40 undergraduate students from Years 2, 3 and 4 volunteer each year, and about 30 complete the training. BizPALS meet formally with Course Organisers on a regular basis throughout the term to feedback how students are getting on with the course and issues arising. Feedback from Year 1 students shows strong appreciation for the advice and guidance provided.

In 2017/18, the Business School introduced DissertationPALS, working with a recent graduate to support current 4th year undergraduate students alongside their academic supervision. Alumni/GradPALS, introduced in 2018/19 in collaboration with the School's Partnership Development team, seeks to identify recent graduates to support 'near-to-peer' mentoring of undergraduate students.

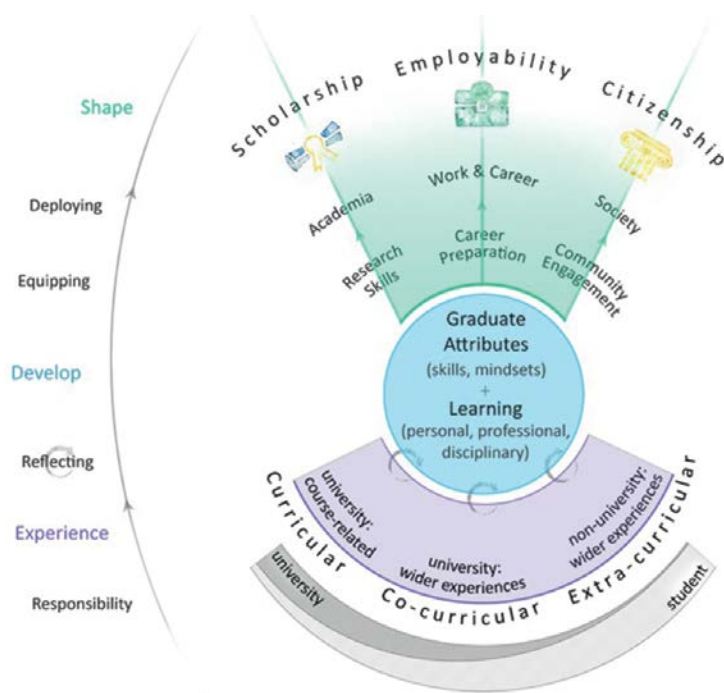
The more socially oriented BizBuddies focuses on welcoming new students, helping to identify relevant services and societies, and offering support and encouragement at this critical time of transition. BizBuddies are encouraged to adopt a 'familial' approach to supporting new students coming into University, to enable a focus on supporting students with common needs, backgrounds and experiences. The contributions of the BizPALS volunteers are recognised by an Edinburgh Award (PALS).

- 2.3.28 The peer support system is part of the overall framework of student support provided to students and works alongside the academic support provided by Schools and Colleges and support provided via central support services. Additionally, for the peer mentors it provides an opportunity for senior (honours) students to grow in confidence and maturity – as they facilitate the learning and a positive experience of pre-honours students – and to gain recognition for this achievement via the Edinburgh Award.

Employability and graduate attributes

- 2.3.29 The ELIR 2015 Report confirmed: "The University has an effective approach to promoting the development of graduate attributes and employability skills" (paragraph 67) that was also considered to be "creative and dynamic" (paragraph 76). The report also noted the good progress we had made in this area in both the 2011 and 2015 reviews. We have built further on this foundation, developing and innovating within all stages of the student lifecycle, and engaging systematically with the breadth of the student experience and using this to support multiple priorities Figure 2.2 illustrates our philosophy for developing graduate attributes and employability.
- 2.3.30 Our approach is collaborative, working to ensure responsibility for employability and graduate attributes is jointly owned by Schools and professional services, overseen by Senate Education Committee and our Director for Careers and Employability. There has been clear focus in this area since the last ELIR, including a Senate Learning and Teaching (LTC) task group in 2017/18. This focus is set to continue under our new Strategy 2030.

Figure 2.2: Graduate Attributes and Employability Philosophy



Curricular activity

- 2.3.31 At the curricular level, graduate attributes are included in course approval, monitoring and periodic review. Additionally, 56 professional bodies accredit our programmes, bringing an additional dimension to student skills, attributes and competencies for professional practice (see section 4.2.14). Integrated governance of this agenda is developing across Schools. School Careers and Employability Development Strategies are an evidence-based collaborative process between Schools and the Careers Service focused on impact. Academic partners with defined employability and careers remit have been established in GeoSciences, Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) and History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA), in addition to industry engagement boards in more vocational areas such as Engineering.
- 2.3.32 We are informing our thinking and action through a mapping of our undergraduate curriculum against sector-informed design principles regarding employability and graduate attributes.⁹⁶ This identified a wealth of contributing activity across the institution as well as areas for improvement, including being more explicit to students about how our provision already supports their employability. We are taking concrete steps in response to the findings, including staff workshops for learning and teaching leaders and the development of a toolkit for embedding and surfacing student development, employability and graduate attributes in the curriculum.⁹⁷ These complement our existing curricular enhancement activities, such as a special employability funding stream within our PTAS⁹⁸ scheme (many projects delivered in collaboration between Schools and our Careers Service), and our investment in and expansion of an institution-wide course model for giving academic credit for reflective, experiential learning through Student-led Individually Created Courses (SLICCs).⁹⁹ There are multiple School-owned courses alongside a centrally-run summer elective

96 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20190522combinedagendapapers.pdf (Paper C)

97 www.ed.ac.uk/employability/curriculum-toolkit

98 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/funding/funding

99 www.ed.ac.uk/employability/slicc

for first and second year undergraduates. We are considering expanding this into a semester-time option to increase accessibility.

- 2.3.33 We recognise that not all activity falls neatly into ‘curricular’ or ‘co-curricular’ silos and therefore continue to develop our range of enabling structures that support progress holistically. Supporting both staff and students, our Reflection Toolkit¹⁰⁰ was developed in response to the pivotal role of reflection in supporting student development and employability across all parts of the student experience. Our Making Transitions Personal (MTP) Pre-arrival Reviews¹⁰¹ built on sector activity around career readiness, learning gain, pre-arrival and induction. Three-quarters of our Schools now use these self-reflective reviews with incoming undergraduate and/or postgraduate taught entrants to surface their aspirations, expectations and concerns, to create a more personalised experience, and to enable targeted and tailored support based on individuals’ responses. We look to expand this initiative into further years of study and integrate into our strategy for graduate careers support.
- 2.3.34 The Students as Change Agents¹⁰² project is piloting curricular and co-curricular models of interdisciplinary, challenge-led experiential learning. Working with external partners from the private, public and third sector, it began as a two-year project funded by the Data Driven Innovation (DDI) programme from December 2018 – July 2020. Further funding has been approved from the DDI programme for a further three years to test different models and approaches with students and partners to develop genuinely scalable and high quality delivery models. It is a cross-University programme involving the Bayes Institute, Careers Service, Colleges, Edinburgh Futures Institute, Edinburgh Innovations, IAD and the Centre for Experiential Learning, Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) and the Students’ Association (see Box 2.7). It is intended that this programme will form part of the foundation for curriculum review led by the Vice Principal Students and the recent confirmation of funding means that we should be able to embed it as a key offer to students over the next few years.
- 2.3.35 Enterprise and entrepreneurship plays a vital part in the development of graduate attributes and student employability as well as being a career choice for a significant number of graduates. Edinburgh Innovations’ Student Enterprise Service¹⁰⁴ leads our work in this area, working in partnership with student societies and other University departments. They work to build an enterprising mind-set within our student community where all our students, not just those that wish to set up their own business, can develop creativity, leadership, innovation, negotiation skills and in doing so build their confidence and enhance their employability and student experience. They provide business support systems that inspire, launch and grow student businesses; offering a wide range of workshops and masterclasses, one to one business support, online resources, collaboration space, investment, mentoring and coaching opportunities that supports the creation and growth of new start-ups and social ventures.
- 2.3.36 We have seen growing evidence that more students than ever are interested in setting up a business: 37 student businesses were started in 2016/17, 45 in 2017/18, 54 in 2018/19 and 72 in 2019/20. We expect that this will reach 100 student start-ups by 2022. A newly launched Student Enterprise Hub in the central campus will allow greater engagement with student community

100 www.ed.ac.uk/reflection

101 <https://edin.ac/MTP>

102 www.ed.ac.uk/careers/changeprogramme

104 www.ed.ac.uk/edinburgh-innovations/for-students

Box 2.7: Students as Change Agents project

The Students as Change Agents project is piloting curricular and co-curricular models of interdisciplinary, challenge-led experiential learning. Working with external partners from the private, public and third sectors, students across all disciplines and levels come together to tackle challenges which have a social/environmental/economic impact and address at least two of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. Host organisations supply data to help participants unlock new insights into their complex challenges. Examples of the challenges addressed so far include: ending violence against children, gender financial equality, youth homelessness, healthy ageing in communities and supporting the circular economy by using technology to reduce waste in the construction industry. Students receive training in complex problem solving and the value of data and in team working skills to enhance their effectiveness during and after the programme. They can also gain recognition for their involvement, either via an Edinburgh Award or a SLICC. After participating in the programme, students have reported an increase in their confidence in skills highly sought after by employers such as problem solving, working in multi-disciplinary teams, managing conflict and networking.

The project has been incubated by the DDI programme which has allowed us to identify partners in growing sectors in the Edinburgh city region as well as using established University networks and local community partners. External organisations have welcomed the opportunity to gain access to the University's talent and the fresh thinking, generated through students' collaborative work.

We are testing different models and approaches with students and partners to develop genuinely scalable and high quality delivery models. We have partnered with Our Health,¹⁰³ an Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)-funded programme based on the European Science Shop model, which takes a similar research-led approach with community partners to address challenges in the health and social care sectors. Next stages of the project will focus on incorporating challenge-led experiential learning into the curriculum through a series of elective courses as well as continuing to run a rolling co-curricular programme.

and offers a focus for enterprise activity and collaboration. This is supported by a dedicated team of business advisers and enterprise educators offering a wide range of enterprise learning opportunities, expert support and connections, in addition to curated online resources.¹⁰⁵

- 2.3.37 We are increasingly aligning the development of enterprise skills with wider employability activity and see this as a necessary approach to engage academic staff and align curriculum development activity, including contextualising the offer for Colleges and Schools. This will also help us address the challenge of raising awareness across the student community so we can support more students to turn their passion into a business.
- 2.3.38 We continue to grow the range of immersive and experiential learning opportunities on offer, including School-based activities such as 'Concept to Consumer' in the School of Chemistry and Student Insight Meeting (SIM) days in Biomedical Sciences and Biological Sciences where interdisciplinary teams tackle 'real world' problems set and facilitated by industry partners. In March

103 www.ed.ac.uk/clinical-sciences/our-health

105 www.ed.ac.uk/edinburgh-innovations/for-students/student-enterprise-hub

2020, three ‘Concept to Consumer’ workshops were attended by a total of 105 students. The Business School runs an annual #makeyourmark 48-hour challenge in which teams of students from across the University compete to develop business ideas which tackle some of the most pressing social issues. In February 2019, 90 students from 13 Schools took part. In February 2020, the event was extended to include all undergraduate students across the University.

- 2.3.39 To support students from WP backgrounds to develop their social capital and gain exposure to diverse careers areas, we have introduced the Insights programme.¹⁰⁶ Students are hosted by alumni across the world on fully-funded and supported local and international work experiences. One hundred students took part in 2018/19 and we have ambitious targets to double participation year on year. We have also expanded our Employ.ed internships schemes¹⁰⁷ which provides valuable structured internships within University departments and in small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This includes offering part-time internships to increase access for students with family commitments.
- 2.3.40 By February 2020, we had excellent engagement from alumni and students for participation in Summer 2020, and had already confirmed offers to 151 students. The Covid-19 restriction on travel meant that we paused any additional offers. As an early programme to be impacted, we are extremely pleased by the success of the alternative offer that resulted. Ninety-nine students and 20 alumni participated in a ‘virtual’ Insights week, which consisted of a series of skills workshops, panel and networking events with alumni and small group projects. Students reported that 84 per cent gained an insight into work, 81 per cent a network of contacts and 86 per cent new skills. Consistent with the in-person insights, students reported a 31 per cent point increase in confidence. We intend to make a virtual insights programme part of our ongoing offer to further widen access to these opportunities.
- 2.3.41 In AY 2018/19, we employed a total of 67 students through the Employ.ed internships scheme across a number of Schools and departments. Information Services Group (ISG) alone employed more than 450 students in 2018/19 in the following areas: Library help desk, IT help desk, Lecture recording interns, digital skills development, for example, peer-to-peer Student Trainer digital skills, and uCreate Maker Space. The Group aims to increase work experience opportunities to 500 students and has also taken the decision that every project resulting in a student-facing service or activity should have a student on the project team. In 2019/20, pre-Covid-19, we were recruiting for over 100 internship roles across all areas of the University. Many of these converted into online internships, resulting in 75 student interns (the majority) working remotely. Feedback to date has been very positive and will be compared with previous years once internships have completed in mid-August 2020.
- 2.3.42 Recognising and reflecting on the development of graduate attributes is achieved through the Edinburgh Award. The 2015 ELIR Report recognised the Edinburgh Award¹⁰⁸ “as particularly positive practice for its ability to promote student engagement in developing graduate attributes across a wide and expanding range of activities” (paragraph 67). Over 1000 students now receive an Edinburgh Award each year (more than double the amount at the time of the last ELIR) and we actively work to ensure as wide a range of co- and extra-curricular activities as possible are

106 www.ed.ac.uk/students/careers/insights

107 www.ed.ac.uk/students/careers/work-while-you-study

108 www.ed.ac.uk/edinburgh-award

included. We recognised that the size of our institution can make it difficult for students to uncover the full range of development opportunities available to them; in response we have created MyDevelopmentHub¹⁰⁹ as a central online signpost for students interested in any aspect of their development.

Assessment and feedback

2.3.43 The ELIR 2015 Report acknowledged that we had “invested significant time and effort in initiatives aimed at improving students’ experiences of feedback on assessment” (paragraph 55). However, this had not been reflected in the NSS results. Our internal CEQs show a more positive picture with regard to student satisfaction with assessment and feedback. Our annual analysis of External Examiners reports for taught programmes consistently commends our assessment and feedback practice. In the last three years, a quantitative analysis of External Examiners comments for undergraduate programmes shows that the assessment process receives the highest number of commendations overall.¹¹⁰ Box 2.8 illustrates some of the comments External Examiners have made about our assessment and feedback practice.

Box 2.8: External Examiner comments

“This aspect of the marking and feed-forward part of the process has developed significantly in my time as an external.”

“I have been very pleased to have my comments each year treated carefully and thoughtfully by the team in Edinburgh. This I think speaks very highly of the seriousness and due care they take this process and suggests to me they take very seriously the chance to reflect on their processes and use the externals to expose areas of better practice they can bring into their processes to improve on the way things are done year on year. I think this attitude to continual improvement is exemplary and not what I have seen in all the institutions I have been external for.”

“The approach to assessment was fair and consistent throughout, and there were excellent examples of moderation in place. Some modules provided very strong levels of feedforward type assessment feedback and this is to be commended.”

2.3.44 Since the last ELIR, we have continued to devote considerable attention to ways to improve assessment and feedback. In response to the ELIR 2015 Report recommendation that we “implement feedback policy and practice in a clear and consistent manner across the University” (paragraph 60), Senate LTC approved a proposal in November 2016 that made the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group a formal task group of the Committee.¹¹¹ The Group had previously acted as an informal advisory group to the Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback since its establishment in April 2016. The formation of a formal task group provided an opportunity to report annually on activities to Senate LTC and advise the Committee on improvements for enhancing assessment and feedback practice.

109 www.ed.ac.uk/my-development-hub

110 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20191205-web.pdf (Paper F)

111 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/16_november_2016_-_agenda_and_papers_final.pdf (Paper I)

- 2.3.45 The task group reviewed the existing Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles resulting in the development of a more practical guide linked to an interactive set of resources and case studies. The ‘EngagEd in... feedback and assessment’¹¹² guide, published in October 2017, is available on the IAD website. The document, which contains updated principles as well as practical guidance, replaced the previous Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles. The impact of the document is being reviewed by the IAD as part of a wider reflection on the use of the ‘EngagEd in...’ series of guides.
- 2.3.46 The task group also assumed responsibility for the Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) quarterly meetings, which had been operating since November 2014. Since the last ELIR in 2015, LEAF audits have continued, and to date 28 programmes across 14 Schools have participated. Themes arising from the audits have been reported annually to Senate LTC. Year on year and across programmes, LEAF has highlighted a number of themes relating to the assessment and feedback experience of students with sufficient consistency to infer that these may be more generic issues for programmes. An evaluation of LEAF was reported to Senate Education Committee in March 2020.¹¹³ The general themes highlighted, which are feeding into the curriculum review, are:
- Over-assessment and deadline log-jams; disparity in required workload and credit available;
 - Consistency in assessment and teaching: ‘assessment injustice’;
 - Agency / assessment literacy: students are not always sure what is expected of them;
 - Aligned authentic assessment: exams and ‘traditional’ methods dominate;
 - Sense of community: peer support and dialogue between staff and students to address perceived distance. This may be addressed by developing feedback as a dialogic process.
- 2.3.47 Responding to the ELIR 2015 Report recommendation that “all students receive timely, relevant and high quality feedback” (paragraph 60), Senate LTC agreed that it would be essential to measure both feedback turnaround times and quality of feedback. Proposals were submitted to Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) and then to Senate LTC from September 2016. In November 2017, SQAC approved changes to annual monitoring, review and reporting processes to monitor feedback turnaround times through the programme monitoring form; specifically monitoring adherence to the feedback deadline set out in Regulation 16 of our Taught Assessment Regulations.¹¹⁴ In December 2019, the sub-group of SQAC that reviews School annual quality reports recommended to the University Executive that we review the 15-day feedback turnaround deadline to determine whether it remained appropriate in all circumstances, and to explore whether a different approach could be taken whilst still allowing for timely and quality feedback to be provided to students, in a clearly communicated timeframe alongside robust marking and moderation processes. The 15 day feedback turnaround deadline has so far not been changed as it was not felt appropriate to do so ahead of potential changes to assessment as part of a wider curriculum review.
- 2.3.48 The ELIR Report 2015 encouraged us to reflect on “the positive experiences of assessment and feedback reported by ODL students” (paragraph 60). At the January 2016 meeting of Senate LTC,

112 <http://edin.ac/2DPPCne>

113 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20200311combinedagendapaperscompressed.pdf (Paper H)

114 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf

the Senior Vice-Principal communicated that Principal's Strategy Group had agreed that all areas must move to online submission of written assessed work and return of feedback.¹¹⁵ In practice many areas across the University have gone further to include marking of assessments online, in addition to the provision of feedback electronically. This has not been without its challenges and has increased workload for some. However, it is now easy to see which students are viewing their feedback, and it is clear that not all students are doing so.

- 2.3.49 Despite these, and other, developments in our approach to assessment and feedback, it is disappointing that our overall position with respect to NSS has not changed significantly at an institutional level. We are increasingly of the view that to address assessment and feedback in a meaningful way requires consideration of the wider relationship between assessment methods, feedback and the curriculum. We have begun to take a more holistic approach to assessment and feedback and are increasingly supporting staff in course/programme curriculum development and approval processes through the Edinburgh Learning Design Roadmap (ELDeR).¹¹⁶
- 2.3.50 ELDeR has been operating since June 2016 and was developed by ISG out of University of Northampton's framework called CAleRO (Creating Aligned Interactive educational Resource Opportunities). ELDeR is a learning design process that takes place over two-days involving the course or programme team, administrators and learning technologists. At the heart of the ELDeR process is the design of student learning experiences, where student feedback and assessment literacies are given top priority, and a shared vision of the course/programme is developed between team members. The output of the ELDeR process can be used in making proposals for course/programme approvals to Boards of Studies. To date around 67 workshops across 16 Schools have taken place. CMVM strongly recommends engagement with the ELDeR process as part of taught postgraduate programme development (see Box 2.9 for information on the evaluation of the impact of ELDeR).
- 2.3.51 In November 2017, Senate LTC considered a paper on the current status of course and programme design resources and proposals to expand and embed these.¹¹⁷ The Committee agreed to strengthen support for Boards of Studies Conveners and training sessions were developed and delivered as outlined in Chapter 4. Six Boards of Studies Conveners and Administrators training sessions have been delivered, covering both pedagogical considerations for developing and reviewing course and programme proposals and clarification of Boards of Studies' roles and responsibilities. Assessment and feedback forms an element of the training, in particular the need for each course to have a formative feedback event and aligning learning outcomes and assessment. Taken together, these developments, including LEAF and ELDeR processes, are ensuring increased attention "to the provision of formative feedback opportunities" (ELIR 2015 Report, paragraph 60), in line with regulation 15 of our Taught Assessment Regulations¹¹⁸ that states: "All students will be given at least one formative feedback or feed-forward event for every course they undertake."
- 2.3.52 In May 2019, Senate LTC approved a proposal to amend the name and remit of the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group.¹¹⁹ In line with our wider thinking, the Group considered that assessment and feedback cannot be looked at in isolation but rather is part of a wider context of

115 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/agendapapers20160127.pdf

116 www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/learning-technology/learning-design/elder

117 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20171115agendapapers.pdf (Paper B)

118 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/2020_taught.pdf

119 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20190522combinedagendapapers.pdf Paper K

Box 2.9: Evaluation of the impact of ELDeR

To understand the impact of the ELDeR process on course and programme design, the team surveyed colleagues who had been involved in an ELDeR workshop.

Almost all the 42 respondents (93 per cent) agreed that the ELDeR workshops had provided them with practical ways of thinking about designing a better programme or course in the future and 95 per cent said they would recommend ELDeR to other colleagues. Indeed, the team observed nine instances of ELDeR-like workshops taking place in Schools following attendance at an ELDeR workshop, which clearly demonstrates the value of the process.

Two-thirds of respondents (67 per cent) said they used the documentation created during the workshop to prepare for the course/programme approval via Board of Studies. Indeed, only seven per cent said they had not used the outputs created at the workshop at all.

To date, all but five of our Schools have used the ELDeR process for course and/or programme design, covering half of the Schools in CSE, three-quarters of the Schools in CAHSS, and all of the Schools in CMVM.

ELDeR participants have commented on the value of the workshop:

“It lets you get a simple overview of your course structure and helps you identify better timescales for activities, for example, making sure that formative and summative feedback relate well to the course timetable.”

“I think these are of huge value. I would like to see them used across all programmes.”

curriculum design. As a result, the name of the Group was changed to the Support for Curriculum Development Group and the remit was expanded to cover matters and operational support relating to curriculum, course and programme design, including assessment and feedback. The group met briefly before the impact of Covid-19 and has not met since.

- 2.3.53 In line with our move to a more holistic approach to curriculum design to enhance assessment and feedback practices, LEAF activity was reduced from 2018/19. A new LEAF model was introduced where some elements of the audit are carried out by the programme and some remain supported by IAD. In October 2019 a new LEAF model resource¹²⁰ was produced.
- 2.3.54 Throughout all the developments outlined, we continue to share good practice in assessment and feedback across a range of networks and events. Good practice examples which are identified through quality processes are shared across the University through a variety of mechanisms including Teaching Matters, network meetings and events. Assessment and feedback was a theme of the University-level sharing good practice event in February 2019 and CMVM's good practice showcase in March 2020. The Boards of Studies Network event on 11 November 2019 focused on enhancing assessment and feedback.

¹²⁰ <https://edin.ac/3ntDYVJ>

2.3.55 Assessment will form a key element of the planned curriculum review and will draw on the various insights we have from the LEAF, ELDeR and quality processes in recent years, and our learning from the recent changes to assessment (notably exams) that we have made in response to Covid-19.

Study and work away service (SWAY)

2.3.56 As part of the SEP, we have launched the new SWAY Service¹²¹ to oversee the management of international and UK-based study and work placement experiences for students and staff mobility opportunities, working in partnership with key internal and external stakeholders. The ultimate aim is to deliver an enhanced student experience by streamlining our processes and facilitating student access to study and work opportunities, both globally and in the UK.

2.3.57 The Service was created in response to a number of key institutional requirements including:

- Knowing where our students are if they are undertaking a study or work away opportunity so we can meet our duty of care obligations;
- Clarity in roles and responsibilities for stakeholders involved in supporting our students to study or work away to avoid duplication of effort;
- Delivering consistency in terms of the support that is offered to students as this currently varies.

2.3.58 The SWAY Service has established a single, specialist Study and Work Away team that will own and manage the end-to-end processes and systems that support students and staff involved in study and work away activities. The Service will provide a single electronic and face-to-face service entry point for all students and staff, and also deliver expert support to staff involved in local aspects of working and study away, working collaboratively with them.

2.3.59 Service provision was introduced from Spring 2020 with ongoing discussions with each School as to which specific study and work activities will transfer to and be supported by the SWAY service. This will culminate in a Partnership Agreement where roles and responsibilities between the SWAY service and Schools will be agreed.

Post-graduation support

2.3.60 We continue to offer services and support to students after graduation, and have been strengthening the connection between alumni and current students. All our graduates may continue to use the full range of services offered by the Careers Service for two years after graduation. Flexible support is available to make access easy for graduates, with one to one appointments offered by telephone and Skype, including availability after 5pm, and a range of workshops delivered online. Graduates who left more than two years ago can continue to use the Careers Service website and we are in the process of extending access to enhanced career planning resources for all alumni. The Careers Service works closely with Development and Alumni in communicating with recent graduates to highlight the support available to them.

2.3.61 In July 2018, Development and Alumni launched Platform One, a single online space for all members of the University community, past and present. Platform One emerged from conversations about the University as a community; not just a community of current students, but a community

121 <https://global.ed.ac.uk/study-work-away>

that also includes staff and alumni. This community is powerful in its breadth and diversity. It provides an online community where students, alumni and staff can connect with each other and share knowledge, insights, ideas and experience.

- 2.3.62 To date there are over 7,200 members (as of July 2020) from over 120 countries around the world, representing a wide variety of different experiences. Around 10 per cent of members are currently offering formal support to our students, including advice via email, work shadowing and advice about building a start-up.
- 2.3.63 Our recent focus for Platform One has been welcoming the class of 2020 to the community and encouraging them to utilise the support on offer. This will be followed by an invitation to all newly matriculated students to join the community from September 2020.
- 2.3.64 A number of short-term changes have been made to Platform One which aim to humanise it further, make profiles warmer and less formal, strengthen the distinctive 'Edinburgh' quality and encourage connections. These changes come ahead of a full refresh which will take place later this year with the launch of a new version of the software.

2.4 Postgraduate taught and research student experience

Overview

- 2.4.1 Our taught postgraduate students are generally more satisfied with their experience than our undergraduate or postgraduate research students. Satisfaction scores in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) are generally in line with or slightly above the average across the Russell Group in the majority of the themes covered. Open comments indicate that postgraduate taught students think that teaching is of a high quality but that there could be a greater focus on career readiness and the application of learning to real world, practical situations. Comments in PTES echo concerns in the NSS around the quality and timeliness of feedback on assessment.
- 2.4.2 For postgraduate research students, the Postgraduate Researcher Experience Survey (PRES) shows that satisfaction scores at Edinburgh are slightly below the average for the Russell Group in all but one area (access to resources). The gap between us and the rest of the Russell Group is however much smaller than the gap seen in NSS scores. Open comments highlight the importance of a positive relationship between postgraduate research students and their supervisors.
- 2.4.3 Much of what has been outlined in the preceding sections of this Chapter also relates to postgraduate taught students and, to some extent, research students. However, there are some differences that necessitate specific approaches. This section focuses on the key developments since the last ELIR 2015 in support of the postgraduate taught and research experience that are not covered elsewhere as part of the wider student experience. These include:
- Improvements to PhD supervision and supervisor training as part of the Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme;
 - Increased support for postgraduate taught students' career development;
 - Piloting of peer support for postgraduate research students;
-

- Improvements in training and support for postgraduate students that teach
- Developments in cohort-based training and development for research students;
- Initial development of a Doctoral College.

Support for postgraduate students' career development

- 2.4.4 The Careers Service website shows the support available to postgraduate students (taught, research and online students).¹²² As reflected in PTES, students desire greater focus on career readiness. In support of postgraduate taught students' career development, the Careers Service launched a new flexible, online career development programme for postgraduate taught students in CAHSS¹²³ at the start of AY 2019/20 in response to growing demands for differentiated careers input for postgraduate students. Recognising the differentiation within the postgraduate taught student body, two strands are being offered: 'developing' for those with fewer than three years' work experience and 'advancing' for those with more substantial career experience.
- 2.4.5 The programmes cover career essentials including: how to market the benefits of masters study; career planning and decision making; building a professional profile and networking; navigating the job market; and PhD applications. With a clear focus on action points and complemented by a suite of high quality resources, this programme is designed to help postgraduate taught students move forward in their career, regardless of whether it is in an academic/research field, converting to a new sector or finding high quality graduate level employment. A similar model will be launched in CMVM and CSE in AY 2020/21.
- 2.4.6 In addition to the support provided by the Careers Service for postgraduate research students, Schools provide their own support to students. For example, the School of Economics have a Placement Officer who helps PhD students into academic jobs. The Officer analyses the job market papers of each student and provides detailed feedback so they may improve them. Success in getting students well placed is on the rise; last year for example students obtained positions at the Universities of Pennsylvania, Düsseldorf and in Austria, all good economics departments.
- 2.4.7 Philosophy, in the School of PPLS, runs a 'proseminar' series that is designed to provide postgraduate research students advice about research, teaching, and other skills required for an academic career.¹²⁴ Regular career advice sessions are organised with input from the Careers Service. The most recent session, for example, focused on careers outside academia.
- 2.4.8 A key strand of the Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme was the Personal and Professional Development Record. A workgroup was established to consider the recognition and recording of postgraduate student achievement. The workgroup reported in December 2017 and recommended that a Personal and Professional Record for postgraduate research students should be introduced and should be called a Postgraduate Research Higher Education Achievement Report (postgraduate research HEAR). Principles of the postgraduate research HEAR and the process for developing it were outlined in the report. Responsibility for implementation was passed over to SEP for consideration as part of their postgraduate research lifecycle project, but is currently paused due to a lack of funding.

122 www.ed.ac.uk/careers/postgrad

123 www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/study-support/supporting-taught-postgraduates

124 www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/philosophy/research/seminars-and-reading-groups/postgraduate-professional-development-and-research

Support for doctoral training

- 2.4.9 All research students are provided with training specific to the nature of their discipline and research. In many cases, the nature of the training is prescribed by Research Councils. We are increasingly moving towards cohort-based training models. CSE has grown its provision of cohort-based doctoral training programmes as a result of a number of successful funding bids to Research Councils, charities and other funding bodies and now hosts a number of Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) and Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) (see Chapter 5 for details) through which training is provided to students.
- 2.4.10 The research training of students in CAHSS is supported via the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS), drawing on the expertise of sixteen Scottish universities, including Edinburgh (see Chapter 5 for further details). Some discipline-specific and interdisciplinary pathways and workshops are provided by staff in CAHSS (for example in 2020 a workshop on how to create open research data derived from PhD projects and how to curate a digital archive); and access to a suite of postgraduate research courses run in the School of Social and Political Science (for example, Core Quantitative Data Analysis; Applied Demography).
- 2.4.11 Cohort-based programmes strongly promote interdisciplinary research training, as well as collaboration with students from other universities and with industrial partners. They differ from traditional PhD training in that they combine PhD study with taught courses, industrial placements and other training opportunities, and provide students with a unique experience as part of a small doctoral cohort. In addition to the standard PhD model, we have extended the range of degree models available to students to include, for example, PhD with Integrated Study, Engineering Doctorate (EngD), and Masters by Research (MScR) plus PhD (“1+3”), which has provided a greater variety of doctoral training to suit different needs.

Training for postgraduate students that teach

- 2.4.12 Having the opportunity to teach is often a key part of the career development for many of our postgraduate students, especially those that are working towards an academic career. Considerable numbers of our postgraduate students are involved in tutoring and demonstrating, and are supported to do so. Training and development for tutors and demonstrators is provided locally at the discipline level and centrally by IAD. IAD employs 1.7fte staff to provide a range of courses for new and experienced tutors and demonstrators on topics such as effective tutoring and assessment and feedback, as well as provision for online tutors and information to support staff who work with tutors and demonstrators.
- 2.4.13 In 2016, a task group of Senate Researcher Experience Committee (REC), including membership from IAD, was appointed to review our Code of Practice on Tutoring and Demonstrating. The review included external benchmarking and consultation with tutors and demonstrators and the staff that support them. In 2017, Senate LTC and Senate REC approved a new Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators¹²⁵ that came into effect fully at the start of AY 2018/19.

125 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tutorsdemonstrators_policy.pdf

- 2.4.14 Section 5.1 of the Policy states that, “Tutors and demonstrators must not commence their duties until the School has provided them with necessary formal induction on all core aspects of their role.” Principal responsibility for providing the required orientation sessions prior to teaching rests with Schools. In supporting Schools to implement the Policy, IAD have been working with staff across the University to adapt, customise and design discipline specific training for their School's inductions and ongoing CPD activities for the tutors and demonstrators they support. The IAD also runs a small number of orientation events for new tutors and demonstrators intended to support anyone unable to attend the sessions run locally in their School.
- 2.4.15 IAD have been involved in communicating the policy to tutors and demonstrators around the University through newsletters and at every relevant workshop, and will support Academic Services in evaluating the impact of the policy in the future.
- 2.4.16 IAD assesses the programme of CPD workshops it provides after each iteration, taking participant and facilitator feedback into account. This allows for the implementation of more specific, targeted activities and the incorporation of emerging literature, and allows facilitators to adjust approaches to better teach a concept if needed. During 2019, IAD also carried out an overhaul of the online resources available to tutors and demonstrators held on Learn (our VLE), expanding the resource to include topics, such as diversity, and improved guidelines around accessibility. This is now a more useful resource for tutors and demonstrators, with improved navigability and relevance.
- 2.4.17 IAD are now able to track usage statistics around this resource, and, for the first time, have analysed user engagement with the IAD tutors and demonstrators Learn site. As of March 2020, there were 387 active users since September 2019. The main users have been those enrolled on the Introduction to Academic Practice (IntroAP) and participants from other IAD tutor and demonstrator workshops. Some of these users have targeted one area of interest, others have accessed several areas of the Learn site, with 26 users generating over 10 hits each and one user reaching 179 hits. This highlights a potential opportunity to promote these resources more widely to other tutors and demonstrators. Going forward, these reports will be run on a quarterly basis to inform action.
- 2.4.18 IAD supports postgraduate research students in gaining recognition for their teaching through accreditation with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) as part of Advance HE. IntroAP is aimed at experienced tutors and demonstrators with at least two semesters of teaching experience prior to enrolment, and leads to the award of HEA Associate Fellow status.
- 2.4.19 IntroAP provides a tailored introduction to pedagogical literature and reflective practices, with over 80 per cent¹²⁶ of all 276 completers since its introduction in 2013 being postgraduate research students. This high concentration of postgraduate research students allows the course facilitators to incorporate structures and content that are relevant and considerate of the specific teaching-postgraduate research experience. Sixty per cent of all iterations of the course have run at full capacity since its induction, often with a waiting list. The rate for successful completion on a first attempt is over 98 per cent, with all unsuccessful participants gaining accreditation on their second attempt. Postgraduate research participants report increased confidence in their teaching practices, a greater appreciation of their own role within a teaching team leading to increased participation

126 This is calculated on application data going back five iterations of the course as the data for the four courses that ran before this is not easily accessible.

in those teams, and a greater understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of their teaching practice.

- 2.4.20 The network of teaching peers that postgraduate research participants build through their participation in IntroAP is also greatly valued by the participants. IAD support postgraduate researchers to gain accreditation through Level one of the Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA). This is a supported, mentored pathway for development in learning and teaching in which participants are assigned an individual mentor who works with the candidate to provide tailored support and guidance through relevant literature and reflective practice. This differs from IntroAP in the manner in which this support is provided. Given the highly flexible nature of this programme, this is well suited to the wider postgraduate research experience, fitting in with an otherwise busy research and teaching schedule. This allows the programme to enhance and build students' reflective practice rather than constrain the participant.
- 2.4.21 The mentor-mentee relationship allows the Level one participant to closely work with a specifically chosen mentor who is in the position to share appropriate good practice and engage in learning conversations that allow the postgraduate research student to understand and examine their own practice in a way they may otherwise not have the opportunity to at their level of teaching, building confidence at an early stage in their teaching career. EdTA Level one is a highly popular programme, frequently oversubscribed. To (in part) address this, the EdTA programme has been rolled out locally

Box 2.10: Support for postgraduate tutors in PPLS ¹²⁷

Tutors in PPLS are given two guidance documents:

1. **The Essentials: Getting Started as a Tutor in PPLS**, a quick point of reference for primarily new tutors, but an “at a glance” guide for all, this provides the most general and vital information such as: key dates, an introduction to Learn, administration duties such as attendance recording and marking procedures, tutor support and training, FAQ's, key people in PPLS and contact details for all listed.
2. **The PPLS Tutoring Staff Handbook**. This contains essential guidance on tutoring in the School with additional specific information for each of the subject areas, including: a background to the teaching context and PPLS students; tips for tutorial preparation and marking; how to provide feedback; support and pastoral care; subject specific support; and information on confidentiality.

The School also offers a number of training events, the main ones including tutor induction; meeting with key staff; and How to use Learn. Further means by which the School develops its postgraduate students' tutor support throughout their tutoring careers is via the following:

1. The option to register on an additional training course via Learn (for example, Philosophy Tools – a bespoke online course created by previous Philosophy tutors).
2. Teaching observation followed by written Course Organiser feedback with reflective logs completed by the tutor for review and discussion.
3. Development of online teaching portfolios.
4. Mentoring and shadowing, mainly in the form of spending time with a more experienced tutor.

¹²⁷ See Advance Information Set

to five Schools around the University. Additionally, the EdTA Level one and IntroAP Programme Leads at IAD are in frequent contact with regards to re-directing postgraduate research students between the two programmes where appropriate to ensure that every applicant is supported in the most appropriate and timely manner for them. Participants on the EdTA programme have reported a particular appreciation of the mentor and group meeting support offered by the programme, as well as the challenging nature of the programme which encourages deeper self-reflection.

- 2.4.22 Schools supplement the training and development provided by IAD to ensure tutors and demonstrators are familiar with the specific roles and responsibilities and organisational practices within the local discipline and courses. For example, the School of Informatics requires that tutors take “Essentials of being a tutor in Informatics” (which runs in both semesters) and is provided by a Teaching Fellow in Informatics. The School reports that having a member of staff dedicated to the delivery of this training has been really beneficial. (Box 2.10 provides an overview of the support provided to postgraduate tutors in the School of PPLS).

Postgraduate research student support

- 2.4.23 In addition to the PhD supervisors/supervisory team and Local Graduate Schools that provide the primary point of support to students, we have increased the range of institution-wide doctoral-specific support to students provided via the IAD. Since the 2015 ELIR this includes greater emphasis on online training and support and a four-week online course, Prepare for Doctoral Success,¹²⁸ for all new postgraduate research students which runs in October and in February. This includes topics such as planning the first year, working with your supervisor and making the most of your degree. The onus is on discussion and building community. Since its launch in 2016, around 150-170 students have enrolled on the course annually. A follow up evaluation after the first year found that the course had a positive impact on students’ experience throughout the first year. There is also now an increased portfolio of short training courses in a diverse range of topics, this has helped to address the needs of all students, on and off campus.
- 2.4.24 Effective communication of the broad range of opportunities and support to postgraduate research students remains a challenge at the University and in 2016 IAD launched an annual brochure¹²⁹ which is given to all Schools to distribute at the beginning of each academic year. The brochure outlines opportunities and support available through IAD and other services. Feedback from Schools is that students and supervisors find this useful.

Peer support for postgraduate students

- 2.4.25 IAD and the Students’ Association are working together on a programme focusing on peer support for postgraduate research students as a means of building community and improving wellbeing, key areas of concern identified through student surveys. A review of current practice across the institution has been carried out, postgraduate research students have been surveyed to gather views of what they want from peer mentoring, and several pilots have been established. The work reported at the end of AY 2019/20 with recommendations of how to roll out suitable peer support programmes for postgraduate research students across the University.¹³⁰

128 <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/iad4phd/2019/01/14/prepare-for-doctoral-success-4/>

129 <https://indd.adobe.com/view/37349b86-cd65-4e0f-87a0-11dc29b8d4fb>

130 Report not on the website, but available on request

- 2.4.26 There are examples of peer support in existence in many of our Schools. For example, in the School of Informatics, these include the reading group in reinforcement learning (run by postgraduate research students in Artificial Intelligence (AI)) and the reading group in Non Linear Problems (run by postgraduate research students in the Institute for Language, Cognition and Communication (ILCC)). Research students provide support to one another and share insights.
- 2.4.27 Another example, is the SolidariTEA¹³¹ initiative established in Biological Sciences with funding from the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA). SolidariTEA is a series of supportive, confidential and relaxed coffee mornings for PhD students to come together and share problems affecting their work or personal life. This initiative has been very successful and taken up in other areas of the University. A further example is Playing the PhD Game,¹³² developed by colleagues in Social Work inspired by a session on board game jams at the Learning and Teaching Conference in 2018. It uses a board game as a means of induction for new PhD students, helping students to learn about the PhD, themselves and each other through game play.

PhD Supervisor support and training

- 2.4.28 The ELIR 2015 Report noted that we “should review the effectiveness and regularity of supervisor training” (paragraph 78). We have made a number of key enhancements to the core support for research student supervision, as a result of the work undertaken as part of the Excellence in Doctoral and Career Development Programme.¹³³ This work took a consultative approach, and used the evidence from focus groups with students and supervisors and external and internal benchmarking to strengthen and formalise existing support and training and to start new initiatives.
- 2.4.29 After consultation with supervisors the Postgraduate Degree Regulations were updated in 2019/20 to clarify the timing and mandatory nature of this training and School responsibilities, so formalising the requirement for supervisor training. This was communicated to Schools via the College Research Training Committees and Academic Services in summer 2019.
- 2.4.30 The IAD coordinates the mandatory PhD supervisor training in all three Colleges, supporting the delivery at School or College level as appropriate. Core training is offered at least four times per year per College to ensure supervisors can access the training at the most appropriate time for them. Schools are responsible for ensuring that all supervisors who are members of staff have attended a supervisor briefing in the last five years. Attendance is recorded by IAD and names and numbers are fed back to Schools so attendance can be monitored. Schools then follow up with staff whose training is about to expire and also ensure new supervisors attend training.
- 2.4.31 As part of our ongoing review of supervisor briefings, the Dean of Postgraduate Studies (or equivalent) in each of the three Colleges have been working closely to share best practice and to ensure content of the supervisor briefings is consistent and covers core information for effective supervision.
- 2.4.32 A comprehensive online course, ‘Fundamentals of PhD Supervision’ was developed by the Institute for Academic Development in collaboration with the Doctoral College, and with relevant staff in Colleges and support staff. It was launched at the beginning of June 2020. This course covers:

131 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/mini-series-encouraging-solidaritea-amongst-phd-students/

132 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/playing-the-phd-game-board-game-jams-with-postgraduate-research-students/

133 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/excellence-in-doctoral-education

- Recruitment and induction of PhD students;
- Supervisor responsibilities and building effective relationships;
- Managing progress;
- Supporting students through completion and final examination;
- Supporting wellbeing, and professional and career development.

2.4.33 It is suitable for new and continuing supervisors at the University and external supervisors. As of June 2020, the Senate Education Committee has agreed that completion of this course fulfils the training obligation for new supervisors but that this should be complemented (where possible) by College or School level briefing sessions. As of the end of July 2020, 99 supervisors have completed this course. The course will be reviewed and updated annually. Information on this course and on other resources and support for supervisors is included on a page of the Doctoral College SharePoint. IAD also continues to offer optional training on topics relevant to PhD supervision and has developed webpages for postgraduate research supervisors to improve awareness of relevant information and events. An ongoing challenge is to increase engagement of supervisors with optional training and events, but we continue to focus on this area. Recent developments, as a result of the Teaching and Academic Careers project, to embed and recognise supervision in the Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education should help to increase engagement with optional training and development.

Doctoral College

2.4.34 During AY 2018/19 discussions began for the proposal to enhance doctoral training provision through the establishment of a Doctoral College, and in January 2020 the University Executive approved its soft launch. The Doctoral College will supplement the already existing Graduate Schools with a layer of University wide coordination and provide an access point for staff and students to locate services and information. It will deal holistically with all aspects of doctoral education from recruitment and scholarships to student welfare, assessment and careers. At its core, the Doctoral College consists of around 200 staff across Schools, Colleges and services of the institution. It provides a mechanism to develop institution wide policy and to implement these policies effectively. As a consequence, the University can provide a more uniform and enhanced experience for our research students.

2.5 Learning environment, including the use of technology

Overview

2.5.1 Our ambition is to ensure we support learning and teaching and the student experience with excellent facilities. We have made significant investment in physical and digital learning environments, student accommodation and social spaces since the last ELIR. This has also been coupled with greater alignment of governance, between learning and teaching and estates. For example, the Vice-Principal Students chairs the Senate Education Committee and Space Strategy Group and sits on the Estates Committee as well as having oversight through Court. In general,

there has been a move to ensure that learning and teaching, through the Vice-Principal Students, is integrally involved in decisions concerning the estate and therefore the student experience.

2.5.2 In terms of our physical infrastructure, key developments include:

- The development and refurbishment of lecture theatres and other teaching and study spaces, such as the Lister Learning and Teaching Centre that opened in 2018, which serves the central campus area;
- The redevelopment of Murchison House at King's Buildings, in 2018, bringing additional group-study and collaborative teaching spaces amongst other benefits;
- Spaces that foster or support student and staff community, including student society spaces, including the redevelopment of the Students' Association Pleasance site in 2017;
- Common areas and rooms in University buildings (for example, the restoration of the School of Divinity's Rainy Hall);
- Expansion and development of student accommodation;
- Development of a new Health and Wellbeing Centre in the central campus that opened in September 2020.

2.5.3 In terms of our digital infrastructure, key developments include:

- Implementation of lecture recording across the University;
- Our VLE consolidation programme, reducing the number of different platforms in use and consolidating into one major VLE, Blackboard Learn;
- Development of standards for VLE through the Learn Foundations project;
- The introduction of Resource Lists, supporting the consistent provision of reading list information and teaching resources;
- Roll-out of Microsoft's Office 365 suite to all students and staff of the University, combining email, calendar and OneDrive file storage;
- Implementation of MyTimetable in Office 365 calendars, providing students with a personalised timetable they can access on phones, computers or other devices;
- Developments to MyEd, the University's central portal, making it easier for students to find and complete tasks relevant to them;
- Development of our online programmes, including Distance Learning at Scale.

2.5.4 Developments to the physical and digital estate are not without their challenges. In making improvements to the estate, this has rendered some facilities unavailable in the short-term, leading to reductions in space in some areas and disruption from noise and building works. Building developments are typically not short-term fixes and for some of our students a significant part of their student experience with us has been affected by building developments of some sort. This has had an impact on their student satisfaction and has been reflected back to us in student surveys.

2.5.5 Staff are also increasingly reflecting issues with space and lack of appropriate teaching spaces. Estates issues have emerged as a key theme arising from Internal Periodic Reviews (IPRs) and the

annual monitoring process over the last couple of years. As a result, we have taken the decision not to grow student numbers for growth's sake, but to take a measured approach. Our ambitious Estates development plan was intended to resolve many of the space issues in time, but some developments are still some years away from completion, others have been paused due to Covid-19 and the impact on the University's financial situation. In the short-term, the use of our physical estate is severely restricted due to Covid-19 physical distancing rules. We have considered how best to prioritise the space available for those students that benefit from it the most (such as new students and those requiring use of labs and other specialist spaces). Prior to Covid-19 some Schools responded by moving non-student facing staff and units out of School buildings, freeing up greater space for teaching and study spaces.

Estate and space strategy

2.5.6 Since the previous ELIR, we have developed our Estates Vision 2017/27 which sets out our ambition to 'create world class estate for a world-class University', with a commitment of £1.5 billion over the coming years to ensure we provide an ever more stimulating environment in support of learning, inquiry, research, innovation and interaction. The aim is to provide an estate that responds flexibly to changing student and staff needs.

2.5.7 To support our vision the following mission statements enshrine our approach:

- We ensure our Learning and Teaching Spaces Strategy is in dialogue with the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS) and the Estates' vision to enable the smooth transformation required by our overall vision;
- We raise awareness around issues of space and learning and teaching to open up communication across and between different staff and student communities;
- We gather information about new technologies, diverse methods of teaching and learning, and contemporary educational approaches in higher education to make recommendations for improvements to the University's estate;
- We make sure staff and students have a chance to express their expectations or share their concerns to inform directly the programmes of work in Estates, Timetabling and Information Services Group (ISG);
- We make sure students and staff have the best possible information on available physical and digital estate and are aware how they can use it for formal/informal learning and teaching;
- We provide spaces, and information about them, that inspire staff and students to try different approaches to learning and teaching;
- We continuously review our services to ensure all processes involved, from timetabling to new builds, reflect current and future needs deliver an outstanding learning and teaching experience.

2.5.8 The priorities as set out in the Estates Vision are to:

- Develop integrated campuses, hubbed around our students and staff;
 - Create outstanding teaching and learning spaces;
 - Enhance the student experience;
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- Deliver inspirational and contemporary research facilities;
- Provide attractive places where students and staff can interact;
- Support innovation by providing collaborative spaces where industry, public and third sectors and the University can interact;
- Protect our city's heritage;
- Plan an optimal, accessible estate to meet the future requirements of our students and staff;
- Connect our residential accommodation and academic estates with effective transport links;
- Align our estate plans to the University's strategic plan.

2.5.9 To maintain a complex and challenging estate comprising over 550 buildings, we spend approximately £60 million per annum to support the estate. Since the previous ELIR, Estates Operations has continued to develop a student, staff and visitor centred approach to how we effectively maintain our estate. Estates Operations has a clear strategic objective to move towards asset based maintenance, to provide a managed framework around proactive maintenance and replacement, moving away from a run to fail approach, which in turn will improve the down time and outages of plant and kit critical to the seamless operation of the estate. This has seen a shift from reactive maintenance to planned preventative maintenance. Estates Operations are also key to our ambition to be carbon neutral by 2040.

2.5.10 Coupled with the capital programme, the Space Strategy Group, a sub-committee of Estates Committee, oversees how the University effectively uses space to deliver the vision. The Space Strategy Group acts as a conduit in the development of space in line with current pedagogy coupled with student and staff need.

2.5.11 The Learning Spaces Technology team supports Audio Visual (AV) and Information Technology across the full spectrum of learning and teaching spaces from formal lecture theatres and classrooms to open access computers in cafes and social spaces. Our 2019 Learning and Teaching Spaces Strategy¹³⁴ outlines our vision to be responsive and sector-leading in the creative use of our spaces to inspire and deliver an outstanding learning and teaching experience. We engage closely with staff and students regarding learning and teaching spaces and their use to ensure our Learning and Teaching Spaces Strategy is in support of the University's learning and teaching objectives. We raise awareness around issues of space, technology and accessibility to open up communication across and between different staff and student communities and gather information about new technologies, diverse methods of teaching and learning, and contemporary educational approaches in higher education. We conduct surveys to understand how our estate is used.

Lecture recording

2.5.12 In response to student demand, we introduced a campus-wide lecture recording system,¹³⁵ approved by Court in September 2016. Rolling out lecture recording at scale was also one of the key recommendations from the 2016 review of the University's Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy. The goal of the project has been to enhance the student experience alongside bringing extensive pedagogical and research benefits.

134 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/lt_spaces_strategy_2019.pdf

135 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/online_learning_brochure_july_2019.pdf

- 2.5.13 The new lecture recording service, MediaHopper Replay, has been rolled out in three stages, with the first stage of 114 rooms equipped for use in AY 2017/18. For AY 2018/19 this increased to 300 rooms and by the start of 2019/20 we had equipped 400 teaching spaces. The capital investment amounted to £2.25 million and the scale of the development amounted to one of the largest digital audio-visual upgrades to take place in the UK.
- 2.5.14 The rollout of lecture recording has enhanced the student experience and brought a range of new technologies into our teaching rooms (see Box 2.11). Our approach was based on being widely flexible and enabling choices of formats and pedagogy. The ability to watch lectures again as an aid to revision is popular with our students and capturing video and audio recordings of lectures at scale will supplement the rich set of online resources that already exist to support learning. In semester one 2019/2020, 90 per cent of courses with lectures took place in rooms where recording is enabled. Of those, 89 per cent had used the automatic scheduler developed by ISG and Timetabling teams to minimise the admin burden for staff. The percentage coverage is above the sector average, which is approximately 80 per cent.

Box 2.11: Lecture recording and impact on student experience

“Offering lecture recordings to our students to such a high quality means that the recordings become an easy way of checking exactly what a complex equation said, or how a diagram was drawn. I can honestly say this is the best lecture capture chalkboard solution I have seen anywhere.”

Ross Galloway

Senior Teaching Development Officer, School of Physics and Astronomy

- 2.5.15 A focused study of the benefits of lecture recording was undertaken in the Medical School. The most common benefit was the use of lecture recordings to enhance or complement students' learning practices, such as revision, clarification purposes, and especially learning in their own time. Staff participants perceived lecture recordings as an accessibility tool, which can be useful for students who may struggle to learn, for example those with learning adjustments. The provision of lecture recordings was seen as reassuring and conducive to better engagement by all students interviewed, as they discussed that they can immerse themselves in the lecture experience rather than struggling to take notes while listening and trying to understand the taught material at the same time. Early findings from research by Moray House School of Education and Sport indicates that Students perceive lecture recording as a 'luxury' service provided by the University to enhance accessibility and enable a more individualised and flexible approach to learning.
- 2.5.16 We understand that each lecturer has a different way of working, and the system accommodates this by recording from two sources, which might be a combination of the lecturer's PC, laptop, the teaching desk, or the chalkboard. This gives us the flexibility to provide students with all the information from a lecture, in whichever method the instructor chooses to deliver it. There is no need for them to adjust their teaching style to suit the technology.

- 2.5.17 We are seeing the value of the investment in lecture recording in a number of ways. Many of our students have complex lives and are balancing study alongside caring responsibilities, or the need to work to fund their studies. Recordings of lectures can lessen anxiety about keeping on top of study and provide a safety net when life circumstances prevail. Under the Covid-19 lockdown, the collection of lecture recordings has become a valuable study resource. While the number of captures (recordings) dropped in April-June (due to the suspension of face-to-face teaching), views were approximately three times higher than the same time last year.
- 2.5.18 It was anticipated that many colleagues would use last years' lecture recordings as the starting point for hybrid teaching in semester one 2020/21. Colleagues are able to make copies of previous recordings and edit them for re-use. In July 2020 alone, 1,200 copies of lecture recordings were made. In recent months, due to Covid-19, the activity of recording on campus has shifted to colleagues making recordings from home. There were 4,262 uploads in June and 3,458 in July which was up 356 per cent on the previous year. For colleagues who are not able to make recordings from home we provided a number of supported 'pop-up' media studios on campus that were available for booking throughout July to September to enable colleagues to prepare teaching materials for the start of the academic year.
- 2.5.19 It was important to us that we learned as much as possible from the lecture recording project, not just in terms of a technical roll-out but also as a learning technology which changes the way we teach and learn. We funded research into the institutional impact of lecture recording as well as a range of smaller discipline-specific projects.¹³⁶ Edinburgh led an Enhancement Theme collaborative cluster on widening participation with lecture recording.¹³⁷ The lecture recording service teams have supported these research projects through helping to source data from the systems, facilitating dissemination of findings, and identifying overlaps between projects and future opportunities for collaborative research.
- 2.5.20 The scale of the Lecture Recording Programme and the profound changes it has brought to the practice of learning and teaching meant that a new and robust Lecture Recording Policy had to be developed, which we implemented in January 2019 after extensive discussion and consultation with staff and the union.¹³⁸ This means that lecture recording now happens automatically for lectures in the timetabling system taking place in a room fitted with the Media Hopper technology. Lecturers can however still opt-out of all or some of their lectures being recorded. The growth in use of the service has exceeded expectations. In 2017/18, over 13,000 lecture recordings were made, with 470,000 student views of these recordings. In 2018/19, over 25,000 lecture recordings were captured with over 750,000 student views. In 2019/20, over 30,000 lecture recordings were made with nearly 1,000,000 student views.
- 2.5.21 In response to our move to a hybrid model of teaching for AY 2020/21, in which a larger part of our teaching is being delivered digitally, Senate Education Committee approved a Virtual Classroom Policy to extend the key principles on the uses of recordings and participant rights to teaching delivered in virtual classes.
- 2.5.22 With regard to accessibility of recorded media, we ran a Sub-titling for Media Project throughout AY 2018/19 to test the feasibility and cost of a student-led caption and transcription service to

136 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/delivering_and_evaluating_lecture_recording.pdf

137 www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/current-enhancement-theme/student-engagement-and-demographics/widening-participation-with-lecture-recording

138 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/lecture_recording_policy.pdf

supplement automated transcribing of recorded media and improve its accuracy. With the move to hybrid teaching and the increased volumes of lecture recording from home, we produced guidance for colleagues on how to use and edit automated closed captions within the desktop recording platform. The automated captions/transcriptions are approximately 90 per cent accurate. We do not require colleagues to edit the automated sub-titles, but the lack of accuracy is a cause for concern for our colleagues and manual editing is adding an additional burden at a very stressful time.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

- 2.5.23 Across the University we have made use of a number of learning platforms and VLEs over the years. Our VLE consolidation programme has brought sustainability and resilience to learning and teaching by reducing the number of platforms and consolidating the majority of on campus, blended learning activity into just one: Blackboard Learn. This has given us the opportunity to return to the idea of establishing minimum standards of use in order to improve the quality and consistency of the student digital experience through the Learn Foundations project.
- 2.5.24 The Learn VLE currently hosts more than 5,000 courses a year and provides access to course materials, assignments, grades and feedback. Feedback from a number of surveys and reviews of our digital systems have highlighted that inconsistencies and poor web usability cause frustration and dissatisfaction for students. Students too often report that they struggle to find important course-specific resources in the VLE, and are spending a disproportionate amount of time on this rather than on the learning activities that they know are important.
- 2.5.25 To improve the consistency and quality of the student digital experience, ISG established the Learn Foundations project, a three-year service improvement process to benefit our students and make it easier for staff to use Learn effectively. Our vision is that colleagues will say: “Courses in Learn are accessible and relevant, information is easy to find by students, staff find Learn easy to use, and are well supported to make and deliver rich courses online.” We have provided a new Learn course structure co-created with staff and students following extensive user research. This includes a template that is easy for students to use, and the provision of advice on the use of more consistent terminology. As part of our Covid-19 response, we accelerated the Learn Foundations project to support the delivery of high quality hybrid teaching in 2020/21.
- 2.5.26 The Learn Foundations team provide assistance when courses are rolled over to ensure any tasks required to update the new structure which would not normally be undertaken by the School, are supported. This support is delivered by a team of student helpers who have been trained in content migration, and have also engaged with reviewing the accessibility of course content and the provision of a report to support future course design which can be used by Heads of School and programme leaders to inform decisions about the accessibility of courses.

Resource lists

- 2.5.27 A list of learning resources and readings can be integrated into the Learn VLE for each course using the Resource Lists service, and the Course Collections programme which supports it. This helps to enhance the student experience by improving the discoverability of, and access to, essential
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and recommended readings for taught courses. The service supports the consistent provision of reading list information and teaching resources, purchasing and digitising content where required to provide effective access to students on- and off-campus. The Resource Lists service had an initial target of providing Resource Lists for 60 per cent of taught courses by the end of September 2021. As a result of the pandemic we are seeking to accelerate that target to support hybrid teaching for AY 2020/21.

Online learning

- 2.5.28 The ELIR 2015 Report noted that “The University is recognised as a world leader in digital education, and it has adopted an embedded approach to technology” (paragraph 47), and our “ODL students are already very satisfied with the levels of academic support and personalised access to their academic tutors” (paragraph 48).
- 2.5.29 We have continued to develop our online learning provision. Over the last 15 years, we have pioneered the delivery of postgraduate degrees online and have the largest portfolio of online postgraduate programmes in the UK¹³⁹ and more than 8,000 students have benefited from the opportunity to study flexibly online from anywhere in the world.
- 2.5.30 We are very proud of the success of these programmes, which is due to the hard work, enthusiasm and vision of teams across the University. We are constantly scanning the horizon to ensure we can offer subjects that meet the needs of our learners, as well as the very best in academic tuition, technological advantages and personal support. The advancing capabilities of global online communication fitted perfectly with our strategic vision of widening access to our scholarship, learning and teaching to make a positive difference to people’s lives globally. We talked to learners to find out what they wanted to study, how they wanted to study it and what they wanted their studies to do for them.
- 2.5.31 Our academic teams have used their expertise to develop courses that would meet those needs and surpass student expectations. We have built the largest team of learning technologists in the country to create digital services that would deliver our online programmes to all students wherever they are in the world. We developed a comprehensive support system to make online learners feel as much a part of our academic community as our students on campus. (see Box 2.12)
- 2.5.32 We are currently piloting a University-wide Distance Learning at Scale project to explore ways of delivering inclusive and sustainable online education for large numbers of students. The courses we are creating are designed from the start with issues of scale in mind, and are very different in nature to our existing online provision. The work builds on the success we have had with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and online masters programmes. The first course created as part of this project pioneers the use of micro-credentials to offer a MicroMasters course on the edX platform. The new digital course materials, new pedagogy and new learning technologies which we have developed as part of this pilot can now be used both on-campus as well as online.
- 2.5.33 We have developed ‘An Edinburgh Model for Online Teaching’ staff development course to assist colleagues in planning and developing online courses and programmes, which can be coupled

Box 2.12: Approach to Engaging students online and building community

The Edinburgh Network: Growing Approaches to Genuine Engagement (ENGAGE)¹⁴⁰ aims to bring together students and staff interested in creating genuine and meaningful interactions between students and staff focused on learning, teaching and assessment. Meetings focus on sharing ideas, research and practice, and offer space for discussion and collegial support. All students and staff are welcome to participate, whether they are interested in enhancing student engagement in learning and teaching from the student or staff perspective.

In April, 2020, ENGAGE ran a workshop on engaging students online and building community, led by the team that runs the successful MSc Clinical Education, who were nominated for an Advance HE Collaborative Award in Teaching Excellence. The team discussed their approaches to engaging students and building online community, comprising a holistic overview with academic, pastoral and administrative issues considered.

with the ELDeR course design service. This course has been extremely valuable in supporting colleagues in preparing for hybrid teaching, as many of our colleagues have not previously engaged with online teaching methods previously. Since lock-down 665 colleagues have participated in the seven-week course that comprises topics such as engaged online learning, engaged learning communities and feedback and assessment.

Office 365 and personalised timetables

- 2.5.34 During 2016/17 we rolled out Microsoft's Office 365 suite to all students and staff of the University. This suite combines email, calendar OneDrive file storage of 1TB, Office online apps and other collaboration products. Students and staff can activate up to five copies of the standalone Office software on personal computer or mobile devices for the duration of their time at the University.
- 2.5.35 The Office 365 suite offers many benefits to students and staff, enabling them to create, store and share documents with friends and colleagues both inside and outside the University. Files are automatically backed up and deleted documents can easily be recovered or rolled back to previous versions. Their work is available from any computer, tablet or phone making it easy to work anywhere of their choosing.
- 2.5.36 In 2017, we added MyTimetable information to Office 365 calendars. We now provide comprehensive teaching and examination timetables to over 32,500 taught students, generating over five million automatically-updated calendar entries to their Office 365 accounts, allowing students to access timetable information and updates on-the-go, from their mobile devices. This comprehensive information also allows students to plan their wider work/life commitments more effectively. In addition, the Timetabling Unit now also provides a central support service for students to submit requests for changes to tutorial group allocations, allowing them to shape their timetable in a way that fits with wider commitments.

140 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/connect/engage

- 2.5.37 The launch of MS Teams was accelerated in March 2020 in the move to hybrid teaching delivery. This enabled both our staff and student groups to continue collaborating and working together remotely.
- 2.5.38 The 'Student Events of Interest' is a new feature to students' calendars, which developed from a collaboration between the University and the Students' Association as a way to use the calendar to improve communication with students. The aim was to bring students together as part of a big community where they can all celebrate a variety of events in a number of ways. This calendar not only raises awareness of various campaigns but also informs students what is going on and increases opportunities to get involved. The events communicated are only those relevant to the wider student body. Examples, include: Welcome Week, Student Elections, key sporting events and Liberation History Months. This development to the calendar supports our other work around building a sense of belonging, bringing students together as part of a big community where they can celebrate events together.

MyEd developments

- 2.5.39 The University central portal service MyEd has been updated with a vision to improve the digital experience of applicants, students, staff and alumni, making them feel the University's online environment is centred around them. Key to success was to involve users in the design of the new interface to ensure the language, grouping and presentation of content resonated with the audience. This change enabled a single University to be presented by task rather than by each silo service making it easier for students to find and complete tasks and content relevant to them. A favourites section was added enabling students at the click of a button to group together the content they interacted with most frequently for example, grades, print credit and bus times. This was further enhanced by the introductions of a call to action notifications service to ensure students do not miss key information such as the publication of exam dates and locations.

2.6 Effectiveness of the approach to enhancing the student learning experience

- 2.6.1 The ELIR 2015 Report noted: "There are many positive aspects of the student experience at the University" (paragraph 76) and we had "taken a self-evaluative, proactive, systematic and strategic approach to enhancing the student learning experience" (paragraph 72). We have continued to develop and enhance the student learning experience in a planned and strategic approach. We have taken a reflective approach to developments, based on analysis and understanding of the student voice and student data, and from working in close partnership with students. Student voice and student partnership underpin much of what we do, and student involvement is fundamental to all our developments to the student learning experience.
- 2.6.2 We have made significant strides to enhance the student learning experience since the last ELIR, although not all our efforts have resulted in increased student satisfaction. A number of initiatives are contributing to strengthening the student voice, such as the new Student Representation system, development of the SPA, and strengthened student voice mechanisms. We believe we have an effective approach to working with students to enhance the student learning and teaching experience.
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- 2.6.3 We have also strengthened the range of support we provide for students, responding to changing student needs. The new Health and Wellbeing Centre will provide greater capacity to support increasing numbers of students with mental health concerns, as well as provide a more joined up service for all students' health and wellbeing needs.
- 2.6.4 We continue to remain committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and access, now embedded from recruitment, through our contextualised admissions processes and our WP strategy, to the curriculum and the entire student experience. We have taken a critical approach to inclusion, through recent thematic reviews relating to student parents and carers and BME student support, openly reflecting on ways in which we can improve what we do to ensure equality of opportunity for all our students, and we have a clear plan of the work still to be done in this area.
- 2.6.5 We have remained at the forefront of learning technology development, through the wide scale roll out of lecture recording and through the ongoing development of our online learning programmes, including recent innovative approaches to distance learning at scale. Our investment in this area has placed us in a good position to respond to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic and the pivot to digital.
- 2.6.6 Notwithstanding the significant achievements, we recognise that we still face challenges, particularly in relation to student support and assessment and feedback. We are of the view that we need to take a holistic approach to improving the student experience, rather than addressing individual aspects in response to individual NSS questions. We set out an ambitious programme of work as part of the StEAP and SEP projects to improve the student experience. Whilst we have implemented elements of these projects, a number of aspects have been paused due to Covid-19 and the impact on the University's financial position, which potentially limits the scope of our original intentions going forward.
- 2.6.7 We also believe that other issues, notably assessment and feedback, would be best approached as part of a broader curriculum review, to look at assessment and feedback in the broader context of curricula design and development, rather than narrowly in terms of feedback turnaround times. The curriculum review will therefore take a broad perspective, allowing us to focus on a number of interrelated aspects of the student learning experience.
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Next, there is the chapter on the University of Edinburgh's approach to teaching and learning. I've selected this photograph from a first-year engineering lecture, where Professor Alan Murray is using an electric guitar as a part of his lecture. I haven't personally taken this course, so I do lack some context, but this photograph embodies the University of Edinburgh's constant commitment to innovative teaching methods. Chapter Three discusses a lot of the technical processes that happen behind the scenes to make sure teaching is always meeting and exceeding the standard expected by the University and the sector. This picture shows the results of all that effort and those backend processes – the only part the students see, for the most part.

Vesna Curlic
PhD Intern

3. Strategy and practice for enhancing learning and teaching

3.1 Strategic approach to enhancement

Overview

- 3.1.1 The Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2015 Report noted that “the University has a reflective and inclusive approach to developing strategy, and that communication and consultation with staff about strategic developments is effective. The University’s approach to implementing strategies relating to learning and teaching is effective, with some challenges remaining around ensuring alignment between institutional priorities and operational structures, which the institution is open in recognising.” (paragraph 14)
- 3.1.2 Our strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching largely comprises our University Strategy (see 1.1.24), our Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS) and the significant change in institutional leadership for learning and teaching with the appointment of the Vice-Principal Students. It also comprises a small number of strategic enhancement projects, a number of which were delivered as part of the Service Excellence Programme (SEP) and the Student Experience Action Plan (StEAP) before they were paused (see 1.1.31 and 1.1.33).
- 3.1.3 Senate Education Committee is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for strategy and policy concerning learning, teaching and the development of curriculum, including strategically-led initiatives and University-wide developments designed to enhance the educational experience. The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) provides University level support for teaching, learning and researcher development, through leadership and pedagogic expertise, in support of our strategic objectives for learning, teaching and curriculum development.
- 3.1.4 Senate Quality Assurance Committee and our institutional framework for quality assurance and enhancement provide support for our strategic approach to enhancement and the LTS, further details of which are provided throughout Chapter 4.

Learning and teaching strategy (LTS)

- 3.1.5 Our LTS¹⁴¹ was developed in 2017 to provide a consistent set of principles and aims across our provision. The strategy promotes partnership working with students to enhance learning, teaching and the curriculum. It articulates our commitment to using the flexibility of the undergraduate degree structure for a rounded learning experience and providing postgraduate taught students with opportunities to develop advanced, cutting-edge skills.
- 3.1.6 In the three years since it we launched it, we have made considerable progress against our LTS, as shown in Table 3.1. Many of these achievements are reported separately throughout this Reflective Analysis (RA). With the appointment of our new Principal in February 2018, our new Vice-Principal Students at the start of AY 2019/20, and the recent launch of our values-led University Strategy at the end of 2019, Senate Education Committee agreed at its first meeting in 2019/20 that this year would mark the final year of the LTS. This signalled a move towards the next phase of strategy for learning and teaching, comprising a curriculum review under the leadership of the

141 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning_teaching_strategy.pdf

Vice-Principal Students. The Committee agreed to use the remainder of the academic year to reflect on achievements and identify any potential gaps to inform discussions throughout the year on the future direction of learning and teaching and the student experience. Hence, the ELIR is occurring at a key time when we are considering and mapping out exciting future developments for learning and teaching, although the progress of these plans has slowed due to Covid-19.

Table 3.1: LTS, Key Achievements 2017-2020

Learning and teaching objective	Achievements
We will work in partnership with students to bring about enhancements to their learning:	We introduced a new student representative structure. We developed our first Student Partnership Agreement (SPA), now in its third year of running.
We will develop and enhance our curriculum:	Via the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI), we undertook a project on Near Future Teaching and developed a values-based vision for the future of digital education which is feeding into the curriculum review. We ran a task group on research-led learning and teaching providing a definition, external benchmarking and identification of internal best practice. We undertook a task group on the inclusive curriculum, developing principles in inclusive course design. We ran a task group on joint honours degrees to improve the student experience for joint honours students.
We will use the flexibility of the standard undergraduate degree structure to build a rounded learning experience including:	We ran a task group on careers and employability, resulting in the development of a toolkit for embedding student development, employability and careers into the curriculum. We extended the range and offering of Student-led Individually Created Courses (SLICCs), enabling students to gain academic credits for co- and extra-curricular experiences and to develop their own set of personal and professional skills and attributes through this experience. We increased the range of international learning experiences available to students, making this more accessible to a wider range of students.
We will offer our postgraduate taught students the opportunity to develop cutting edge and advanced skills and knowledge in their chosen field:	Through the EFI, we have been developing a suite of innovative, interdisciplinary postgraduate offerings as full masters programmes and MicroMasters. We are piloting a Distance Learning at Scale project, building on the success of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and online masters, and developed our first MicroMasters course in Predictive Analytics for Business Applications.
We will nurture a learning community that supports students:	We undertook a significant review of student support, including mental health support and academic support leading to the development of the new Health and Wellbeing Centre. We rolled out lecture recording across the entire University and developed a policy on its use. We extended the reach and impact of peer support and peer learning schemes. We made considerable investment in the Estate to extend the quantity and improve the quality of learning and teaching spaces. We developed a project to explore the role and use of learning analytics in supporting students. We developed and implemented a new Widening Participation (WP) Strategy.
We will recruit and nurture excellent teaching staff:	We ran a task group on teaching and academic careers to ensure that excellence in teaching is valued within our academic career paths. This has resulted in clearer progression routes for teaching-focused staff and revised Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education for all staff. We have developed and extended our opportunities and expectations for staff development in support of teaching excellence.
We will optimise academic and professional support staff time devoted to core learning and teaching activities:	We established the Service Excellence Programme (SEP) to deliver consistent systems, processes and ways of working to help make it easier for students to join and study with us and make life simpler and better for staff.

Near future teaching

- 3.1.7 The Near Future Teaching project¹⁴² was established as part of the LTS to develop a values-based vision for the future of digital education at the University of Edinburgh. It formally ended in 2019, but the insights from the project have been valuable in informing our approach to hybrid teaching in response to Covid-19 and informing our ongoing thinking in relation to curriculum review. The co-design approach to the project has been highly effective, engaging large numbers of staff and students. The project was led by the Assistant Principal Digital Education who continues to discuss ways in which the outputs of the project will feed into the longer-term trajectory by informing other areas of work.

3.2 Impact of the national Enhancement Themes and related activity on policy and practice

Overview

- 3.2.1 The 2015 ELIR report recognised that, since the 2011 ELIR, we had been “a significant contributor to the national Enhancement Themes, highlighting that there was considerable evidence of the institution using the outcomes of the Themes to inform its own policies and practice.” The report went on to note: “The University continues to be fully engaged in the national Themes and there is much evidence of the current Theme, as well as previous Themes, being used to influence institutional activity, for example in the development of the University’s graduate attributes.” (paragraph 82)
- 3.2.2 We have continued to be fully engaged in the Enhancement Themes since our last ELIR, which has comprised the previous Theme on Student Transitions and the recently completed Theme on Evidence for Enhancement. We have also been an active contributor to the work of the Focus On projects, in particular Postgraduate Research Student Experience,¹⁴³ Assessment and Feedback, Graduate Skills, and Technology Enhanced Learning,¹⁴⁴ and an active contributor to the Enhancement Theme conferences.
- 3.2.3 We have established an institutional team under the leadership of the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance to coordinate our engagement with the current Theme of Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience. The institutional team, with membership from across the University, has oversight of Theme-related activities with the aim of sharing information and identifying links and synergies. The team also supports engagement with and work on the Theme within the University and across the Scottish sector via the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC), the Theme Leaders’ Group (TLG), and Enhancement Theme clusters, facilitates communication across the University, and promotes the use of data for enhancing the student experience.
- 3.2.4 We are using the previous Theme to focus and reflect on the various types of evidence that we use as a University, and to help us understand what we do well and what we could improve. These reflections have resulted in a number of activities and outputs to enhance the student experience reported throughout the RA. In addition to our own activities, we are also engaging across the

142 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/about-us/latest-news/near-future-teaching-celebration-report

143 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/training-and-support-for-postgraduate-students-who-teach-pgwt/

144 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/spotlight-on-remote-teaching-technology-enhanced-learning-tel-resource-hub

sector as the lead in two collaborative clusters; the creative disciplines and best practice guidelines for supporting WP students with lecture capture, and as a partner in the learning analytics and developing graduate support collaborative clusters. In the latter cluster, working with four other Scottish Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), we have been instrumental (through our Careers Service) in producing a graduate support toolkit for careers services and a graduate careers MOOC ‘Just Graduated – What Next?’ which has been very positively received with registered users far exceeding projected numbers.

3.2.5 The previous Enhancement Themes have similarly had a positive impact on the University (see Box 3.1). We made a significant contribution to the Student Transitions Theme and benefitted significantly from participation.

Student transitions

3.2.6 Staff and student engagement with the Student Transitions Enhancement Theme has been extremely positive. It has been a Theme that has attracted broad appeal and relevance across the University. From our engagement in this Theme we have developed key resources for both staff and students to assist in supporting transitions into, through and out of the University, and we have engaged in widespread sharing of good practice, both within our University and across the sector. For us, academic transitions encapsulate the student learning journey and the skills, mind-sets and practices that students require in order to negotiate these journeys successfully.

3.2.7 Engaging in the Theme has been valuable for us in highlighting the importance of transitions and acknowledging the individuality of students’ transitions. Across the three years of the Theme, we engaged widely with a range of staff and students to understand students’ experiences of transitions and the ways in which we could support those transitions better. The full extent of the work we have produced from the Theme can be seen on our transitions website¹⁴⁵ and is summarised in a presentation on the website.¹⁴⁶ We have produced several key resources to assist both students and staff in supporting successful transitions, including our student-facing Adapting Well website and staff resources, Academic Transitions Toolkit and Student Transitions staff leaflet. These examples reflect, not only significant engagement with the Theme but an ongoing impact for students beyond the life of the Theme.

3.2.8 The Adapting Well¹⁴⁸ website serves to help students settle into University life and get the best from their University experience. It provides information and insight, via a combination of self-study guides, video messages from students and guidance on adapting to local culture, coping with change, managing resilience, adapting to academic life and (for online learners) what to expect from online learning.

3.2.9 The Academic Transitions Toolkit¹⁴⁹ is designed to offer staff theoretically informed, practical examples of good practice in supporting students’ academic transitions. Colleagues can use these to further enhance learning and teaching in their own practice and programmes. We developed the Toolkit in response to student interviews that were conducted during a longitudinal, qualitative research study into first year undergraduate students’ learning journeys at the University of Edinburgh (Shovlin and Doye, 2015). It has also been informed by Institute for Academic

145 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/enhancement-themes-overview/student-transitions/institutional-work

146 <https://prezi.com/view/H3M1tdxqNMhpGyjtGH0i/>

148 www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/adapting-well

149 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/levels/academic-transitions-toolkit

Box 3.1: Impact of the Student Transitions Theme on enhancement

Examples of work the University undertook include¹⁴⁷:

- A presentation outlining key resources produced by the University through the Student Transitions Enhancement Theme.
- Nine projects were funded including a Study Skills Transition Resource and supporting our students to transition from student to graduate nurse.
- The institutional team gathered examples of good practice from across the University in the form of case studies to create an institutional map of student transitions-related activity.
- The Pre-arrival and Induction team and Academic Services hosted an annual Gearing Up event from 2015 to 2017.
- Enhancement Themes Annual Conference:
 - The 12th annual conference and second international Enhancement Themes conference June 2015. The University contributed 14 presentations, two workshops and five posters.
 - The 13th annual Enhancement Themes conference 2016. The University contributed 10 sessions in total (one workshop, four presentations and five lightning talks).
 - The 14th annual conference and third international Enhancement Themes conference June 2017. The University contributed 12 papers sessions, one panel session and two posters.
- MOOC with Edinburgh College (Student Experience Project). A film was created that shows a project with Edinburgh College using a MOOC which combines work on community engagement and support for academic transitions.
- Adapting Well Student Website – a website was developed which contains information and resources to help students adapt well and get the best from their University experience.
- Student Transitions – a leaflet for staff outlining 10 key ingredients of successful student transitions was developed.

Development (IAD) partnerships with academic colleagues. Each example of good practice in the Toolkit has been tested at the University and evaluated as effective and impactful by both students and staff. The majority of good practice examples in the Toolkit have been tested with undergraduate students, but they are also directly applicable to postgraduate transitions.

- 3.2.10 The Student Transitions staff leaflet¹⁵⁰ sits alongside the Academic Transitions Toolkit as a short leaflet summarising for staff the key ingredients of successful student transitions. This was produced by a PhD student intern from an analysis of case studies and resources throughout the Enhancement Theme. It outlines why student transitions are important and what makes a student transition easier.
- 3.2.11 Throughout our engagement in the Enhancement Theme, our institutional team gathered examples of good practice from across the University in the form of case studies to create an institutional map of student transitions-related activity (see Figure 3.1). An interactive version of this map, showing all

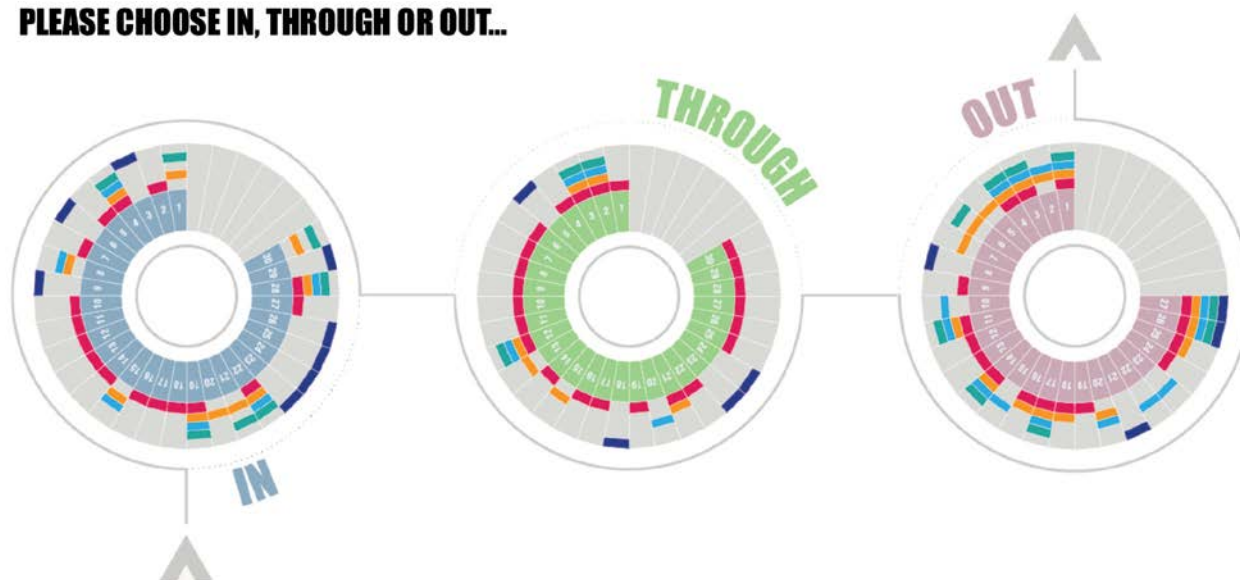
¹⁴⁷ www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/enhancement-themes-overview/student-transitions/institutional-work

¹⁵⁰ www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/levels/student-transitions-guide

examples of good practice across the University, can be seen on our transitions website¹⁵¹ and all the case studies are available on the Student Transitions wiki.¹⁵²

Figure 3.1: Student Transitions Map

PLEASE CHOOSE IN, THROUGH OR OUT...



3.2.12 Our institutional team noted an increase in collaborative working across the University as a positive outcome from our engagement in the Enhancement Theme and sharing of good practice. This is demonstrated most significantly in the Gearing Up for Transitions events that have brought a range of staff and students together (see section 2.3.9).

3.2.13 The June 2020 issue of Teaching Matters focused on student transitions.¹⁵³

Evidence for enhancement: improving the student experience

3.2.14 We have been actively engaged in this Theme and participation in the Theme is having a positive impact on our policy and practice in relation to the use of evidence in improving the student experience in the following areas:

- We have reviewed sources of data that support key quality assurance and enhancement processes with the aim of providing staff with clarity on how to access, interpret and effectively use data;
- We have tested and evaluated the provision of a standard high-level analysis of student feedback data to School student representatives;
- We are monitoring engagement with the staff-facing web resource on closing the student feedback loop and seeking more examples to add;
- We have implemented a handover document for all Programme Representatives to complete at the end of their tenure;
- We created an interactive graphic of student voice mechanisms;
- We conducted work to investigate specific non-continuation challenges.

151 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/enhancement-themes-overview/transitions-map

152 www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/ETST/Enhancement+Theme+--+Student+Transitions+Home

153 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/welcome-to-junes-issue-of-teaching-matters-student-transitions/

- 3.2.15 The Head of the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team led a project to enhance the student data dashboards as part of a transition to Power BI, an interactive data visualisation tool. School Directors of Quality, College Deans of Quality and relevant School, College and Academic Services professional services staff were invited to a session in February 2019 to discuss the existing data sets and provide their views on student performance metrics, definitions and populations. Following the session, staff were asked to comment on data definitions and provide feedback on test reports via a SharePoint site. Reports were made available for testing in May 2019 and the final student data dashboards were made available in June 2019 in time for the next annual monitoring cycle. Three demonstration sessions were held in June 2019 for staff on the new Power BI student data dashboards. This project has been successful in terms of improving the student data dashboards and increasing access to data. However, it has not been without its challenges and more recent work has been carried out to support colleagues further in making effective use of the available data and dashboards (see sections 4.4.8 – 4.4.9 for an update).
- 3.2.16 Throughout AY 2018/19, Academic Services, Student Systems and the Students' Association have been testing and evaluating a pilot with three Schools to provide a standard high-level analysis of student feedback to School student representatives, using data reports from the National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), accompanied by training on how to understand and utilise the data to achieve change. Going forward the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) reports will also be included. Additional contextual information was also made available to clarify the scope of surveys, the survey cohort, and the timing of when data is collected as well as information about the School, including an overview of programmes and courses covered in the survey (for example, the number of programmes, cohort information, numbers, demographics).
- 3.2.17 The Students' Association evaluated whether the data had been useful and, if so, how it had been useful. The School Representatives explained that they felt having the quantitative data allowed them to better evidence the anecdotal feedback they had gathered from classmates and was useful in their role. Following the successful pilot, Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) approved proposals to roll the pilot out across the University for AY 2019/20.¹⁵⁴
- 3.2.18 From AY 2019/20, all School Representatives were given access to the full suite of survey reports in the Power BI suite that staff have access to. The School Representatives were asked to review the reports in preparation for their training session in September/October 2019. The training session covered interpretation of results and how to engage effectively with the survey reports. A further session was held with the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team to review the standard report format and to consider any developments. At this session, it was highlighted that engagement with the reports was mixed, with only a small number of School Representatives reporting that they had reviewed the reports and, within that group, an even smaller group having discussed the results with the School. A significant number of the School Representatives had not engaged with the reports; some feedback indicated that they were not clear how to access the information, or how to interpret the results.

- 3.2.19 It is clear that School Representatives find having access to data from student surveys helpful in completing their roles, but that they require support to be able to utilise the information effectively. Moving forwards, the Students' Association and colleagues within the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team will continue to provide this data to School Representatives in September each year, and will explore opportunities to embed and enhance training opportunities to enable the representatives to engage fully with the student surveys data available to them. The Students' Association will also consider whether additional groups of student representatives could benefit from access to data.
- 3.2.20 Academic Services has been monitoring engagement with the staff-facing web resource on closing the student feedback loop and seeking more examples to add (including those gathered as part of sector-level work in year one of the Theme). This work has aligned well with the student-led project and links to these resources have been added to our webpage.¹⁵⁵ We have promoted these resources as part of our communications about mid-course feedback (MCF).
- 3.2.21 The Students' Association has implemented a handover document for all Programme Representatives to complete at the end of their tenure. The handover documents provide Programme Representatives with an opportunity to reflect on their time in the role, highlighting successes and challenges, and evaluating their personal development. Sections of the handover documents, which relate to key issues or areas of work, are shared with future Programme Representatives when they start their role, ensuring that feedback is not lost at the end of the academic year and Programme Representatives are able to track issues over time. Collectively, the handover documents also allow the Students' Association to identify trends in student feedback and areas for further development, which are picked up by staff in the Students' Association's Academic Representation team and the Vice President Education who starts in their role in early June each year.
- 3.2.22 In AY 2018/19, 65.7 per cent of Programme Representatives completed the newly introduced handover document (up from 53 per cent who completed the impact questionnaire in the previous year). Due to Covid-19, we have not been able to fully evaluate the impact of the handover document, but anecdotally we know that Programme Representatives appreciate them because the information contained within them helps representatives "hit the ground running" when they start in their role.
- 3.2.23 In the first year of the Theme, we developed a graphically designed visual representation of the student representation system when the student representation system was still in a transitional phase. At this point, the graphic was not shared. All Schools and Deaneries confirmed that they moved to the new student (programme) representative system from 2019/20 and the graphic was reviewed at that point. Additionally, a follow-up evaluation of MCF and a review of course evaluation questionnaires (CEQs) in 2018/19 identified a need to provide clarity for staff and students on the various student voice mechanisms and how they relate to each other. The original graphic was expanded and developed into 'Giving feedback: a student guide' with online¹⁵⁶ and hard copy¹⁵⁷ versions shared across the University. The guide was shared at a workshop at Strathclyde University and is mentioned in a blog.¹⁵⁸ We intended to ask Schools how the guide has been used to inform an evaluation, but this work has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

155 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/closing-feedback-loop

156 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback.pdf

157 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback_printversion.pdf

158 <https://explorance.com/blog/strathclyde-workshop-highlights-clear-focus-on-enhancement-from-all-participants/>

- 3.2.24 We have carried out detailed work to investigate specific non-continuation challenges. The most recently published Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Performance Indicator for non-continuation of young UK domiciled 2017/18 entrants, shows that our percentage for no longer in Higher Education for the session following entry is 2.6 per cent; lower (i.e. better) than for any other recent cohort. Our statistic is now below (i.e. better than) our HESA calculated benchmark of 2.8 per cent (the HESA benchmark represents the average across the UK Higher Education sector for our subject and entry standards mix). Our non-continuation rate is less than half that of the UK sector (6.8 per cent) and the Scottish sector (6.1 per cent).
- 3.2.25 We know that non-continuation rates vary between our Schools and between some student groups. In-depth analysis investigated these patterns across four cohorts. Regression analysis was incorporated into the study, to suggest which factors were more powerful predictors of non-continuation. Amongst other insights this suggested that Scotland domicile, and socio-economic factors were more powerful predictors of non-continuation than which of our Schools the students were attached to. Since then we have opened a conversation with the Students' Association about joining their data into this analysis. This would investigate, for example, the extent to which engagement with societies is correlated with success but it will require a data sharing agreement to be compliant with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). We are currently working on extended analysis, incorporating more cohorts and the programme entry qualification level of UK students; to examine the extent to which these are correlated with non-continuation rates.
- 3.2.26 Further analysis has already been carried out for the University's Equality Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) (further details in section 2.2.5 – 2.2.9), particularly to support the recent Ethnicity Spotlight report. Analysis of recent cohort non-continuation rates by ethnicity and other factors suggested again that the rates vary more between Scotland and rest of UK domiciled students than between BME and White students, but also highlighted differences at the more granular level of ethnicity. In parallel, as continuation does not necessarily imply progression, for the Spotlight report we also piloted an analysis of rates of progression between programme years one and two, years two and three and so on. With the aid of this analysis we were able to assess whether differences in the rate of progression were persistent throughout programmes. As part of that pilot, we have developed course grade analysis charts so that we can begin to probe the differences between different groups and what may be driving non-progression in a particular School.

3.3 Approaches to identifying and sharing good practice

Overview

- 3.3.1 The ELIR 2015 Report noted: "The University has an effective approach to identifying and sharing good practice, with a number of mechanisms in place to disseminate information and encourage staff to become involved in conversations about enhancement in learning and teaching" (paragraph 79).
- 3.3.2 We have continued to develop and strengthen our approach to identifying and sharing good practice. Some of the key ways in which we share good practice include:
-

- Our Teaching Matters website, blog and podcast, and the recently developed Edinburgh Hybrid Teaching Exchange;
- Our annual Learning and Teaching Conference;
- Insight from our student-led Teaching Awards;
- Our quality assurance and enhancement processes;
- A range of networks and communities of practice at University, College and School-level.

3.3.3 Many of the above are led or supported by the IAD. The ELIR 2015 Report noted that “IAD has a positive impact in the University, which was evident throughout the ELIR. It takes a leading role in identifying and sharing good practice” (paragraph 80). IAD has continued to occupy a central role in leading the sharing of practice, with the notable developments since the last ELIR of Teaching Matters, the annual Learning and Teaching Conference and the Edinburgh Hybrid Teaching Exchange.

Teaching matters

3.3.4 Teaching Matters is the University’s website, multi-authored blog, and podcast, for stimulating debate and conversations about learning and teaching, and for sharing and highlighting ideas, experiences and approaches to teaching and learning. It was established in 2016 as an informal platform to share and showcase learning and teaching practice at the University and is managed and maintained by IAD.

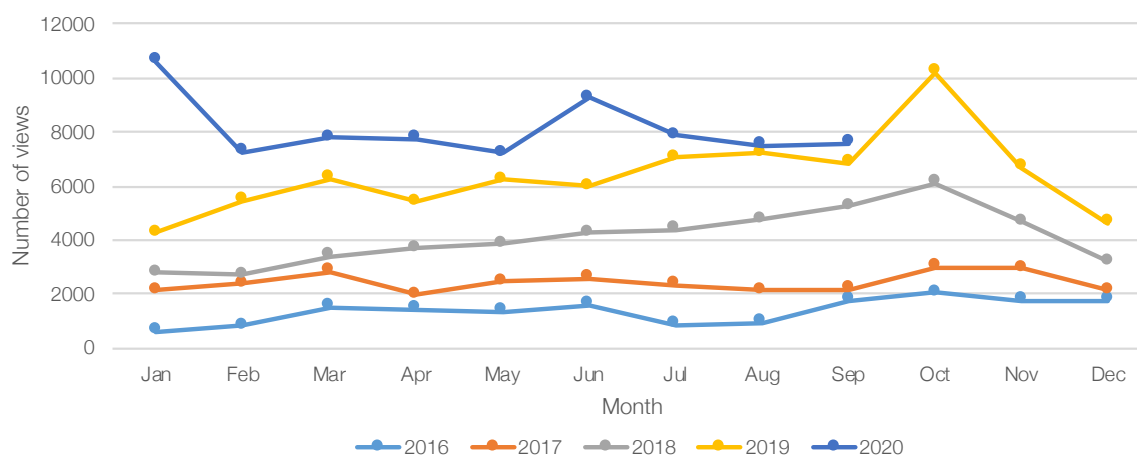
3.3.5 Professional and academic staff, and students, are encouraged to contribute. As a proxy for evidencing engagement with others’ practice, blog readership viewing figures have more than tripled over the last two years (see Figure 3.2), with total blog views recorded at 220,364. As of June 2020, over 550 contributors have written 630 blog posts. Contributors include academic and professional services staff as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students across all Schools and Colleges at the University.

3.3.6 Social media is a highly effective method for disseminating published blog posts, with 2,456 Twitter followers, and 455 Instagram followers. This ensures both a local and an international reach. The start of the academic year and semester two through to the summer period appear to be the most effective times for engagement (Figure 3.2) with Teaching Matters. We do not know for certain why this is the case, but it is very likely to reflect peak times in academic workload. The pattern of engagement with Teaching Matters in 2020 looks somewhat different, due to Covid (for example, in June Teaching Matters was used extensively to share insight on our approach to hybrid Teaching).

3.3.7 We have designed our Teaching Matters’ publishing schedule strategically to maximise different and effective ways of promoting and sharing good practice across the University and beyond. The schedule balances an inclusive bottom-up approach, where all student and staff members feel welcome to contribute on a learning and teaching topic at any time, with a top-down approach, where content is actively solicited by the editor from colleagues involved in important areas of work across the University. The schedule also includes monthly themes, mini-series, ‘Spotlight on...’ series and links to strategic priorities across the University.

3.3.8 Monthly-themed posts are published every Tuesday and Thursday, and they not only align with the University’s teaching priorities, but also with high priority initiatives; recent examples include: Building Academic Communities and WP. Monthly themes are decided by the Teaching Matters’ Editor six months in advance to ensure content can be solicited. The Teaching Matters’ Editor works closely with Colleges and Schools to ensure current practices are captured in these themes. Colleges use School annual quality reports to identify innovative practice, which is discussed at College Quality Committee meetings and celebrated across the wider University using local and institutional sharing good practice events. Internal Periodic Review (IPR) reports are also used to source contributions from staff and students who are identified as exemplifying good practice in their learning and teaching.

Figure 3.2: Teaching Matters blog views: 2016-2020



3.3.9 The mini-series addresses ‘hot topics’ across the University through a co-edited series (a weekly post is published every Wednesday over two months). This allows specific strategic initiatives, Senate committees and University-wide projects to document their outcomes as an in-depth series of blog posts. Recent series have included Mental Health and Wellbeing,¹⁵⁹ Inclusivity in the Curriculum,¹⁶⁰ and Academic blogging.¹⁶¹ By assigning each post in the mini-series with a unique meta-tag, the co-editors can refer to one simple link to share a resource bank of between eight to ten blog posts and two podcast episodes on their mini-series.

3.3.10 The Teaching Matters Editor actively liaises with departments and initiatives across the University to ‘tag’ specific blog posts with a unique meta-tag to create a resource bank of blog posts, which documents good practice. Examples of such meta-tags include: staff experiences of Go Abroad,¹⁶² examples of quality enhancement from IPR,¹⁶³ examples of the curriculum toolkit in practice (employability),¹⁶⁴ outputs from the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) funded projects, and findings from the Principal’s Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) funded projects.¹⁶⁵

159 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/mini-series-mental-health-and-wellbeing/

160 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/mini-series-inclusivity-in-curriculum/

161 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/mini-series-academic-blogging/

162 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/go-abroad-staff/

163 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/quality-enhancement-report-examples/

164 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/curriculum-toolkit-explicit-recognition-of-employability/

165 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/ptas-findings/

- 3.3.11 The ‘Spotlight on...’ series¹⁶⁶ focuses on documenting outcomes and good practice from long-term projects or initiatives, which are unfolding across the University over a number of years. Posts related to these series are published on an ad hoc basis throughout the year. These have included: Spotlight on Joint Degrees and Spotlight on Learn Foundations. We also used the Spotlight on... series to blog about the ELIR and share chapters of the RA for comment and consultation.¹⁶⁷
- 3.3.12 Teaching Matters is working with Schools to add a ‘Teaching’ section on School homepages (for example, School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures¹⁶⁸) through which Teaching Matters posts that have been authored by staff or students in that School can automatically be displayed. This instils ownership of and pride in the good teaching practices specific to each School.
- 3.3.13 Although statistics show high engagement with the Teaching Matters blogs, only 10 per cent of posts have received written online comments. It still feels a largely monologic form of sharing practice. As a result, IAD launched the Teaching Matters Podcast¹⁶⁹ in February 2019 to add a layer of dialogue to Teaching Matters. Each mini-series is accompanied by two or three podcast episodes, available for download on AnchorFM¹⁷⁰ (a free, online podcast hosting site) and streamed to Spotify, iTunes and similar services. As of June 2020, there have been 1,697 plays across the current 15 episodes, with the majority of listeners in the UK, United States of America (USA), Australia, Ireland, Netherlands and India. Both staff and students are invited to contribute as guests, and guest hosts. The most popular episodes are currently “Climate optimism or fatalism: Teaching climate change in today’s university” (263 plays) and “Commonwealth Scholars’ experiences of diversity and inclusion” (258 plays). Both these episodes were student-led.
- 3.3.14 A key question we are attempting to answer is what impact does Teaching Matters have on others’ teaching and learning practices? A small team in the IAD are conducting a mixed-methods research project to map the experiences of Teaching Matters authors and readers to gain greater insights into how teaching and learning conversations circulate,¹⁷¹ and generate impact on practice and professional development. The findings will help further develop Teaching Matters as a resource to support the informal sharing of good practice and influence practice more positively. Initial insights from the data suggest the following approaches:
- Monthly coffees to discuss the current theme and stimulate in-person conversations;
 - Collating blog posts into digital artefacts (pdf magazine) which could be promoted as digital publications;
 - A day where contributors could meet and discuss various topics or just a day of workshop/conference style where some of the key topics that were covered in the blog may have a slot/round table;
 - Including live webinars associated with blog posts.

166 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/?s=spotlight

167 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/spotlight-on-elir/

168 www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/teaching-excellence

169 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/podcast/

170 <https://anchor.fm/teaching-matters>

171 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/beyond-analytics-exploring-the-impact-of-teaching-matters-on-learning-and-teaching-practices/

Learning and teaching conference

- 3.3.15 Until 2018, we held various symposia to highlight learning and teaching practice and share good practice, including the Senate Committees' Symposium, the PTAS Symposium and events sharing good practice from IPR. However, we considered there was a need for a larger-scale Learning and Teaching Conference to maximise sharing good practice and to contribute to a strategic push to raise the status of teaching. We held the first University Learning and Teaching Conference on 20 June 2018. It was an incredibly vibrant conference, opened by our Principal and chaired by our then Senior Vice-Principal.
- 3.3.16 To foreground our institutional conversations around curriculum review and culture change, we invited two inspiring keynote speakers. Professor Amy B. M. Tsui, from the University of Hong Kong, talked about experiences of "Transforming student learning: the journey of a university-wide curriculum reform", and Dr Torgny Roxå, from Lund University, Sweden, presented work on "Strong and weak ties – changing teaching cultures in higher education". Over 80 presenters from across the University, (staff and students) shared research and practice, and 288 delegates attended. The feedback that we received was extremely positive. (See Box 3.2)
- 3.3.17 An archive of the keynote videos and presentation slides from the 2018 conference is available on the IAD website.¹⁷² Professor Amy Tsui also wrote a Teaching Matters blog which has received 153 reads.¹⁷³ Another Teaching Matters blog, by Veterinary Medicine student Vikky Park, giving a student's perspective on the conference, has had 81 reads.¹⁷⁴
- 3.3.18 We held the second Learning and Teaching Conference on 19 June 2019. Just over 300 places were available for this conference and they were fully booked in just over 24 hours, with more on a waiting list. This is a very positive sign of the level of interest in the conference and in learning and teaching. However, we were aware that this degree of interest might cause some disappointment for those colleagues who were not able to book in time and wanted to attend. In some cases, staff were frustrated because they had been teaching and missed the opportunity to register in time for the conference. We were able to offer many people on the waiting list a place due to cancellations, but, due to the level of the demand, we also offered live streaming of the opening speeches, keynotes and some of the parallel sessions. This facility enabled an additional 20 colleagues to engage with the conference, including some from outside of the UK.

Box 3.2: Learning and Teaching Conference: Feedback

"Hugely inspiring keynotes. Definitely came away with a sense that there is a drive behind learning and teaching at the moment in Edinburgh, and it is good to see it."

"There was a great buzz around the place – it was lovely and very encouraging to see that we have such a large and diverse community feeling passionate about learning and teaching at our university. Thank you very much for organising this hugely successful and inspiring day!"

172 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/practice/ltconf2018

173 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/celebrating-the-universitys-first-learning-and-teaching-conference-a-reflection-from-professor-amy-tsui/

174 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/a-students-experience-of-the-learning-and-teaching-conference-2018/

Box 3.3: Learning and Teaching Conference: Feedback

“The organisation of the conference and the materials provided were superb. Really impressed by the thought that went into this, well done!”

“I thought it was a first-class event and was delighted to be involved. Inspirational and motivational!”

“I really enjoyed the conference and liked the way it was structured. I’ve been to other conferences where I felt there was too much going on and all a bit rushed. This conference provided plenty of breaks and in doing so presented more opportunities for networking/ discussions.”

“An inspiring day, thank you.”

- 3.3.19 The conference was opened by our Principal and chaired by our then Senior Vice-Principal. The morning keynote presentation, “Relationships matter: moving relationship-rich experiences from the periphery to the centre of teaching and learning”, was given by Professor Peter Felten, Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning, and Executive Director of the Center for Engaged Learning at Elon University, North Carolina, USA. The afternoon keynote presentation, “The value and values of learning gain data: evidence, ethics and enhancement”, was given by Dr Camille Kandiko Howson, Associate Professor of Education, Imperial College London. Over 100 staff and student presenters from across the University shared their research and practice in parallel sessions. Our Principal stayed all day, and this significant senior support was welcomed by many colleagues, as evident in the feedback we received.
- 3.3.20 The evaluation comments from the day demonstrated that many of the concepts from Professor Felten’s keynote presentation resonated deeply with a huge number of delegates. Professor Felten’s arguments for the importance of creating a ‘relentless welcome’ to students, and mentorship that goes beyond formal mentorship systems to enable other colleagues to act as ‘mentors of the moment’, acknowledging the role that many different staff play in informal mentorship for students to enhance students’ sense of community and belonging. These are key messages that have informed our strategic work at the University through the Sense of Belonging Task Group as part of the StEAP.
- 3.3.21 An archive of the keynote videos and presentation slides from the 2019 conference is available on the IAD website.¹⁷⁵ Professor Peter Felten also contributed a Teaching Matters blog post.¹⁷⁶
- 3.3.22 The conferences have encouraged greater dialogue about learning and teaching. In one such example from the 2018 Conference, Dr Jill MacKay from the Vet School attended a session run by Professor Alan Murray from the School of Engineering. Jill spoke with Alan, adapted the idea to their own practice and was able to use a really useful new approach in their own teaching. Jill wrote about this in a Teaching Matters blog, so sharing this practice more widely still.¹⁷⁷ This blog has had 124 reads to date. In another example from the 2019 conference, Dr Thomas Bak, from the School of PPLS led a workshop entitled “Joys, opportunities and challenges of learning and teaching at a global university”. The attendees of this workshop reported finding the discussions so helpful and

175 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/practice/ltconf2019

176 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/creating-a-relentless-welcome/

177 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/sharing-innovative-pedagogical-ideas-across-disciplines-measure-unicorns-magic-dust-yield/

enjoyable, that they opted to continue to meet in different settings over the subsequent months: their second meeting took place at the Book Festival café in August 2019.

- 3.3.23 The 2020 Learning and Teaching Conference moved online due to Covid-19. Originally, we planned a one-day face-to-face conference at the McEwan Hall for 500 delegates (a larger venue than previous years to meet growing demand). Instead, we held a four-day conference online on 16, 18, 23 and 25 June. The conference was opened by our Principal, with keynote talks from Professor Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students and Professor Sian Bayne, Assistant Principal for Digital Education, Director for the Centre for Research in Digital Education, and Director of Education at Edinburgh Futures Institute. On the first day, 376 staff and students attended the opening keynotes. Across the four conference days, an impressive 759 individual delegates attended the conference sessions. This is a significant increase on the 281 delegates who attended the 2019 Learning and Teaching Conference in person.
- 3.3.24 In 2020, we engaged representatives from each College to curate a College-specific set of lightning talks to enable each College to showcase learning and teaching work from within their College. Across the conference there were 70 different parallel sessions including many collaborative presentations from different Colleges and Professional Services, and 20 of the 147 presenters were students. A dedicated interactive poster site was included as part of the online conference, and there was also a conference web page celebrating all those at the University who gained recognition as Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy during the previous year. The conference webpages include more information.¹⁷⁸

Teaching awards data analysis

- 3.3.25 The ELIR 2015 Report noted: “Edinburgh University Students’ Association (EUSA) also facilitates the identification of good practice through the EUSA Teaching Awards Scheme” (paragraph 81). We have continued to make use of the Teaching Awards Scheme, not only as a means of recognising excellent teaching in individuals and teams, but also as a source of good practice examples to be shared and disseminated more widely across the University.
- 3.3.26 Over the ten years that the Teaching Awards have been running, we have gathered a significant amount of data on what good teaching looks like, from students’ perspectives. In 2016, the Students’ Association received funding through the Principal’s Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) to conduct a systematic analysis of almost 3,000 Teaching Award nominations, to understand teaching excellence from the student viewpoint as a means of informing best practice in the student experience.¹⁷⁹
- 3.3.27 The key findings from the report have been shared widely across the University to highlight the key qualities that contribute to an excellent teaching experience from the student perspective. For example, at the Learning and Teaching Conference, at the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee¹⁸⁰ and at an event “What does good teaching look like to students?” that took place December 2016, as well as via the Teaching Matters blog. The insights have influenced the way in which we consider the key qualities to be included in academic role descriptions/promotions criteria, and are also highlighted to staff attending key training and development events (for example,

178 <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/ueoltconference/>

179 www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/campaigns/teachingawards/research/

180 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/16_november_2016_-_agenda_and_papers_final.pdf (Paper E)

Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and tutors and demonstrators training). The report has also been shared more widely across the sector via Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

- 3.3.28 Throughout 2019/20, the Students' Association has worked with an intern within the Student Analytics and Insights team to identify key trends in nominations across categories based on the 2018/19 data, and will be considering how best to share these findings with the University community.

Outcomes from quality processes

- 3.3.29 A key aspect of our quality assurance and enhancement process is to identify and recognise positive practice and share this to encourage wider enhancement in learning and teaching and the student experience. We discuss overviews or summaries of the good practice arising from annual monitoring, IPR and the Student Support Services Annual Reports (SSSAR) annually at SQAC. The papers outlining examples of good practice are shared with IAD to identify content for wider sharing on Teaching Matters. As a direct result, the April 2019 issue of Teaching Matters focused on building academic communities.¹⁸¹ Examples of Teaching Matters blog posts that have been identified through quality assurance and enhancement processes are tagged.¹⁸²
- 3.3.30 We also hold University-wide events to share good practice identified from our quality assurance and enhancement processes. The event from last year's cycle, held in February 2019, focused on academic community and assessment and feedback. The event held in February 2020 focused on student community and student voices, and student skills and employability. Colleges also organise their own events at various times to share practice at a College-level. We have recently developed an area of the University's quality website to share good practice, resources and events linked to outcomes from our quality assurance and enhancement processes.¹⁸³

Networks and communities of practice

- 3.3.31 We organise a range of networks across the University, bringing staff in specific roles together as communities of practice to support one another, learn about new developments and share practice. Colleagues new to these roles particularly find such networks valuable. A number of new networks have been established since the last ELIR to bring colleagues together and to strengthen links across the University. We also engage in a range of external networks to share our own practice more widely and learn from the practice of others.

Student Experience Network (SEN)

- 3.3.32 The Enhancing Student Support (ESS) project, operating at the time of the last ELIR, established the Senior Tutor Network (STN) and Student Support Team Network (SSTN) to support staff during the implementation of the (then) new Personal Tutor (PT) system. These networks have been extremely effective in providing a conduit for communication, sharing of practice and, importantly, identifying any major issues, barriers or frustrations with any aspects of developing and implementing the PT system.

181 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/welcome-to-the-april-issue-of-teaching-matters-building-academic-communities/

182 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/quality-enhancement-report-examples/

183 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice

3.3.33 When the ESS project ended in 2015, the STN continued to meet to help facilitate the implementation of the PT system. The SSTN then developed into the Student Experience Network (SEN) and, now led by the Director of Student Wellbeing, is acting as a useful sounding board for the current review of student support.

Directors of Quality Network

3.3.34 The School Directors of Quality Network was set up in 2012 under the leadership of the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance and provides a forum for sharing practice, learning about updates (both internally and externally) and supporting colleagues in the role. It is open to both Directors of Quality and School professional services staff that support their work and is also attended by College Deans for Quality and College professional service staff. The Network meets twice a year, and each time features speakers sharing an aspect of practice. Recent discussion topics have focused on quality reporting, collaborations, the UK Quality Code, use of data (Power BI), quality processes for Schools, programmes and postgraduate research provision, and Course Evaluation Questionnaires (CEQs). We recently held a joint event with the Directors of Teaching Network, which proved beneficial in joining the dots between learning and teaching and quality, which we intend to continue. Our good practice website provides further details and resources from the events.¹⁸⁴ Both existing/established Directors of Quality and those new to the role value the Network and are using it to make their own connections across the University.

Directors of Teaching Network

3.3.35 Under the leadership of the then Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback, a School Directors of Teaching Network was established in November 2016. The Network is aimed at School Directors of Teaching but is an open forum which anyone is welcome to attend. Topics for discussion have focused around assessment and feedback. Information and resources are shared on a wiki.¹⁸⁵ Since 2019/20, under the leadership of the Vice-Principal Students, this Network's discussion has broadened to wider curriculum discussions. Recent discussion topics have focused on the Director of Teaching role (specifically role description and how it could be better embedded in School management structures) and consideration of curriculum review. The intention is that this network would be a key forum for curriculum review discussions going forward.

Networks supported by IAD

3.3.36 IAD organises several networks as a means of bringing colleagues together to share practice. Some of these include: the Postgraduate Research Supervisor Network with regular meetings to share experiences; the Experienced Teachers Network; Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Network; Board of Studies Network for staff; and the Edinburgh Network: Growing Approaches to Genuine Engagement (ENGAGE)¹⁸⁶ for students and staff.

3.3.37 As an illustration of the sorts of discussion topics covered, the ENGAGE Network discussions have focused on community and collegiality, engaging students better in lectures, and supporting autistic students and staff, and the Board of Studies Network has focused on designing a University of Edinburgh course design interface tool. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Network provides a forum for staff interested in researching, evaluating and disseminating their teaching

184 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice/events

185 www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/spaces/viewspace.action?key=DTN

186 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/connect

practice. The Experienced Teachers Network is for teachers who wish to informally share ideas about teaching with colleagues and also aims to influence teaching policy and practice in the University, drawing on the experiences and expertise of the Network participants.

College and School Networks and Fora

- 3.3.38 In addition to institution-wide networks, the Colleges and Schools organise a variety of networks, fora and events to share practice. For example, the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) has set up a Centre of Doctoral Training (CDT) Directors Forum and CDT Admin Forum which extends to all Doctoral Training Centres (DTC) and CDTs across the University. CSE has the greatest concentration of CDTs/DTCs and has taken the lead on establishing these networks, but they extend across the University to share good practice in research student support as well as discuss the development of institution wide training and cohort building. The College has a dedicated member of professional services staff who looks after these networks.
- 3.3.39 Another example is the Centre for Science Education which was formed in 2014 and comprises Technology Enhanced Science Education roles in each of the Schools in CSE and colleagues who have a predominant interest in teaching and scholarship of teaching and learning. Meetings are quarterly, along with ad-hoc events and informal interactions to share best practices amongst Schools. Recent interactions have focused on sharing best practices in curriculum review and developments in digital approaches to Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education at scale.
- 3.3.40 The College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) runs an annual good practice showcase. The planned 2020 event, which was due to focus on assessment, was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, although a Teaching Matters blog with recordings of presentations is planned. The 2019 event focused on feedback and the 2018 event on academic communities. The event is aimed at all who are involved in teaching and learning and presenters are drawn from taught and research staff and both online and on-campus provision. Themes emerge from School annual quality reports. In addition, there are some School and Deanery sharing practice events within the College, including a Learning and Teaching forum in Biomedical Sciences, Vet School talks, workshops and journal clubs, and a monthly postgraduate teaching hub in Molecular Genetic and Population Health.
- 3.3.41 Within the College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS), Moray House School of Education and Sport has its 'Practice Worth Sharing' series.¹⁸⁷ This is a series of lunchtime sessions aimed at promoting discussion and sharing information on teaching-related practice that has worked well within the School. The sessions also provide an opportunity to discuss 'tricky issues'. The sessions are open to and take contributions from all staff and research students involved with teaching in the School, including academic, support, technical or professional staff. A Spotlight on... series in Teaching Matters has been developed from the 'Practice Worth Sharing' series, giving colleagues across the University the opportunity to benefit from the insights as well.¹⁸⁸

187 www.ed.ac.uk/education/about-us/qae

188 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/spotlight-on-practice-worth-sharing/

Leaders' Forum

3.3.42 The Leaders' Forum¹⁸⁹ is the most recent network developed. Led by the Principal, the purpose of the Leaders Forum is to establish a community of leaders across the University, to encourage collaboration, communication and commitment in addressing the strategic challenges facing the institution. Members of the forum include: Heads of Colleges, Heads of Schools, Heads of Professional Services Groups, Vice and Assistant Principals, College Registrars, Deans, Directors of Professional Services and Heads of Professional Services Units. Recent discussion themes at the Leaders' Forum have included: results and action following the staff survey; engaging with the new Strategy 2030; and student experience. It has been a very positive development and has led to a formalised University Heads of School themed dinner and discussion. Throughout 2020, the main focus of the Leaders' Forum was responding to Covid-19.

3.4 Engaging, developing and supporting staff

Overview

3.4.1 A significant focus of attention since the last ELIR has been on staff support and development in our efforts to: (a) recognise and reward excellence in learning and teaching and the student experience; (b) support and develop staff to deliver excellent learning and teaching for our students; and (c) achieve parity of esteem between teaching and research.

3.4.2 The ELIR 2015 Report noted that we had “an integrated approach to staff development with clear linkages between institutional strategy, promotion processes and the range of flexible staff development opportunities provided by the IAD.” (paragraph 89). We have continued to build our approach to staff development. Significant developments since the last ELIR include:

- A review of the processes and incentives for the recognition, reward and support for teaching in academic careers alongside other parts of the academic role (Teaching and Academic Careers Task Group);
- Consolidation of our overarching Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Learning and Teaching;
- A re-designed Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (Higher Education) (PgCAP);
- A streamlined central Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA) and introduction of local variants;
- New leadership development and support for leaders;
- A revised annual review process to better account for learning and teaching contributions;
- A new staff survey;
- Development of mentoring connections.

Teaching and academic careers

3.4.3 The ELIR 2015 Report commented that, the “development and use of the Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education demonstrate the University’s commitment to help teaching staff articulate their contribution to the student learning experience” and that during the last ELIR “it was evident

189 www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/leadership-programmes/leaders-forum

that reward and recognition for teaching practice were embedded in promotional processes and supported by the work of the IAD, with staff commenting positively on the change in parity of esteem between teaching and research that they had seen since the 2011 ELIR.” (paragraph 90).

- 3.4.4 We have continued to strengthen our approach, and in May 2018, the University Executive established a Teaching and Academic Careers Task Group¹⁹⁰ to review processes and incentives for the recognition, reward and support of teaching in academic careers alongside other parts of the academic role. In the first phase of work, the group developed and consulted widely on a set of principles to guide our approach to teaching and academic careers to inform future actions to enhance the way in which teaching is valued and supported within our academic career paths. The University Executive approved these principles in November 2018.
- 3.4.5 The Task Group began a second phase of work focused on ensuring the principles agreed in the first phase were reflected and enacted effectively in University policies and practices. This included producing a revised version of the Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education that sets out examples of achievement in teaching that can be used to support cases for promotion (now including exemplars for promotion from Grade 7 to Grade 8). The Exemplars make it clear that academic staff whose roles focus predominantly on teaching have a career path available to them that can extend from an initial Grade 7 appointment through to Grade 10 and the distinction of professor. In principle, this has been possible in the past, but practices and conventions have varied across the University so that in some parts of the University a teaching-focused route from Grade 7 to 8 has been limited in practice.
- 3.4.6 Recommendations further to enhance professional development in teaching included a requirement for all Schools and equivalent organisational units to produce a Professional Development of Teaching Strategy, a commitment to increase the proportion of staff with a teaching qualification or accreditation, and to provide practical training and support linked to specific roles and career stages. The IAD supported Schools to develop their strategy and plan for the professional development of teaching during 2019/20.
- 3.4.7 The University Executive also approved a further phase of work for the project in 2019/20, led by Vice-Principal Students, to address a series of linked activities so that the newly optimised career path can function effectively. Together these steps will further underpin a University culture that values and recognises high quality teaching.

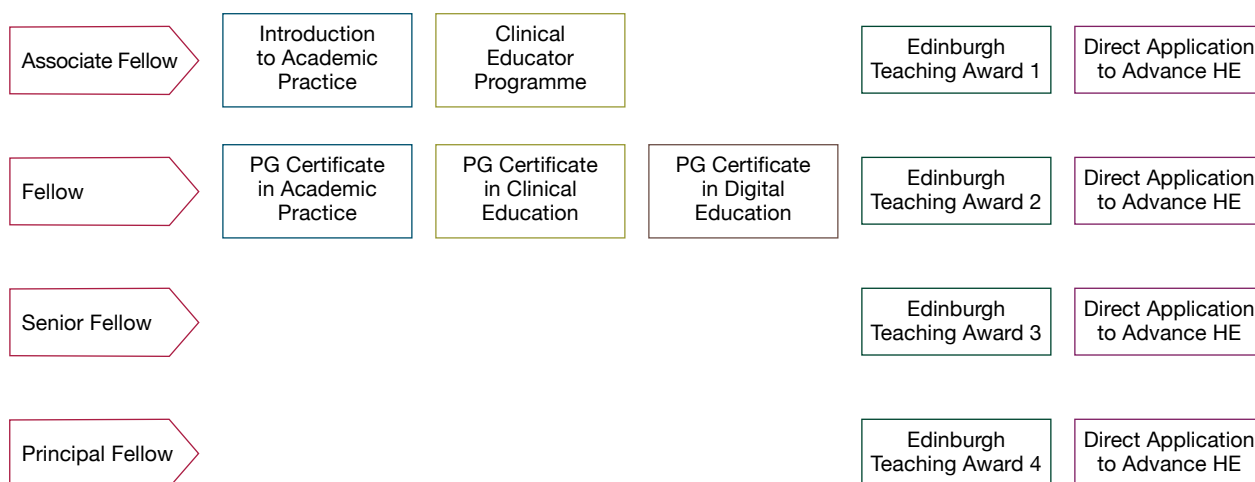
CPD framework

- 3.4.8 The ELIR 2015 Report noted: “The ELIR team regarded the IAD’s development of the Framework as an effective, practical and flexible approach to supporting staff in enhancing their practice in learning and teaching.” (paragraph 88) Since the last ELIR, we have continued to develop this framework to support our staff, in response to developments outlined above.
- 3.4.9 We have consolidated our overarching Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Learning and Teaching.¹⁹¹ This Framework continues to provide structured and flexible routes to the different categories of fellowship set out within the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

190 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/teaching-and-academic-careers

191 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/cpd/cpd.

Figure 3.3: CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching



Our CPD Framework was re-accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA)/Advance HE in 2017 with enhancements to key elements.

- 3.4.10 Our CPD framework provides three main pathways: the Introduction to Academic Practice (IntroAP); the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Higher Education (PgCAP); and the Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA). Disciplinary variants of these exist (as shown in Figure 3.3).

Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (Higher Education) (PgCAP)

- 3.4.11 Our newly re-designed PgCAP¹⁹² is aimed at early career academics. It introduces them to significant issues in relation to academic practice at a research-intensive institution and provides the opportunity for them to develop their academic practice in line with the UKPSF. It combines reference to theory and educational literature with practical application and makes use of a wide variety of teaching and assessment strategies to demonstrate good practice. Drawing on the UKPSF, as well as current research within the field of academic practice in higher education, the programme provides participants with the conceptual and theoretical frameworks needed to engage reflectively and critically with the question of how to promote high quality student learning within research-intensive settings.
- 3.4.12 The programme has been designed in accordance with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 11. It normally takes between 14 and 36 months to complete the programme. So far 40 participants have graduated since the launch of the new programme in December 2017 and 144 colleagues are currently enrolled. Participants are continuing to complete the previous version of the PgCAP (49 graduating in 2018/19 and 21 in 2019/20). The new programme has one compulsory 40-credit course and participants choose two 10-credit options from a suite of six. Option courses are delivered in mixed mode (face-to-face and online) except for one course 'Digital Education' which is entirely delivered online. We moved all teaching for the PgCAP online in April 2020 in response to Covid-19. We will build on this experience and continue to develop the online and hybrid character of the PgCAP during 2020/21.

192 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/cpd/postgraduate-certificate

- 3.4.13 The PgCAP is evaluated through a range of mechanisms, including external examining, staff-student liaison, and diverse feedback methods used across the courses. We intentionally model a range of feedback practices so that participants can learn about methods they might use to evaluate their own teaching in future. Our External Examiner has indicated that the standards on the PgCAP compare well with provision elsewhere and that participants are provided with excellent feedback. They also commented that the participants' development is impressive and that the new compulsory course seems to work much better than the previous core course. They have also given us useful developmental feedback to work on, including updating some of the literature we use and emphasising the application of core concepts across diverse contexts. The student-staff liaison participants have helped us to make modest improvements to the programme but they have not identified any serious concerns. The feedback that we have collected suggests that the participants generally find the PgCAP to be an excellent learning experience. They appreciate, for example, how the core concepts enhance their reflection on their practice and how much they learn from working with peers from across the University. They sometimes adopt teaching methods from the PgCAP into their own courses. They also note the development of their academic identities during the programme. Recent feedback has identified some topics and aspects of the programme design that participants find confusing, so we are working to make these as clear as possible for busy colleagues.
- 3.4.14 A piece of research is currently being conducted by a team from the PgCAP to evaluate how effective the programme is in encouraging graduates to become agents for change around learning and teaching within their home Schools. Results from this will be available from summer 2020. A formal evaluation of the PgCAP will be carried out as part of the reaccreditation process beginning in 2020.

Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA)

- 3.4.15 The EdTA was designed to provide a more manageable and flexible route to Advance HE accreditation than the PgCAP, allowing individuals to fit it around busy and variable work schedules. It is aimed at all colleagues contributing to the student learning experience, at any stage of their careers and can be completed over six months to two years. The EdTA is a supported pathway for development in learning and teaching. Participants are assigned an individual mentor who works with the candidate to provide tailored support and guidance through relevant literature and reflective practice. In response to feedback from participants and mentors, a streamlined version of the EdTA¹⁹³ was re-accredited within the CPD Framework in 2017.
- 3.4.16 A key development is the establishment of local EdTA schemes which, while integrated into the University-wide EdTA, offer the possibility of discipline-specific and geographically convenient activities. Local EdTA schemes are currently running in five Schools: Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, Biomedical Sciences (within the Edinburgh Medical School), Chemistry, Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, and Mathematics. Pathways for colleagues with specialist interests are also available, as indicated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Pathways for colleagues with specialist interests

Specialist pathway	Category	Achieved
Clinical Educator Programme (CEP)*	Associate Fellow	60
PgCert Clinical Education	Fellow	136
PgCert Digital Education	Fellow	27

*Colleagues who have successfully completed the ‘Clinical Educator Programme’ may transfer this in for 20 credits on the PgCAP.

- 3.4.17 As the EdTA was our most significant new undertaking in CPD for academic staff, we arranged an external evaluation of the provision in 2016/17. The evaluation involved 18 interviews with senior managers, participants and IAD colleagues as well as survey responses from 24 EdTA participants. The findings were very positive with participants particularly appreciating their mentors and finding writing their EdTA blogs to be a good learning experience, provoking deep reflection on their teaching. The majority of the respondents to the survey had already changed their teaching or assessment practice based on participation. The main concern raised by participants was that the Pebblepad blog was difficult to use so we changed to a WordPress blog that has proved much more user friendly. Further details of the evaluation are contained in a Teaching Matters Blog.¹⁹⁴
- 3.4.18 We carried out an internal evaluation of the EdTA in 2019.¹⁹⁵ A total of 106 people responded to an email questionnaire, 54 who had completed an award, 47 who were currently participating and five who had withdrawn. Respondents described their experiences of the EdTA as inspiring, interesting and reflective. Teaching Matters blog posts provide EdTA participants’ first-hand accounts of how participating in the EdTA can promote teachers’ development.¹⁹⁶ They also noted that the process could be frustrating and challenging. In response to this feedback, new resources are currently in preparation, including video clips of former participants and a short online presentation about effective blogging. We have also been working hard to make sure that colleagues whose main teaching is supervision also understand that the EdTA is for them.¹⁹⁷ An in-depth evaluation is being planned as part of the re-accreditation process starting in 2020.

Introduction to Academic Practice (IntroAP)

- 3.4.19 The IntroAP was developed to provide a route to Associate Fellowship of Advance HE (AFHEA) for experienced tutors and demonstrators who previously had no internal route at Edinburgh or accreditation. The IntroAP runs over one semester and involves regular face-to-face and online contact with a small cohort of peers and facilitators. It provides the opportunity to focus on specific aspects of teaching; to gather new ideas; to consolidate and think about current practice; and to discuss and share reflections with teachers in similar situations and at similar stages of their teaching career. It also includes teaching observation. This route provides an ideal learning environment for less experienced teachers and is ideally suited for postgraduate tutors and demonstrators. Postgraduate students appreciate having a nationally recognised teaching qualification for their own career development.

194 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/evaluating-the-edinburgh-teaching-award/

195 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/evaluating-the-edinburgh-teaching-award/

196 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/time-well-spent-reflections-on-undertaking-the-edta/

197 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/a-research-teaching-nexus-gaining-higher-education-academy-hea-accreditation-based-on-supervisory-activities/

3.4.20 The IntroAP was re-accredited in 2017 and is subject to a process of ongoing evaluation. At the end of each course, participants' views are ascertained, results are scrutinised and content updated. Amendments and the rationale for change are presented at the Programme Board and commented on by the External Examiner. Since 2013, 340 colleagues have achieved Associate Fellowship of Advance HE through the IntroAP.

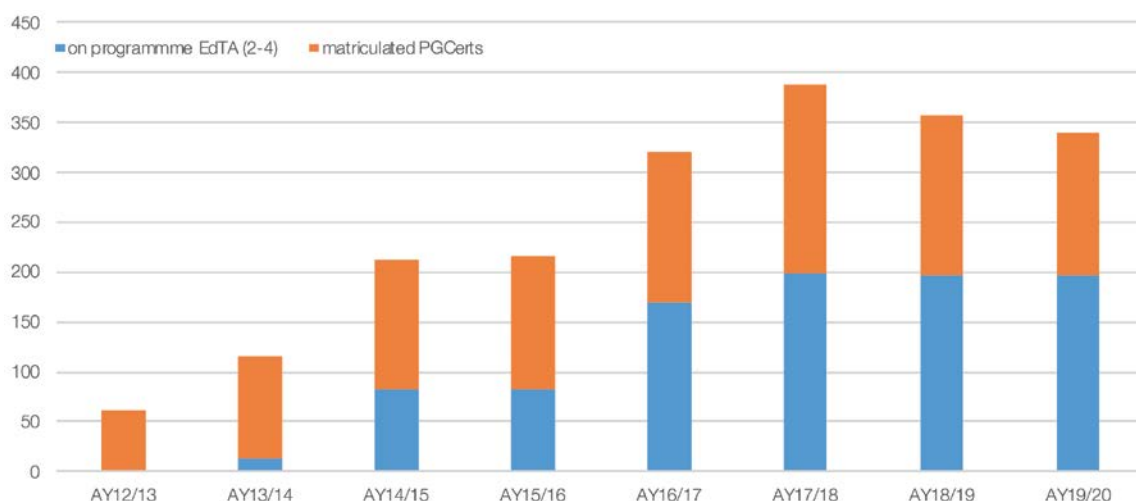
Engagement with the CPD framework

3.4.21 We discuss participation and completion rates at the Senate Education Committee each year. Since our CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching was launched in AY 2013/14 we have seen significant growth in participation and completion that is feeding through into staff teaching qualification statistics.

3.4.22 Participation in the PgCAP (see Figure 3.4) has remained generally stable in recent years, despite the introduction of the EdTA as an alternative possibility for staff. This suggests an increase in willingness of staff to participate in accredited provision. There is potential for growth on the PgCAP, we could take two cohorts of around 50 participants per year leading to around 200 participants on the programme at any given time (assuming two years to completion). At present we are accepting around 30-40 participants per cohort. The peak numbers reported for the PgCAP in 2017/18 probably reflect our transition from the old to the new PgCAP programme and participants exiting the new programme more quickly during 2018/19.

3.4.23 Participation in the EdTA grew steadily until AY 2017/18 and has now stabilised (see Figure 3.4). We have reached a steady state of around 200 participants per year on the central and existing School EdTAs. We typically run a waiting list for the central provision from some months before each intake. Growth in the numbers or scale of School EdTAs may result in participation numbers increasing but we are close to capacity for the central EdTA.

Figure 3.4: Participation in the EdTA (levels 2-4) and PgCAP (AY12/13 to AY19/20) on programme

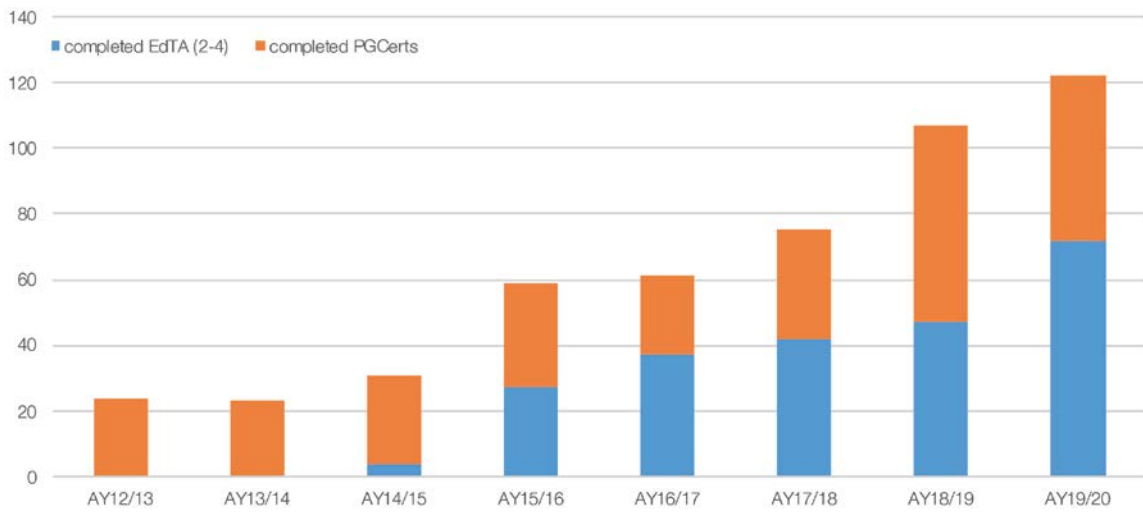


3.4.24 Participants tell us that finding time is the biggest barrier to full participation in the PgCAP and EdTA. We are getting regular comments from participants in the PgCAP and EdTA (and also from EdTA mentors) about the lack of recognition of this work in many School workload allocation models. The

precarious working lives of some of our colleagues are also a factor, with some of those on short contracts leaving before they are able to complete. They may be able to use what they did on the PgCAP as accreditation of prior learning into programmes in new institutions in these cases.

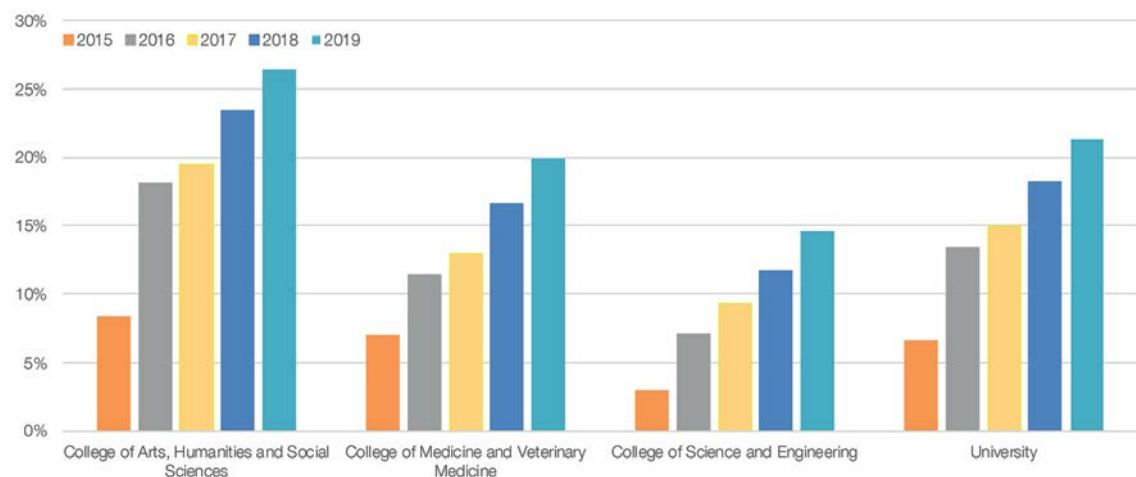
3.4.25 The number of colleagues completing the full PgCAP is beginning to improve with the new version of the programme (see Figure 3.5) but it will take two to three years to be sure this trend is established. Completions of the EdTA have grown steadily. Participants who do not complete the PgCAP or the EdTA typically cite time pressures as the main barrier.

Figure 3.5: In year completions for the EdTA (levels 2-4) and PgCAP (AY12/13 to AY2019/20)



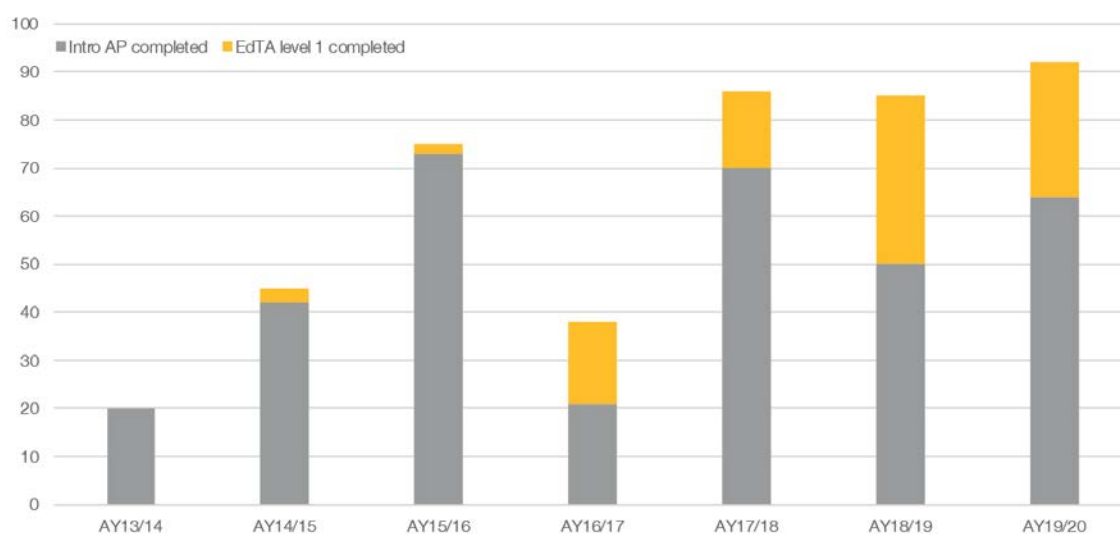
3.4.26 Figure 3.6 shows the percentage increase in the numbers of academic (teaching) staff on grades eight to ten who hold a teaching qualification. This shows a steady upward trend with some variation between Colleges. These data will include EdTA and PgCAP completers as well as colleagues who came from other institutions with their Advance HE Fellowship already in place. It also includes other qualifications recognised by HESA, such as holders of PgCE qualifications in secondary or further education.

Figure 3.6: Percentage of academic (teaching) staff with a teaching qualification Grades 8 to 10, recorded on Oracle (1 August census date)



3.4.27 Completion data for the IntroAP are provided in Figure 3.7 along with completion data for the EdTA category one. The excellent completion rates for the IntroAP of around 90-95 per cent reflect the close support given to participants by the IntroAP team. Other influences on completion are that tutors and demonstrators tend to have somewhat milder time pressures than other staff and do not yet have secure careers thus providing another incentive to secure an accredited award. Recruitment to the IntroAP has not yet peaked and we have capacity to take further participants, particularly in the semester two intake. We cap the number of EdTA participants for category one in order to prioritise spaces on this oversubscribed provision for academic staff rather than tutors and demonstrators. We also offer non-accredited workshops on tutoring and demonstrating to a larger number of participants.

Figure 3.7: Completion of the IntroAP and EdTA Category 1 (AY2013/14 to AY2019/20)



(The October 2016 iteration of the IntroAP was cancelled due to staff changes which also affected the January 2017 intake.)

3.4.28 The numbers of completers of Fellowship via other pathways through the CPD Framework are presented in Table 3.4. It is important to bear in mind that these pathways often have much higher completion rates overall but not all participants qualify for (or choose to work toward) Advance HE Fellowship (FHEA) as part of their participation. Only a subset of these Fellowship completers will be employed by the University.

Table 3.4: Numbers of Fellowship completions by academic year for other pathways

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20 (to 30/7/20)
Clinical Educator programme (AFHEA)	16	7	11	16	3	5
MSc/PgCert Clinical Education (FHEA)	25	19	15	19	21	16
MSc Digital Education (FHEA)	0	2	9	9	6	3

3.4.29 Looking ahead we expect to see faster growth in participation and completion due to the Teaching and Academic Careers project. A key recommendation from the project, being implemented during AYs 2019/20 and 2020/21, is for all Schools to develop a Professional Development of Teaching Strategy and Plan. These plans will be integrated with University quality assurance arrangements and subject to periodic review. They will include a focus on informal staff development and teaching culture, alongside task and role specific CPD, and externally accredited provision, with School and institutional indicative and aspirational targets for teaching qualifications.

Tutors and demonstrators training

3.4.30 Since the last ELIR, we have reviewed and replaced our code of practice on tutoring and demonstrating with a new mandatory policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators. This policy was developed by a task group of Senate Researcher Experience Committee (REC) with consultation across the University including students and trade unions. Launched in September 2017 with full implementation in 2018/19, the policy describes tutor and demonstrator roles and responsibilities and sets out expectations on induction, training, support, feedback and review. Schools provide all tutors and demonstrators with a formal induction to the core aspects of their role before they commence their duties and determine what mandatory training they undertake in relation to their role. Feedback on their performance is a valuable aspect of development for tutors and demonstrators and Schools provide constructive and timely feedback as well as a formal annual review. Plans to evaluate the impact of this policy during the AY 2019/20 have been delayed due to Covid-19.

Leadership development and support

3.4.31 The University's leadership development offer was refreshed in 2018. This included launching the Introduction to Leadership Programme (aimed at leaders of teams or projects who are key to the future growth of the organisation), the Senior Leadership Programme (aimed at staff with significant leadership responsibilities for their department) and offering a singular nomination process to assist Colleges with their leadership and talent development planning.

3.4.32 For Heads of School an induction programme for their first year in post is available, designed to help them establish networks across the organisation and identify and achieve their development requirements.

3.4.33 Heads of Subject Area training is in place in CAHSS which is an excellent introduction for new Heads. New Heads of School are appointed a coach and a mentor and emotional quotient inventory leadership coaching is also available for staff transitioning out of a Head of School role (or similar). We are considering ways in which we can make more use of the institutional knowledge of former Heads and Deans.

Management development

3.4.34 A series of workshops, programmes and toolkits for managers is available to support the continued development of management skills, knowledge and confidence across the University. This includes the new Aspiring Manager (future managers) and Edinburgh Manager (current managers)

programmes that have been launched in 2020. The aim of the offer is to ensure that those in management roles are equipped to fulfil those roles and lead the significant changes happening across the University.

Technician development

- 3.4.35 The University signed the Technician Commitment in 2017, recognising the important role technicians play in teaching, research and supporting students. Technicians were invited to speak at the Learning and Teaching Conference in 2019 about the role they play in teaching.
- 3.4.36 A Career Development programme for technicians was launched in 2019, highlighting different career pathways open to them. A key part of the programme is providing opportunities for technicians to find out more about teaching as a career and what professional development is available to those wishing to follow this path. As part of the Technician Career Development programme, Human Resources (HR) and IAD have run sessions that promote the EdTA, with one specifically focusing on teaching as a career path option and the IAD Learning and Teaching team providing more information about this route and EdTA/Advance HE in these sessions. A blog was written to promote and encourage engagement in teaching accreditation for technicians.¹⁹⁸

Annual review

- 3.4.37 Our staff appraisal is known as Annual Review. Annual Review is an annual discussion that all staff have with their line manager or designated reviewer. Its purpose is to support staff to realise their full potential by reviewing their progress against previous objectives, discussing future plans and development needs and setting objectives for the time until their next review. Over the last few years we have focused on increasing completion rates and have consistently seen over 90 per cent of all eligible staff having an Annual Review over the last four years.
- 3.4.38 In 2014, we established a task group to ensure that Annual Reviews contribute towards meeting the University's strategic objectives and placed a greater emphasis on teaching performance in Annual Review discussions. The task group introduced a number of initiatives to improve the quality of Annual Review conversations, promote personal accountability and increase engagement. Initiatives included the introduction of Annual Review principles, supporting checklists, guidelines, training, videos and online resources.¹⁹⁹ We believe that the conversation is more important than the paperwork. Schools and departments have flexibility around which forms they use, although templates are available.²⁰⁰
- 3.4.39 The University is currently preparing to introduce a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system which will enable Annual Reviews to be recorded and submitted digitally with direct links to professional development opportunities, further supporting career progression.

Staff survey outcomes and actions

- 3.4.40 In autumn 2019, we conducted our first pan-University staff survey, with a 46 per cent response rate and 67 per cent positive employee engagement score. The key strengths and challenges highlighted from the survey are summarised in Table 3.5. Staff clearly feel they have good

198 <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/technicians/2019/08/19/recognise-me-teaching-and-being-a-technician-are-not-mutually-exclusive/>

199 www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/annual-review

200 www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/annual-review/forms

relationships with colleagues they work with, feel they are treated with dignity and respect and are proud to work for the University, which is very positive. However, the survey suggested there was work to be done to ensure that poor performance is dealt with effectively, and change is managed effectively, ensuring changes made are for the better.

3.4.41 Our new Strategy 2030 has a clear set of values and a clear people focus, providing a strong basis for our work to continue improving the staff experience. The staff survey results have helped to inform the people sections of the Strategy, which emphasise the importance of providing support to one another; valuing the contribution of every individual; setting an example for others by conducting ourselves with integrity; and being open to changes to best support our academic mission.

Table 3.5: Key strengths and challenges: Staff survey

Highest scoring	% positive	Lowest scoring	% positive
I have good relationships with the colleagues I work with	91%	Poor performance is dealt with effectively where I work	20%
I am treated with fairness and respect by colleagues	89%	The University manages change effectively	24%
I am proud to work for the University	82%	When changes are made, they are usually for the better	26%

3.4.42 Following the survey a number of measures have been implemented at cross-University level:

- We set up a new Staff Experience Committee to shape and lead cross-University priorities on staff experience;
- Individual groups have followed through on their own survey results;
- We set up a network of staff experience champions to promote and share different ways of approaching issues and sharing information with colleagues about what is happening across the University to improve staff experience;
- We created a digital information hub for managers, which includes guidance and support materials to help share reports and key messages, with a tool to help analyse local staff survey data;
- We have improved employment conditions of staff employed on Guaranteed Minimum Hours contracts including, agreeing that these contracts should be the exception rather than the norm and ensuring staff on these contracts are paid appropriately for all the work that they are asked to do, including agreed time for professional development;
- We have committed to ensuring Teaching Fellows have more secure contracts and regularised pay. By the start of AY 2020/21, recurring nine/ten-month fixed-term contracts will be replaced by fractional contracts with pay in every month of the year;
- We have agreed a refreshed, modern set of family-friendly policies. These include improvements to maternity, adoption, and shared parental leave pay;
- We have expanded and revamped our suite of training and development opportunities on personal effectiveness, management and leadership – all these areas are central to improving staff experience for ourselves and those around us;

- In support of staff wellbeing and good mental health we have provided access for all our staff and students to Big White Wall, the Feeling Good and SilverCloud apps; and the new Health and Wellbeing Centre for staff and students (the opening of the Centre was postponed until September 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic);
- New start and induction processes and information have been improved to give people the best possible introduction to the University and to help them understand what is expected in relation to their behaviour.

Mentoring connections

- 3.4.43 The University has a Mentoring Connections programme which is open to all staff. The programme has been in place for several years and evaluation has been consistently positive, with 95 per cent of mentees reporting an increase in morale and motivation, 86 per cent an increase in confidence and self-esteem and 92 per cent of mentors reporting a personal sense of achievement and satisfaction from their mentoring relationship.
- 3.4.44 In order to increase participation and availability of the programme, we introduced a digital self-selection approach for staff in February 2019. Since the launch of this digital mentoring platform the number of staff mentors has more than doubled from 144 in 2018 to 309 in 2020 (an increase of 114 per cent). The platform is open to staff, students and alumni, reinforcing the University's strategic objective to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and experience, both close to home and across the globe. This has increased the total number of mentors available to 806, an increase of 460 per cent.
- 3.4.45 Our mentoring programme was initially set up to support early career females and women continue to be attracted to this as a form of development, making up 84 per cent of mentors and 89 per cent of mentees. We enable staff to manage their own profiles, matches and availability with online resources, training and support which is available as and when they need it.

3.5 Effectiveness of the approach to implementing institutional strategies and enhancing learning and teaching

- 3.5.1 We have a mature and embedded approach to implementing institutional strategies and enhancing learning and teaching. We have continued to reflect on and develop our approach to ensure ongoing effectiveness. Since the last ELIR, our Learning and Teaching Strategy has provided an effective focus for the development of policy and practice in learning and teaching with many positive achievements. Together with the more recent work of the Adaptation and Renewal Team and lessons we are learning from our move to hybrid teaching, this puts us in a very good place for the next significant phase of learning and teaching development with an institution-wide curriculum review and reform under the leadership of the Vice-Principal Students.
- 3.5.2 We have demonstrated extensive engagement with the national Enhancement Themes, and our participation in this work has had wide-reaching impact on policy and practice across the University. The outcomes from the Student Transitions Theme are now fully embedded in our welcome and induction activities, in student support and in our support for graduate skills and career
-

development. The current Theme, Evidence for Enhancement: improving the student experience, has had a significant impact on our engagement with data, the use of it in monitoring and review activity, the sharing of data with staff and students, as well as training in its use. Engagement to date has been positive, and we intend to undertake further work over time to track impact and effectiveness.

- 3.5.3 We have expanded the means by which we identify, celebrate and share good practice. Engagement with Teaching Matters and the annual Learning and Teaching Conference has far exceeded our expectations in a short space of time, and both are proving extremely effective at sharing practice and engaging colleagues in learning and teaching discussions. We are now starting to explore the impact of such engagement on the learning and teaching practices of others. We have increased the opportunities for colleagues to support one another and share practice through the establishment of role-specific networks, bringing communities of practice together. These networks provide valuable routes to the implementation of policies and strategies as well as effective feedback channels. Engagement is high and the networks are valued by staff who are both new to and established in their roles.
- 3.5.4 We have a well-established and comprehensive approach to engaging, developing and supporting staff. We have continued to reflect on and improve the recognition and reward of teaching in academic careers. Our accredited CPD framework offers multiple pathways to qualifications and professional accreditation. We take an inclusive approach to professional development, offering routes for staff of all levels, including academic and professional support staff, postgraduate researchers and technicians. We have continued to reflect on the CPD opportunities available and have developed our offering in response to the demands and circumstances of colleagues, which has led to an increase in engagement. There is scope to increase engagement further in professional development and the introduction of School professional development strategies and plans should provide a targeted focus to achieve this.
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In Chapter Four, we look at the University's academic standards and quality processes. Much like the graduating students in this picture had to regularly demonstrate the quality of their work and their academic achievements to reach this point, so does the University as a whole. All aspects of the University are regularly reviewed, assessed, and improved through a series of quality monitoring processes. This image encapsulates the success borne by many years of hard work and improvement, which is at the heart of this chapter, too. On another level, this picture reminds us that the success of our institution is also the success of hundreds of individual students each year. Each year, a new group of students finishes their time at the University of Edinburgh and takes their experiences here into the world, starting or furthering careers, opening businesses, living their lives and changing the world. This wide-reaching impact is ultimately why these institutional quality-assurance processes are so vital.

Vesna Curlic

PhD Intern

4. Academic standards and quality processes

4.1 Key features of the institution's approach to managing quality and setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards.

Overview

- 4.1.1 The Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2015 report confirmed that our “approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards is effective” (paragraph 91) and noted that we had “robust processes that have been systematically reviewed and refreshed since the 2011 ELIR.” (paragraph 103)
- 4.1.2 Our broad approach to managing quality and setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards has not changed fundamentally since the last ELIR. Institutional leadership for quality and standards remains unchanged since the last ELIR, providing continuity throughout the recent changes in senior leadership in learning and teaching and governance. However, without wishing to become complacent, we have continued to reflect on and enhance our approach to quality and standards. Key developments since the last ELIR include:
- Improvements to the annual quality monitoring process;
 - Enhancements to the presentation and analysis of data to support decision making;
 - Enhancements to the annual monitoring of student support services and periodic thematic review;
 - Changes to the student representation system and support for student representatives;
 - Introduction of a Student Partnership Agreement (SPA);
 - Review and restructure of Senate committees;
 - Strengthened support and development for key School roles for quality and standards and leadership in learning and teaching.
- 4.1.3 Our regulations, policies and guidance for quality and standards are set and maintained at University-level by two key Senate committees. Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)²⁰¹ has oversight of the academic regulatory framework relating to assessment, degree classifications, the operation of exam boards and External Examiners. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) has oversight of the quality assurance framework, including academic programmes and student support services, and is responsible for advising Senate on quality and standards.
- 4.1.4 Consistent with our structure, the day-to-day management of quality and standards is devolved to the three Colleges and their respective Schools, operating within University-wide regulations and policies, ensuring consistency in principles but allowing some degree of flexibility in practice.

Programme and course approval and management

- 4.1.5 The ELIR 2015 report noted that our “arrangements for programme and course approval are effective.” (paragraph 101) These arrangements remain broadly the same, but we have enhanced

201 Previously Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

them further with a recently updated policy for course and programme approval, refreshed training and support for Boards of Studies and greater consistency in course and programme information capture. We believe our arrangements continue to meet the expectations and practices in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the guiding principles of the advice and guidance for the course design and development theme (as demonstrated in the Advance Information Set (AIS)). The process is set out on the Academic Services' website²⁰² for the benefit of students and staff, an overview of which is shown in Figure 4.1.

- 4.1.6 Consistent with our quality assurance framework, we operate a devolved approach to course and programme approval and management in accordance with policy.²⁰³ Proposals for new programmes typically begin in Schools or subject areas and are required to address a number of key aspects including demonstrating evidence of consideration of internal and external reference points, accessibility, and student involvement.
- 4.1.7 Each School has at least one Board of Studies (depending on subject specialism) that is responsible for ensuring that proposals are academically appropriate, and for assessing whether they will contribute to a good student experience. School Boards of Studies endorse proposals for new programmes and Colleges have devolved authority from Senate for final approval of new programmes. Proposals for new courses, programmes, or awards that do not comply with the academic year structure or curriculum framework and/or which have wider implications must be approved by APRC.
- 4.1.8 In response to Covid-19, programme and course changes for 2020/21 were managed in line with the Programme and Course Approval and Management (PCAM) Policy. APRC approved a concession to allow Heads of School to appoint multiple, temporary Boards of Studies Deputy Conveners in order to spread workload appropriately. Deadlines for changes were agreed and communicated and Colleges maintained oversight of the changes made. Agreed changes were communicated to students by Communications and Marketing.
- 4.1.9 The PCAM Policy was last updated in September 2018. The Boards of Studies Terms of Reference were simplified in 2018/19 to regulate the small number of high-level matters as outlined in the 1966 Higher Education Act and to allow for responsibility for the regulation of other more operational matters to be delegated to APRC.²⁰⁴ Online supporting guidance is available on the Academic Services' website.²⁰⁵ Colleges are working together to create a single simplified programme approval form, aiming for introduction in 2020/21.
- 4.1.10 As part of our work on programme and course design, we developed training for Boards of Studies conveners and administrators. The training covers policy and process, roles and responsibilities, and pedagogical considerations. The first session was delivered in February 2018 and five additional sessions have been delivered to date. Feedback has been very positive, with attendees noting the "opportunities to learn and share good practice", the benefits in "getting together to mutually consider issues, establishing common ground across College boundaries", for "new administrators/conveners and for more experienced colleagues is incredibly useful." Colleagues noted that we "could do with more in the way of fora and networks like this." In response to this feedback, we established a Boards of Studies Convener and Administrator Network in December

202 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum

203 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog_course_approval.pdf

204 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boardofstudies.pdf

205 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum

2018, to provide a forum for discussion and sharing practice.²⁰⁶ The Network has met three times to date, and has provided a valuable forum for the discussion of various topics in course and programme design, including employability and student engagement.

- 4.1.11 At the time of the last ELIR, the Programme and Course Information and Management (PCIM) project (which ran as part of the Student Experience Project from 2012-2016), aimed to enhance the student experience by providing accurate, consistent and usable information on programme and courses. The project had several outcomes, including enhanced course descriptors and revised policies, which laid important groundwork for the current PCIM project. PCIM is now part of the Student Administration and Support (SA&S) strand of the Service Excellence Programme (SEP), which aims to improve and enhance student administration and support across the University. PCIM aims to deliver a golden copy of all course and programme information for use by both prospective and current students and staff. It is enhancing the information available by improving and streamlining how we propose, maintain, and close courses and programmes. As a result, staff time will not be wasted updating and publishing the same information in multiple locations, reducing the risk of inconsistent information being presented to students. Work on PCIM is paused as the current focus is on immediate priorities of adaptation and renewal.
- 4.1.12 The main source of information for applicants about programmes and courses is the Degree Finder,²⁰⁷ which links to the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS).²⁰⁸ We also have listings on Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) and on a number of postgraduate websites.

Annual monitoring

- 4.1.13 We conduct annual monitoring of all our credit-bearing provision, including non-credit-bearing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). The process is outlined on the Academic Services' website²⁰⁹ for the benefit of students and staff.
- 4.1.14 Since the last ELIR, we have made significant changes to our annual monitoring process for academic provision following a review of our quality framework in 2015/16.²¹⁰ The review identified opportunities to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the annual monitoring process, aligning it better with the planning cycle. The main changes made as a result of the review were:
- The unit of analysis for reporting shifted from course to programme level to align with oversight of the degree programme experience;
 - Timing for the submission of School annual quality reports was brought forward from November of the subsequent academic year to late August, thus allowing annual monitoring to be completed before the start of the next academic year and for outcomes to feed into School planning;
 - School annual quality reports are now considered at University-level by a sub-group of SQAC, rather than College-level (although Colleges still receive copies and have a role in their analysis) to allow for better institutional oversight and to inform College annual quality reports;

206 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/connect/board-of-studies-network

207 www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees and <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/degrees>

208 www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

209 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting

210 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac_agendapapers_20160526website.pdf (Papers C, D and E)

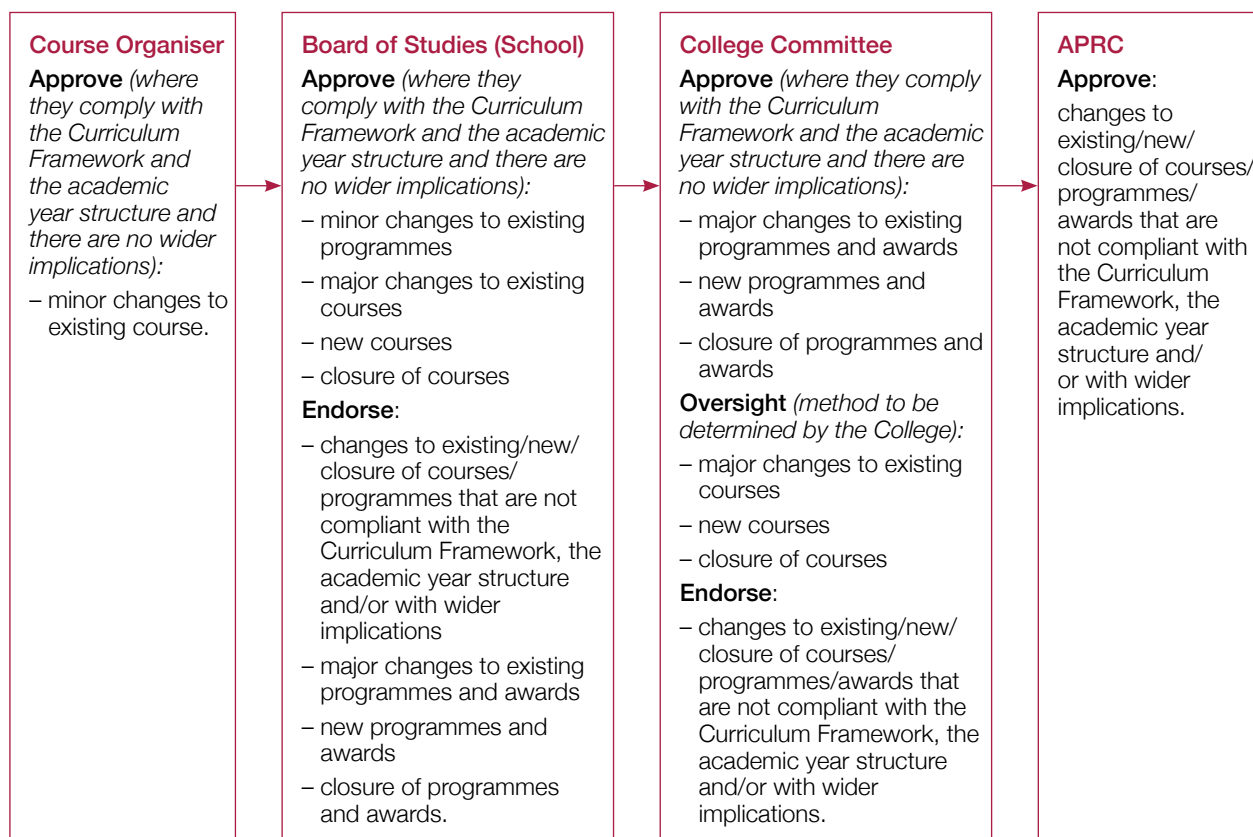
- Existing report templates (School and College) were streamlined to encourage reflection and focus on forward planning and action rather than analysis of data and performance in the past, but strengthened by improved access to data;
 - Improved focus and attention on postgraduate research provision.
- 4.1.15 The Policy,²¹¹ outlining the current process, received approval from SQAC in September 2016. The first School Annual Quality Reports in this format were submitted in summer 2017 (reporting on 2015/16 and 2016/17).
- 4.1.16 Underpinning the development of School Annual Quality Reports, Schools carry out annual programme monitoring. Annual programme monitoring is informed by ongoing evidence-based discussion which includes consideration of course monitoring (including in particular consideration of course evaluation feedback from students, External Examiner feedback and student performance). This is carried out according to a standard set of data (both quantitative and qualitative) and using a standard University-wide reporting template. Some programmes are quite small in student numbers and share courses with other programmes. These are clustered for the purposes of annual monitoring, with the optimum clustering determined by Schools.
- 4.1.17 Schools determine the best way to conduct their annual programme monitoring to meet their local contexts and structures. The College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS), for example, has developed an electronic version of the University-wide annual monitoring template used by all Schools in the College and has been adopted by some Schools in the College of Science and Engineering (CSE). The School and Programme Quality System (SPQS) is an open access system that supports programme, School and College-level reporting.²¹² Reports are completed and published within the system, which includes a facility for report collaboration and data protection controls. The system serves as a powerful archive for reports. A corresponding Power BI report has been developed to highlight key themes emerging from reports and is proving to be useful for analysing content more easily at a College level. See the AIS for further information on the SPQS.
- 4.1.18 A sub-group of SQAC, chaired by the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, meets in September each year to consider all School Annual Quality Reports. The sub-group reviews each report, carefully considering whether appropriate progress has been made with actions identified in the previous year's report and if the actions identified match the reflection (including on data). The report template also allows for Schools to reflect on University priorities. Key University priorities addressed in the last two years include personal tutoring, patterns of degree classification outcomes, and the impact of industrial action on the student experience.
- 4.1.19 The sub-group also identifies broader themes of good practice and areas for further development requiring institution-wide attention, and remits actions in relation to areas identified for further development as appropriate. College Quality Committees also consider the sub-group report. Academic Services compiles a comprehensive overview of good practice recognised by the sub-group for consideration by SQAC. We share the good practice examples with the Institute for Academic development (IAD) for wider communication via Teaching Matters blogs, through the Academic Services' good practice webpages,²¹³ and showcase the good practice at events and

211 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/annualmonrevreppolicy.pdf

212 <https://spqs.euclid.ed.ac.uk/>

213 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice

Figure 4.1: Overview of the Course and Programme Approval and Closure Process



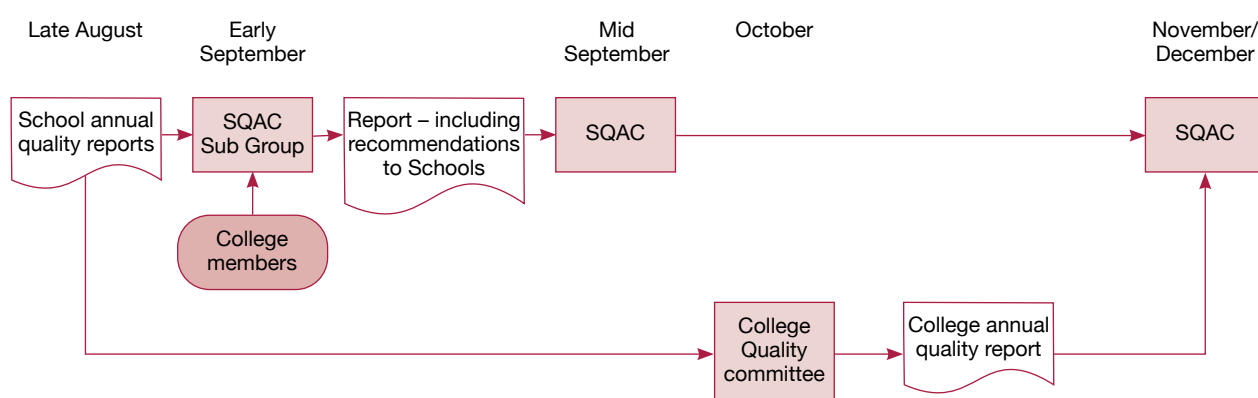
network sessions. SQAC feeds back to Schools and Colleges on individual reports and on the status of actions of College- and University-level actions.

4.1.20 We evaluated the changes made to the annual monitoring process in September/October 2017. Feedback received from Colleges via their Deans, School Directors of Quality and College Quality Committees was generally positive. Notwithstanding the challenges associated with the shorter reporting cycle, colleagues acknowledged that the process resulted in clearer and more actionable reports than previously. A survey of School Directors of Quality found that the aims of streamlining the process whilst deriving maximum benefit, encouraging wide engagement from across the School and helping the development of clear actions had been met. Positive feedback was received from University Court on the 2017 Scottish Funding Council (SFC) report, which contained the outcomes of the 2016/17 annual monitoring processes. The SQAC sub-group that reviews the School annual quality reports noted that the process had been generally well received, and concluded that the process was working well and no major changes were proposed.

4.1.21 Overall, the developments we have made to our annual monitoring have created a consistent, streamlined process which allows for greater University-level oversight of the outcomes. The process results in the identification of clear actions which are useful in informing School annual planning. The annual monitoring process has been greatly supported by the development of data dashboards and enhanced access to data. Further details on our use of data to support decision-making are provided in section 4.4.

- 4.1.22 We reflected further on the annual monitoring process in 2018/19 and concluded that with the changes to the School-level annual monitoring, there was a need to review the timescale and content of the College annual quality reports. The timing of the College reports was too late to inform SQAC forward planning as originally intended, and the data analysis section of the template duplicated Schools' analysis and the work Colleges carried out with Schools on benchmarked data. In response, Academic Services and College Deans and quality contacts agreed a new reporting timeline and a revised reporting template for College annual quality reports. The changes were approved by SQAC in August 2019, with the first reports submitted in November 2019. The timeline for annual monitoring is illustrated in Figure 4.2.
- 4.1.23 As part of ongoing work to ensure that Schools reflect on postgraduate research provision within annual reports, a discussion was held at the School Directors of Quality meeting in October 2019. Changes to the report template were discussed with College Deans of Quality and quality contacts in January 2020 and approved at SQAC in February 2020. Additionally, the requirement for Colleges to provide benchmarked data was removed and how the Personal Tutor (PT) system should be reflected upon was amended to reflect on 'student support' within each School.²¹⁴
- 4.1.24 At its meeting in May 2020, SQAC agreed to suspend the normal annual monitoring, review and reporting processes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, an interim process was approved with the aim of complementing ongoing academic contingency work during the coming year. The reports will focus on the impact of and learning from our response to the pandemic, but will also allow for updates on actions identified from last year's reporting cycle and reflection on other aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience (including industrial action). Reporting deadlines for School annual quality reports were extended from August to November to take account of the learning from both the end of AY 2019/20 and the start of AY 2020/21.

Figure 4.2: **School and College Annual Monitoring Timeline**



Student Support Services Annual Review (SSSAR) and Thematic review

- 4.1.25 Our process for Student Support Services Annual Review (SSSAR) requires student support services to produce an annual monitoring report according to an agreed standard template. The template asks services to reflect on progress over the past year, including areas for consideration identified in the previous annual review, and identified in the service's own key priorities in the short to medium term. This is a well-established and embedded process that has developed over time.
- 4.1.26 A sub-group of SQAC, chaired by the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, including colleagues in key leadership roles, an external member from the higher education sector and a student representative, reviews the reports and provides feedback to each service. The feedback highlights aspects of good practice and areas for further development or consideration. The sub-group also identifies in a report to SQAC cross-cutting themes of wider relevance to student support and the student experience, including good practice and areas for further development at institutional level.
- 4.1.27 The number of services involved in the review process has expanded in recent years in recognition of the need to take a more holistic overview of the entire student experience. Currently, 14 services are included in the annual reporting process. The latest service to join the process was the Estates department, in response to student experience surveys and annual monitoring and Internal Periodic Reviews (IPRs) identifying space as an area for further development.
- 4.1.28 In 2017, we reviewed the SSSAR process to better align with the University planning round and altered the reporting timeline accordingly. We also introduced a new, clearer reporting template for services and developed guidance for report readers. The template now asks services to reflect on how their provision impacts on and enhances the student experience. As of 2018, we introduced identifying exemplar reports for use of data, key performance indicators (KPIs) and holistic reporting. These are accessible to services on the review wiki.²¹⁵ In 2019, we introduced a peer review element where heads of service review another service's annual report.
- 4.1.29 Service heads are provided with reader and peer reviewer reports for information. They are also asked to comment on the proposed areas for further consideration in their next year's report before these are submitted to SQAC for approval.
- 4.1.30 A key element of the SSSAR process is to identify cross-cutting themes in student support and experience and make sharing good practice easier. To enable this, we changed the format of the annual meeting of student services and introduced a discussion forum to include all service heads at one event. This event explores key themes emerging from services' annual reports and spotlights areas of good practice for sharing across services.
- 4.1.31 In 2018, the theme of "collaboration" emerged and resulted in a Teaching Matters blog.²¹⁶ The blog featured areas of good practice, particularly where services were working together across service boundaries to support the student experience. In 2019, three areas of good practice were shared among service heads: using key performance indicators and evaluation; using LEAN for service enhancement; operating a values-led approach to service delivery. Two areas were identified

215 www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SSSAR/Student+Support+Services+Annual+Review+Home (restricted access)

216 www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/supporting-academic-community-at-the-university-of-edinburgh/

for further consideration and development: ‘going local’ how embedded services support the student experience; affordability, in recognition of the financial challenges facing students. Early conversations have taken place among a small group of colleagues from Student Administration, Finance and the Students’ Association to discuss how we can better support students with financial challenges. As part of the Adaptation and Renewal Team (ART) work, further financial support is being put into place to support students affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

- 4.1.32 Overall, services have responded positively to the annual and thematic review process, in particular noting the recognition of the contribution of the service to the student experience and the opportunity to reflect critically on the service they provide to students in this respect, as highlighted by comments from service heads:

“Main benefit for me and IAD is the requirement to produce an open, critical and enhancement-led report on a regular basis that has a pretty consistent format and structure. It is this longitudinal evidence of achievement, progress and challenge that I find most useful as a planning tool.”

Jon Turner, Director, IAD

“The SSSAR process provides a structured and supported process for honest self-reflection, constructive peer and stakeholder critique and the exchange of effective practice. As such, it can make a significant contribution to continuous quality improvement in service operation and delivery.”

Shelagh Green, Director, Careers Service

- 4.1.33 Our external member of the process, Deputy Secretary, University of Stirling, comments on our process:

“The SSSAR is an excellent example of a reflective and developmental review process, which celebrates success and spreads good practice, but also addresses development areas. It has been great to see how the process itself has been enhanced over the last couple of years, to involve and engage each area in the process through peer review. All the colleagues involved, both the service leads and the reviewers, participate in a spirit of collaboration.”

Joanna Morrow, Deputy Secretary, University of Stirling
– external SSSAR sub-group member

- 4.1.34 At its meeting in May 2020 SQAC agreed to suspend the normal SSSAR reporting process and approved the implementation of an interim process in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. SSSAR reporting for AY 2019/2020 will be streamlined to focus on impacts of industrial action and Covid-19. Services will be invited to submit their reports from the end of August 2020 for a mid-November deadline to a new SharePoint site, which will facilitate sharing of experience and good practice.

- 4.1.35 A key outcome of the SSSAR process is the identification of broader thematic areas of student support requiring further attention. With support from students, these have been taken forward as Thematic Reviews involving a detailed investigation of the theme, the appointment of a review panel, including external experts, and engagement with students and staff.²¹⁷

- 4.1.36 To date, we have conducted three Thematic Reviews: Mental Health Services (2015/16); Support for Mature Students and Student Parents and Carers (2017/18); and BME Students’ Experiences

of Support at the University (2018/19). Academic Services conducted a fourth review in 2016/17 of Support for Disabled Students, which, although technically not a Thematic Review, was largely thematic in nature.

- 4.1.37 We did not conduct a Thematic Review during 2019/20. Instead, Academic Services conducted a holistic overview of the outcomes of the Thematic Reviews to date to understand the impact and wider value of such reviews. The outcome of this was presented in a paper to a meeting of SQAC in February 2020.²¹⁸ The main messages are that student engagement is essential and has been very positive, Thematic Review provides the opportunity and space to explore issues, it has adopted an agile methodology, but it is resource intensive to operate. SQAC agreed that we would continue to undertake Thematic Reviews, but they would be reserved for significant issues requiring in-depth exploration that often cannot be achieved via Internal Periodic Reviews (IPRs) or SSSAR and would not necessarily occur on an annual basis. We are not carrying out a Thematic Review in 2020/21 partly due to the demands of the ELIR.
- 4.1.38 Our approach to Thematic Review has evolved over time. In May 2017 SQAC approved the current approach which aims to put the lived experiences of students at the heart of the review process with students more involved from the outset of a review, helping to set the agenda and conduct the consultation with key stakeholders such as student and staff service users, support service staff, and University management. The scope of Thematic Review can be broad or narrow depending on the nature of a particular theme. Unlike IPRs, which are typically concentrated in a two-day review visit, Thematic Reviews tend to extend over a period of time to allow a range of students and stakeholders to input into the process. Accordingly, the methodological approach taken by a review panel can be varied depending on the theme, ranging from large-scale student surveys to more qualitative methods (such as interviews and small focus groups). The process seeks to identify and analyse areas of good practice and areas for enhancement across student support in relation to a chosen category of student experience or ‘theme’.
- 4.1.39 A report is produced for each review which is submitted to SQAC for approval. Following receipt of the final report, the professional services and academic areas are responsible for taking forward action on the recommendations made by the review. The reviewed areas (which could involve more than one service or area) are responsible for informing student service users of the review outcome and actions taken to address recommendations. Approximately 14 weeks after receiving the final report, the areas with remitted actions submit an initial progress report to SQAC for comment, approval and feedback. A year after receiving the final report, areas with remitted actions submit a further progress report to SQAC for comment, approval and feedback. At this point, where recommendations are still outstanding, SQAC will agree an appropriate approach for ongoing monitoring of recommendations.
- 4.1.40 Good practice is identified in the commendations and shared via the publication of the report. Any good practice identified is also used by the review teams as the basis of recommendations to other areas and the University in general.

Box 4.1: Enhancements to IPR since 2015

The quality framework review 2015/16 proposed changes to the review process to “reduce the documentation required by Schools, including a more streamlined focus of the analytical report and reduction in the supporting evidence.” It was agreed that, “due to the lead-in time preparing for reviews, such streamlining as can be achieved will be implemented for reviews taking place in 2016/17. The remaining changes will be implemented for reviews in 2017/18.”²¹⁹

Changes made for reviews taking place in 2016/17 included:

- Streamlining the list of documentation to reduce the volume of information required to be provided by Schools, although the review team may still request any documentation;
- Streamlining review visit schedules to allow more time for discussion of subject-specific remit items;
- Streamlining of External Examiner analysis based on data from the External Examiner Reporting System;
- Improved oversight of academic standards and assessment via School annual monitoring and College oversight, allowing greater focus on enhancement in the review. Colleges confirm that Schools’ processes assure academic standards.

Additional enhancements during 2016/17 included:²²⁰

- Remit – consolidation of the remit headings to simplify;
- Remit meeting – improved accuracy of the list of programmes and courses to be included in review and to enable Student Systems to cross check data in EUCLID;
- Analytical Report – renamed to Reflective Report;
- Separate guidance and template – Schools encouraged to write a shorter, more critical, evidence-based reflection;
- Supporting documentation – Academic Services will now produce data reports for Schools/Subject areas, supported by Student Systems;
- Review visit schedule – minor amendments to template to increase duration of some meetings and clarity on meeting attendee;
- Review team encouraged to suggest two questions for each meeting rather than a list of comments/ thoughts. This should enable review team administrators to collate these questions into a more coherent format for the review;
- Final review report – template revised to encourage review team administrators to write a shorter, more focused, evidence-based report;
- Annual briefing meeting – changes to the format/agenda and introduction of parallel sessions for review teams and School.

Further enhancements from 2018/19 included:²²¹

- Revised versions of the University remit and reflective report template to ensure ongoing compliance with the SFC guidance to higher education institutions on quality from August 2017 to 2022;
- Consideration of the ongoing sustainability of courses and programmes to inform decisions about their continuation, in the context of the wider School, College and University portfolio were included to the remit and templates.

219 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers_20160908.pdf (Paper L)

220 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendaspapers-20170525.pdf (Paper F)

221 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20171130-web.pdf (Paper K)

Internal Periodic Review (IPR)

- 4.1.41 The ELIR 2015 report commented “sample documentation demonstrated a comprehensive, robust and professional approach to IPR, and confirmed the application of the University’s terms of reference and composition of review panels.” (paragraph 111)
- 4.1.42 Since the last ELIR in 2015, we have made a significant number of phased enhancements to the IPR process resulting from the quality framework review carried out in 2015/16 (see Box 4.1).
- 4.1.43 From AY 2019/20, we changed the name of the reviews to IPR to reflect our move towards a more holistic approach to review. This replaces the previous nomenclature of Teaching Programme Review (TPR) and Postgraduate Programme Review (PPR) and the separation of undergraduate/taught and postgraduate/research provision.
- 4.1.44 In practice, IPRs can be organised to cover undergraduate provision only, joint undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision, postgraduate taught provision only, postgraduate research provision only or joint postgraduate taught and research provision. In consultation with Schools and Colleges we decide on the best grouping of provision to ensure that the review is meaningful, aligns with local organisational structures and ultimately adds value. Oversight of the outcomes is maintained through an annual analysis of themes arising from IPRs.
- 4.1.45 IPRs operate to a common framework that meet SFC expectations, and meet the expectations and practices in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the guiding principles of the advice and guidance for the monitoring and evaluation theme (as demonstrated in the AIS). In some respects we exceed the external expectations; for example, we require two external members on review teams. This gives us greater flexibility to include additional academic subject experts, representatives from professional bodies or industry.
- 4.1.46 Detailed guidance is available on the quality webpages for review team members and Schools/subject areas under review.²²² Since ELIR 2015, we have consolidated guidance for undergraduate and postgraduate reviews as part of a streamlining exercise and a move to holistic IPR. We use a University-wide standard remit as the basis for each review to ensure consistency in approach. It also ensures that the review process is aligned to external expectations and that key reference points and sector themes are included.
- 4.1.47 We consider each review, and its remit, within the specific context of the School/subject area. In advance of each review, we invite Schools/subject areas to reflect on key data specific to their context and to propose subject-specific remit items for inclusion in the review. The proposals should be evidence-based and based on discussion with staff and students. We discuss the proposals at a formal remit meeting that includes relevant members of the School and College, internal members of the review team and student representatives. Once agreed, the subject-specific items are added to the formal remit. This forms the basis for the remit of the review and, together with the information contained in the reflective report, forms the basis for identifying key themes and meetings for the review visit.

222 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review/process/general

- 4.1.48 In alignment with SFC guidance on quality arrangements, we engage with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) to explore appropriate ways in which our parallel review processes may be streamlined and complement each other. Recent examples include working with The General Teaching Council for Scotland, Community Learning and Development Standards Council (Scotland) and the Scottish Social Services Council.
- 4.1.49 Academic Services provide a substantial amount of support and guidance to both Schools/subject areas approaching review and review teams to enable them to get the most out of the review process. Detailed checklists and templates are available on a wiki page for the Academic Lead and School Administrative Support staff to support their role.²²³
- 4.1.50 In the academic year before the review, we hold a briefing meeting for colleagues involved in reviews in the forthcoming year, specifically for the Academic Lead role and the School Administrative Support, and for the Convener and internal review team members. The purpose of the briefing meetings is to provide an overview of the process, the key roles and timelines. Individuals that have previously been involved in a review as review team Convener, Internal member and Academic Lead attend to share their experiences. The ELIR 2015 report noted that, “staff commented positively on the value of these briefings” (paragraph 111). Academic Services and Colleges jointly provide additional support on writing the reflective report.
- 4.1.51 Students and the student voice are central to our IPRs. Each review team includes a Student Reviewer. Academic Services and the Students’ Association jointly recruit and provide a support session for Student Reviewers that focuses on expectations of the role, how to prepare for the review and an overview of the documentation that they will be expected to read. The session also provides an opportunity for Student Reviewers to hear from a student who has recently participated in a review and learn from their experience. We are fortunate that students generally are keen to be involved in this role and there is not usually any difficulty in meeting the required demand. In fact, a number of students involved have gone on to apply to be an ELIR Student Reviewer, and several of these have taken part in ELIR reviews.
- 4.1.52 We also provide guidance to Schools and subject areas on how to engage students on their programmes with the review process, as well as providing guidance for the students on the programmes being reviewed on how they can engage.²²⁴
- 4.1.53 The role of the Review Administrator is key to ensuring consistency in approach across reviews and adherence to the framework. We therefore provide Review Administrators with detailed guidance and a checklist to support them in their role.²²⁵ We use a small pool of staff as Review Administrators, mainly from Academic Services and key College and School administrator roles. For individuals undertaking the role for the first time, we provide an opportunity for them to shadow an experienced Review Administrator in the year before undertaking the role. We also offer mentoring during the review process.
- 4.1.54 We provide support for each individual review, including a session for the Schools/subject areas on reflective report writing (the self-evaluation document prepared in advance of the review), and a preparation meeting for the internal review team members, to discuss the key questions emerging

223 www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageld=294618340 (restricted access)

224 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review/process/general

225 www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/InternalReview/Review+Team+Administrators+information (restricted access)

from the documentation, agree the chair for each meeting, and to discuss any final arrangements for the review.

- 4.1.55 SQAC approves IPR reports. We continue to publish all IPR reports and the Schools' responses to reports on the website. We do not publish the reflective reports in order that Schools can reflect openly and honestly on the areas for development within the review. However, Schools/subject areas do share these documents informally as a means of supporting one another with preparations for the review.
- 4.1.56 SQAC receives an annual report in September each year on areas of good practice and for further development from IPRs and remits actions as necessary. College Deans of Quality communicate the areas and the outcome of the discussion to relevant College committees. SQAC considers a progress report on actions at an appropriate point later in the academic year. We share the good practice examples with the IAD for wider communication via Teaching Matters blogs, through the Academic Services' good practice webpages,²²⁶ and showcase the good practice at events and network sessions.
- 4.1.57 SQAC continues to receive and comment on the 14 week and year-on reports following the review and provides feedback to Schools to indicate whether good progress is being made with addressing the recommendations or to request additional information on actions taken or planned. Colleges continue to receive the same reports and provide support at the College level to Schools. For example, in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM), the College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee considers the 14 week and year-on reports in relation to progress and whether any support is required. Where multiple reviews have taken place within a year, the committee takes the opportunity to seek any cross-College themes.
- 4.1.58 In an effort to track the impact of reviews on enhancement, we began to ask Schools/subject areas from AY 2017/18 to note in their year-on response examples of positive change as a result of the review. The first analysis of this was presented to the September 2019 meeting of SQAC.²²⁷ We intend that this will be an annual report to track the longitudinal impact of reviews on enhancement of the quality of learning and teaching and the student experience.
- 4.1.59 We consider that our system of IPR has many strengths. The fundamental principle is that it is a cooperative and collegial procedure in which review of the students' learning experience in a given subject area is carried out by people whom the teaching staff trust and to an agenda (review remit) with which they agree and have actively contributed. It increasingly emphasises student engagement both through specific remit items proposed by students and through student representative structures in the preparations for and actions resulting from the review, and there is an increased emphasis on identifying good practice for wider benefit. It has therefore been widely accepted by Schools/subject areas, which have generally found it valuable, and we are able to track the impact of reviews on quality enhancement.
- 4.1.60 As a result of the Covid-19 outbreak we were unable to complete three IPRs that were due to take place during semester two 2019/20. These reviews had to be rescheduled into AY 2020/21 with a knock-on effect for the reviews in that year, which was also the year of ELIR. Consequently, we

226 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice

227 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20190918.pdf (Paper N)

sought and were granted approval from Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and SFC to postpone three reviews that had been scheduled to take place in 2020/21 to a subsequent year to accommodate the three reviews we had to carry over from 2019/20, leaving a total of eight reviews scheduled for 2020/21. In addition to the rescheduling, we also made adaptations to the operation of the review to accommodate remote/online meetings, ensuring that students, staff and externals could participate fully. The review remit and coverage remained unchanged.

Management of assessment

4.1.61 We manage and maintain assessment standards via several related processes. Key regulations and policies include:

- The University's assessment regulations (for taught and postgraduate research programmes),²²⁸
- Degree classification procedures,²²⁹
- Operation of Boards of Examiners (including Special Circumstances Policy²³⁰ and External Examining²³¹);
- Academic misconduct procedures.²³²

4.1.62 Assessment practice is underpinned and supported by a set of assessment principles,²³³ a small number of Edinburgh Common Marking Schemes,²³⁴ and guidance on moderation of marking.²³⁵

4.1.63 APRC has oversight of the academic regulatory framework, and fosters a culture of self-reflection and engagement, which has led to greater ownership of the assessment regulations by academic staff. The assessment regulations are subject to annual light-touch review, in which feedback on their application is sought from Colleges on behalf of Schools and steps taken to address any lack of clarity or more endemic issues for the following year. We publish key changes to the taught assessment regulations and the research degree regulations annually in a separate document for ease of reference and disseminate to key stakeholders in Colleges and Schools.

4.1.64 We have separate assessment regulations for taught and research programmes.²³⁶ Our assessment regulations set minimum requirements and standards for students and staff and are intended to deliver an appropriate level of consistency in treatment of students, while enabling creativity and innovation. It is APRC's role to ensure that the regulations are responsive to curriculum development and innovations in learning and teaching practice.

Boards of examiners

4.1.65 Boards of Examiners operate according to clearly defined principles, remit and operational guidance, ensuring consistent application of the assessment regulations. In 2016/17, we introduced a new Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes.²³⁷ This incorporated and streamlined the content of six previous policy documents, providing a single,

228 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations

229 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/assessment/degree-classification

230 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners

231 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/external-examining

232 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct

233 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf (Regulation 11)

234 www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

235 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf (Regulation 31)

236 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/assessment/assessment-regulations

237 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf

accessible guide for staff involved in acting on or supporting Boards of Examiners. Each Board has a designated regulations expert to ensure the correct and consistent application of the assessment regulations. School level experts on University regulations are supported in their role by designated experts at the College and University level. In 2018/19, we revised our approach to briefing and training regulations experts and Conveners, delivering in-person sessions focused on case studies around routine and challenging issues encountered by Boards. This approach was received very positively by attendees at the sessions.

- 4.1.66 Special Circumstances Committees consider all individual cases of special/extenuating circumstances at a separate meeting before the Board of Examiners, anonymously and independent of degree performance. Special circumstances are circumstances outside the control of the student (such as severe illness or bereavement) that may have an adverse impact on assessment performance. The University's Special Circumstances Policy²³⁸ sets out what constitutes a special circumstance and what decisions the Committee can make (such as permitting a resit or re-assessment, or disregarding marks or course components affected) based on the impact of the circumstances on assessment performance. It is a student's responsibility to report any special circumstances, including all relevant documentary evidence. PTs and Student Support teams assist and advise students in such matters.
- 4.1.67 We are in the final stages of a major project (part of the wider SEP) to redesign the process of handling course work extension requests and special circumstances applications from students. The project aims to deliver, during 2020/21, a single, online system for application and processing of students' special circumstances requests, and a dedicated, central team for making decisions regarding the validity of applications.
- 4.1.68 The new system will provide easy access for students to make an application; a dashboard for the team to triage and respond to applications; and a staff-facing dashboard for key staff in Schools (for example, student support staff) to support conversations with students. The service also aims to provide key decision-making data for School reflection on assessment deadlines, volume and focus of requests by course and programme, giving us an institution-wide overview on the volume of special circumstances applications to support any policy changes.
- 4.1.69 As part of our response to Covid-19, the team delivering the new system has been involved in resilience activity to support special circumstances processing for semester two of 2019/20, providing data for use by Special Circumstances Committees within the context of our 'no-detriment' policy.

External examiners

- 4.1.70 We operate an online External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) for undergraduate and postgraduate taught External Examiners. EERS launched at the time of our last ELIR review and has now been operating for five years. The system facilitates timely report submission and responses from Schools as well as easy extraction of themes from EERS. The system prompts examiners to comment on specific themes, including assessment, which supports programmes and Schools to reflect on assessment practice. Themes are analysed at University level and

238 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf

reported annually to SQAC. Institutionally, themes from EERS provide useful data for supporting policy development and reflecting on assessment practice. Themes arising from EERS have provided evidence to support assessment regulation reviews, IPRs and discussions on marking schemes.

- 4.1.71 Feedback from EERS users within the University has identified some operational challenges with the system, both with practicalities of using the system and with the reporting outputs. Academic Services are working with Student Systems on solutions, however, no resources are available currently to support system developments. Notwithstanding the operational challenges, the system produces useful data and oversight of External Examiners' comments.
- 4.1.72 During 2018/19, we conducted a major review of the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy,²³⁹ to ensure ongoing consistency with the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education and UK employment and data protection law. The review resulted in a streamlined, clearer and easier to use policy supported by enhanced web-based guidance for External Examiners.²⁴⁰ The policy clarifies Course and Programme External Examiners' responsibilities, including their role in commenting and giving advice on assessment procedures and standards.
- 4.1.73 In response to Covid-19, we wrote to External Examiners in April 2020 to advise them of changes made to our teaching, learning and assessment arrangements in light of the pandemic. This included changes to examinations for undergraduate pre-honours and honours and postgraduate taught students, with additional advice on the approach to coursework and dissertations. We advised that Boards of Examiners would still operate, although virtually or by correspondence, and that External Examiners would be invited to participate as planned. The deadline for External Examiner reports for undergraduate programmes and courses was extended from 31 July to 30 September 2020. No extension to External Examiner reporting for postgraduate taught programmes was planned, as these Boards occur later in the year. We encouraged External Examiners to comment in their reports on how the Board of Examiners has responded in terms of mitigating the impact of Covid-19. Guidance for Schools on the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) was also developed and shared.²⁴¹

Assessment practice

- 4.1.74 The ELIR 2015 report noted: "There would be value in the University reviewing the information provided to students about marking schemes, building on good practice developed within some schools of expanding the descriptors of grade schemes and considering the possible benefit of developing grade descriptors at institutional level" (paragraph 94). In addition, the report noted: "There would be benefit in the University reviewing the information provided to students on the grade descriptors for the common marking schemes in use and to consider this as part of the wider area for development around implementing feedback policy and practice in a clear and consistent manner across the University" (paragraph 104).
- 4.1.75 Since the last review, we have reflected on options to rationalise our common marking schemes. Evidence that rationalisation is desirable has come from EERS, IPRs and discussion at College level. Institutional reflection included debate at a sub-committee of Senate Learning and Teaching

239 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

240 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/external-examining

241 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/eersguidance-covid-19.pdf

Committee (LTC). Outcomes were varied; however, it was clear that there was appetite for reviewing the common marking schemes across Colleges and at LTC.

- 4.1.76 Senate committees discussed proposals at both LTC and Senate Curriculum and Student progression Committee (CSPC). LTC recognised the value of the proposals and supported further consultation with Schools and students and benchmarking with other institutions. However, subsequent discussions at both committees pointed to this having more impact as part of a broader curriculum review.
- 4.1.77 With a major curriculum review on the horizon, we feel we cannot review the common marking scheme in isolation of broader developments to the curriculum and assessment and feedback. We have therefore halted this in anticipation that further discussions around the common marking scheme are likely to be considered as part of a broader curriculum development to be led by the Vice-Principal Students.

Academic misconduct

- 4.1.78 Academic misconduct (including plagiarism) is an increasing concern within higher education. We take all incidences of academic misconduct seriously, and we have processes in place to ensure that we are able to identify, report and deal with suspected cases efficiently and appropriately. A network of School and College Academic Misconduct Officers (SAMOs/CAMOs) are responsible for investigating suspected cases at School or College level, and for determining appropriate penalties, according to a University-wide procedure.
- 4.1.79 There has been a steady increase in the number of students penalised for academic misconduct at the University, in line with rising student numbers, although the overall numbers remain a very small proportion of the student population at less than one percent. In 2018/19, 365 students received penalties for academic misconduct, an increase of 45 students from 2017/18 (though it should be noted that 2017/18 had seen a decrease of 31 students from 2016/17). The increase in cases is partly accounted for by greater use of detection software (such as Turnitin) across the University, and growth in student numbers. Given the wider interest in academic misconduct, this has prompted us to take action to address this.
- 4.1.80 We have reviewed our approach to prevention, detection, and investigation of academic misconduct, and have taken a number of proactive steps to enhance this. Fundamental to this is a strong focus on promoting academic integrity and good academic practice. We provide guidance and resources for students via the IAD.²⁴² CAHSS (which sees the largest number of cases of academic misconduct, due to student numbers) collaborated with Edinburgh University Students' Association on a major campaign – Read:Write:Cite²⁴³ – which aims to educate students about why and how they should credit the sources they use. Some Schools also make use of detection software, such as Turnitin, where relevant, for educational purposes (as well as for detection), encouraging students to proactively check and reflect upon the originality of their work.
- 4.1.81 The Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance convenes three meetings per year with the three CAMOs and their teams to continually share experience arising from academic

242 www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/study-hub/learning-resources/standards

243 www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/academic/citeright/

misconduct casework, reflect on current practice and make recommendations for revisions to policy and practice as a result. This has led to recently revised Academic Misconduct Procedures, making them easier to follow for students²⁴⁴ and staff.²⁴⁵ We are developing guidance about the use of proof-readers for the start of AY 2020/21.

4.1.82 We are closely monitoring developments within the sector regarding contract cheating and the use of “essay mills”. Particularly in the absence of mature technologies designed to address this (though we are aware of new tools released by Turnitin), our focus (as above) is on promoting good academic conduct among students, encouraging them to understand that the only way to gain the full benefit of University education is by taking responsibility for producing their own work.

4.2 Use of external reference points in quality processes

Overview

4.2.1 Consistent with practice in the Scottish sector, we take account of a number of external reference points in managing academic standards and quality. At a national UK and Scottish level, we take account of:

- The UK Quality Code for Higher Education;
- The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF);
- SFC guidance to higher education institutions on quality;
- The UK Professional Standards Framework;
- Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies;
- External Examiners;
- The Enhancement Themes; and
- Benchmarking across UK institutions, such as the Russell Group.

4.2.2 At a European/International level, we take account of:

- The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area;
- The Bologna process; and
- International benchmarking.

UK Quality Code, including subject benchmark statements

4.2.3 We use the Code as a key reference point for developing and reviewing our policies and practices. Academic Services’ policy cover sheet makes reference to the Quality Code. Our approach to the Code was discussed and agreed by LTC in May 2019.²⁴⁶

4.2.4 We have created new mapping documents to reflect the fundamental changes made to the Code. The mappings take a bottom up approach, using the guiding principles of the advice and guidance themes to demonstrate how our policies and practices meet the expectations and practices of the Code. We took this approach as we felt that the expectations and practices were too wide to map our policies and practices to meaningfully. Throughout, 2019/20 SQAC approved mappings to 11

244 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/conduct/academic-misconduct

245 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct

246 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20190522combinedagendapapers.pdf (Paper E)

of the 12 advice and guidance themes. The final mapping was presented to SQAC in September 2020.

- 4.2.5 We took a team-based approach to create the new mappings. The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Academic Services met policy and practice leads to explain the changes to the Code, and the agreed approach taken to the mappings. A SharePoint site was used to create and share the mappings collaboratively, inviting contributions from across the University and the Students' Association. Critical friends reviewed mappings before they were presented to SQAC.
- 4.2.6 The mappings approved by SQAC are the same as those presented in the AIS and published on the quality website along with information about the Code.²⁴⁷ As our policies and practices are developed or reviewed, we update the mappings accordingly. We continue to use the Code in the same way as we did before it was reviewed.
- 4.2.7 We believe our policies and practices for admissions, recruitment and widening access; monitoring and evaluation; and student engagement demonstrate good practice and provide strong mappings to the Code. The mapping did not highlight any major gaps or changes to policy and practice based on the expectations in the Code, but there are two areas that we are continuing to develop based on the updated advice and guidance: work-based learning and partnerships.

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

- 4.2.8 We align with the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies. The Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy is designed to ensure that proposals for new programmes and courses give appropriate consideration to alignment with the SCQF in setting appropriate levels and credit, and requires proposals to evidence consideration of relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements in determining appropriate course and programme content.
- 4.2.9 The SCQF is covered in the Boards of Studies training for conveners and secretaries. Additionally, during the training session, attendees undertake an exercise to design a learning outcome which is appropriate for a specific SCQF level. The same exercise is used in the Practical Strategies sessions: 'Introduction to Course Design' and 'Designing Effective Learning Outcomes'.
- 4.2.10 IPR processes provide an ongoing basis through which we ensure ongoing alignment with SCQF and updates to Subject Benchmark Statements.

Scottish Funding Council (SFC) expectations

- 4.2.11 Our quality processes take account of SFC expectations, through the standard templates we use for annual monitoring and the standard University-wide remit for IPR. We review and update our processes following revised guidance from SFC.
- 4.2.12 Externality is a key feature of our IPR processes. Each review has at least two external subject specialists on the panel which exceeds the SFC expectation of one external. Having two externals gives us greater flexibility to appoint, where relevant, both academic and industrial experts. In some cases, we have included externals from PSRBs (for example, the General Teaching Council,

247 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/quality-code

the Law Society and the Scottish Social Services Council) to foster greater alignment between academic and professional standards.

UK Professional Standards Framework

4.2.13 Our CPD framework for staff development maps onto the UK Professional Standards Framework, details of which are discussed in Chapter 3.

Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

4.2.14 PSRBs are a key external reference point for us. There are 56 PSRBs accrediting 236 programmes, providing another important mechanism for assuring the external comparability of the quality and standards of our degree programmes. Our links with PSRBs help ensure that these programmes remain current and relevant for the professions and help promote the employability of our students graduating from them.

External Examiners

4.2.15 In addition to maintaining standards, our pool of approximately 500 External Examiners provides a valuable source of externality and benchmarking against the sector. We ensure, through Boards of Examiners' discussions and External Examiner's reports that we benefit from the insight that this externality brings to ensure we learn from positive practice in the rest of the sector. Recent comments from our External Examiners provide reassurance to us that our programmes are relevant, stretching and innovative (see Box 4.2).

Box 4.2: External Examiner comments

"I am, as always, impressed by the way Edinburgh continues to lead the field in subject innovation, providing students with a thorough and deep understanding of Japanese language and culture. The team continues to innovate the curriculum to provide students with a cutting edge understanding of the field. Congratulations to you all on a programme well-designed and immaculately delivered."

External Examiner, School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures

"The courses are world class – I am particularly in praise of the skills taught and the evidence that hard work invested by academic staff early in the programme is paying dividends in terms of very good to sensational dissertation projects."

External Examiner, School of GeoSciences

"I have always been impressed with the high standards of both the MSc and the ChM courses. They reflect the huge commitment of the academic staff to provide relevance and excellence in the gaining of theoretical and practical ophthalmic knowledge for these students in the UK and internationally."

External Examiner, Deanery of Clinical Sciences

Enhancement Themes

4.2.16 The QAA Enhancement Themes continue to be a valuable reference point for us. Section 3.2 details our involvement in the Enhancement Themes and the impact of this engagement on our policies and practice.

Benchmarking across networks

4.2.17 The University is an active participant in the League of European Research Universities (LERU), Universitas 21 (U21), and the Russell Group. Within the Scottish sector, the University participates actively in the Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee, Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC), and the Enhancement Themes Theme Leaders Group (TLG). These groups provide opportunities for sharing practice and benchmarking.

4.2.18 We have recently joined the UNA Europa Alliance which provides an important opportunity to benchmark across a network of European universities, as well as forge collaborations in teaching and research (Chapter 5 covers collaborative teaching arrangements). The Alliance was formed in response to the European Commission's new European universities initiative which aimed to establish small groups of universities who will 'create a truly European inter-university environment where excellent research is linked to transnational, problem-oriented learning and innovative, critical thinking'. UNA Europa outlined its plans to meet the objectives of the new initiative in its 1Europe project which was led by KU Leuven and submitted under the European universities call in February 2019. News of its success was announced in June 2019.

4.2.19 UNA Europa was one of 17 successful alliances that responded to the call and in the initial pilot will receive 5M Euros for disbursement amongst members to support 1Europe objectives. The University of Warwick and the University of Essex were the only other UK universities who were successful in the initial call. Since the bid was submitted, UNA Europa has become a legal entity under Belgian law, has established an office in Brussels, appointed a Secretary-General and additional staff members based in Brussels.

4.3 Commentary on action taken since ELIR 3 and identification of matters arising from the AIS not otherwise explored

Action taken since ELIR 3

4.3.1 A detailed report of the action taken since ELIR 3 is provided in the AIS. We took a themed approach to implementing actions from the previous ELIR in order to ensure broad alignment with learning and teaching priorities and Assistant/Vice-Principal roles and responsibilities (ensuring senior leadership) as part of an integrated planning process. SQAC assumed oversight of progress against the actions and received quarterly progress reports from the theme leads during the first year after ELIR, then six monthly until February 2018, with one final update presented in February 2019 which marked our transition to preparation for ELIR 4.

- 4.3.2 All individual reports to and responses from SQAC are available on the Committee's SharePoint site. A summary report of the actions taken in response to the previous ELIR for each theme is available in the AIS. Actions to key recommendations are also highlighted throughout the Reflective Analysis (RA).

Identification of matters arising from the AIS

- 4.3.3 There are no additional matters arising from the AIS that are not discussed in the AIS or elsewhere in the RA.

4.4 Approach to using data to inform decision-making and evaluation.

Overview

- 4.4.1 The ELIR 2015 Report noted: "The ELIR team would encourage the University to progress with ... in particular developing the staff-facing 'Dashboard' project" (paragraph 119). As a research-intensive university, we take a scholarly and evidence-based approach to self-evaluation. This is supported by robust internal data, managed through mature data systems, and by key external data and reference points. Since ELIR 2015, we have enhanced our access to and use of data for decision-making and evaluation and increased the use of data in our discussions with students.

Annual monitoring and Internal Periodic Review

- 4.4.2 Our annual and periodic review processes are robustly supported by data, with the majority now provided through enhanced data dashboards. Performance data used in annual monitoring and IPR processes align with SFC and UK Quality Code for Higher Education expectations. In keeping with our ethos of quality assurance that monitoring should take place as close as is possible to delivery and be reflective and evaluative, our most granular level of reflection is carried out by Schools at the course level. Schools make use of performance and achievement data from a standard suite of centrally generated data together with External Examiners' reports and feedback from students.
- 4.4.3 Within SSSAR, student services reflect on user engagement and feedback, analysis of service use (including service level agreements), partnership working and externality (external recognition and benchmarking).
- 4.4.4 Our IPRs promote self-evaluation in a number of ways. The process of preparing for the review is designed to encourage self-reflection in the preparatory meetings, in internal consultation by the School/subject area with its staff and students on the items it wishes the review to focus on, and the writing of the reflective report. These reflections are supported by data reports. We are increasingly making use of data at the remit meeting to contextualise the remit of the review and ensure priority areas, as identified by data, are reflected in the subject-specific remit items. Further details on the use of data in IPR is outlined in Section 4.1.
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Student survey data

- 4.4.5 The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team is well established and the appointment of the current head in 2018 has provided enhanced use of and reflection on data. The team manage the external student experience surveys including the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and the internal Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs) and provide analysis of themes and free text comments. Schools and Colleges reflect on results and implement appropriate enhancements locally. Under the new Senate committee structure, the Senate Education Committee (previously LTC) takes a holistic view of all student experience surveys, providing greater insight across surveys and coherence for institutional, evidence-based decision-making.
- 4.4.6 The move, in 2019, to Power BI for data dashboards has provided enhanced presentation of and easy access to data. This supports evidenced-based decision-making for Schools, Colleges and University committees. The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team has developed new student experience survey reports in Power BI that provide analysis of survey results. Information is now able to be released on “Results Day”; this means colleagues have much quicker access to results than in previous years. A key word search function makes open comments more accessible and survey results can be filtered to provide comments and data in relation to specific questions, for example student experience of assessment. The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team provides analysis of the insights that can be garnered from student surveys to Academic Strategy Group, Senate Education Committee and University Court.
- 4.4.7 In addition, the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team uses Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data to provide colleagues with benchmarking. Student number benchmarking and awards benchmarking reports are published as part of the annual monitoring data dashboards. This allows colleagues to consider performance against comparator groups as part of their reflections in the annual monitoring process.
- 4.4.8 The Power BI data dashboards were developed in consultation with colleagues involved in quality processes in 2018/19 and were launched in June 2019. The dashboards consolidate the majority of data required for quality processes in one location, displaying it visually and enable easy access to the data. However, the SQAC annual monitoring sub-group noted a lack of reflection and engagement with the data on the new Power BI dashboards. Feedback from stakeholders suggested that the volume of data available is now too great and that additional support was needed to identify and respond to key data. The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team have conducted user testing on the new format of dashboards and responding to feedback have developed a new bank of tools which should allow for easier engagement with the data. Consistency across all data sources and types has been developed to further aid the user in accessing and understanding the data.
- 4.4.9 Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, a range of Power BI training videos have been developed to help users feel more comfortable and confident using the tools available to them. An Insights Hub has been created to raise awareness of all of the resources available to colleagues in the
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University, allowing them to link straight from the Hub to the data dashboard they are interested in. Keeping the links to all the resources in one place allows colleagues to not only easily find what they were looking for but also allows opportunities for them to discover other data they did not know was available to them.

Degree classifications

- 4.4.10 SQAC considers data annually on the degree classification outcomes of the University's undergraduate students, in the context of recent trends and HESA data on Russell Group research-intensive institutions. In April 2018, SQAC also held a strategic discussion of trends in undergraduate degree classification outcomes. SQAC discussed explanations for the increasing proportion of good (first or upper second) degrees being awarded by UK higher education institutions, noted that the University has a number of controls in place to ensure that degree classifications are robust and appropriate, and identified additional ways for the University to address the issue.
- 4.4.11 Whilst most subject areas across the University are broadly in line with Russell Group comparators for their discipline and/or with the University average, there are a small number of outliers which diverge substantially from either the University average or comparators in their discipline. Whilst there may be good reasons for these areas to have these patterns of degree outcomes, SQAC asks the relevant Schools to give particular attention to their degree classification outcome data and provide an analysis of their context within their School annual quality report. SQAC also strengthened the focus on this issue in annual monitoring processes.
- 4.4.12 We are working on having a single, algorithmic approach to borderlines for classification for 2021/22. We had aimed to introduce this for 2020/21 but this work was delayed due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Appeals, complaints and discipline reports

- 4.4.13 SQAC maintains institutional oversight of student academic appeals, complaints and discipline. Annual reports and trends are considered collectively at the same meeting. The Committee specifically considers any institutional learning points arising from the overview reports with a view to reflecting on any changes required to regulations, policies or practice. Table 4.1 provides an overview of trends in the number of cases of appeals, complaints and student conduct over the last four years.

Table 4.1: Number of cases of academic appeals, complaints and discipline, 2015 to 2019

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Academic appeals	166	189	187	237
Complaints	294	342	437	531
Breaches of the Code of Student Conduct	536	621	630	562

- 4.4.14 Reflection on academic appeals data informs the ongoing development of the University's Assessment Regulations, and feeds into annual training for School Boards of Examiners. The changes made to the appeals process in recent years have had the desired effect of reducing turnaround times for appeals, and therefore providing students with more timely outcomes, while having no negative impact on the likelihood of an appeal being upheld from the perspective of appellants.
- 4.4.15 We conducted a periodic review of our Student Appeal Regulations and associated guidance during AY 2019/20. The review was informed by consultation with various stakeholder groups, including the Students' Association, Colleges, and members of the Appeal Committees. We also conducted benchmarking with comparator institutions. The review also considered evidence from annual reporting on the appeal process, and recent contact with QAA Scotland about an individual case which was considered (and closed) through their Scottish Concerns scheme. The final report of the review²⁴⁸ was considered by APRC which agreed a small number of amendments to the regulations and guidance. These included streamlining the grounds for appeal (without narrowing their scope), while providing more guidance about appeals relating to perceived prejudice or lack of due diligence on the part of examiners, as well as more concrete examples of what an appeal under each ground might look like. We also added text to the regulations to clarify and create some additional oversight around the process of preliminary screening of appeals, which can lead to a very small number of appeals being rejected where they do not relate to a decision falling within the jurisdiction of the Student Appeal Regulations. We will monitor the impact of these changes in the coming year through dialogue with the Students' Association.
- 4.4.16 The University was the first institution to adopt the Scottish Higher Education Model Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) in 2013 and will be implementing the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) revised Model CHP from AY 2020/21. The key emphasis of the Complaints Handling Procedure is on 'valuing complaints' and learning from them, and the annual reports to SQAC therefore focus on these aspects. The emphasis of the Committee's consideration is firmly on identifying learning points and using these to enhance provision for other students and to support staff in their handling of complaints.
- 4.4.17 The number of appeals and complaints is very small as a proportion of the overall student population (less than one percent). This relates to the number of cases, which does not necessarily relate to the number of students; some students submit both complaint and appeal cases. Cases tend to be fairly unique and broader trends are not always possible to discern at a wider University level. In all cases of appeals and complaints, individual learning points are communicated back to the Schools and departments in question, where the learning is often most valuable.

Student engagement in use of data

- 4.4.18 We have made a number of developments to the use of data to encourage and support students in engaging with data for enhancement. Our involvement with the current Enhancement Theme has been particularly useful in this respect. Further details on student engagement with data are provided in Sections 2.1 and 3.2.

Learning analytics

- 4.4.19 We are investing in the use of learning analytics for course design, attainment, and improving the student experience and have developed principles and a policy for the use of learning analytics.²⁴⁹ Learning analytics and student data analysis methods hold potential for addressing some of the challenges confronting educational institutions. By merging technical methods for data mining with current educational research and practice, learning analytics offers novel approaches to assessing critical issues such as student progression and retention as well as personalised and adaptive learning. Use of student data analytics brings ethical challenges at all levels of the institution, and we are well prepared to address these via investment in academic leadership and professional services support for ethical data analytics.
- 4.4.20 Since November 2019, we have been piloting the use of OnTask to send feedback to over 800 learners across three modules of the Predictive Analytics MicroMasters. Academic Leads are responsible for creating feedback with support from Instructional Designers in Information Services Group (ISG) to assist in identifying and designing the required data and the optimum points in the course when feedback is most relevant. The feedback sent to date has been based on responses to quizzes and has directed students towards topics they may want to revisit, along with providing additional reading and encouraging learners to continue with the course content. Piloting of OnTask will begin in the School of Mathematics from semester one, 2020/21.

4.5 Effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic standards.

- 4.5.1 The ELIR Report 2015 confirmed broad confidence in the soundness of the University's procedures for the present and likely future management of the quality of our programmes and academic standards of awards. Since ELIR 2015 we have continued to reflect on, review and develop our arrangements for setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards, including ongoing review of our assessment regulations, Boards of Examiners, external examining, and Code of Student Conduct. We believe that our approach is well embedded and robust, meets (and in some cases exceeds) sector-wide expectations, and assures the standards and quality of programmes.
- 4.5.2 We consider that a key strength of our approach to maintaining standards is our willingness to engage in ongoing reflection, review and development. This has facilitated much greater staff engagement with and ownership of the regulations and policies that underpin academic standards. This also ensures that the regulations remain fit-for-purpose and keep pace with curriculum development and innovations in learning and teaching.

4.6 Effectiveness of the institution's approach to self-evaluation, including the effective use of data to inform decision-making.

- 4.6.1 We are confident that our approach to self-reflection and evaluation is enabling us to develop and enhance our approach to learning and teaching and improve the student experience. Our evidence-based approach to self-reflection is supported by robust data, mature data management systems and effective management of information for both internal and external reporting purposes. We have provided greater support to staff and students to enable them to access and engage with the available data and make effective use of it for self-evaluation and decision-making. Our approach to self-evaluation occurs at all levels of the University from institution-wide reflection on data through the Senate Committees to Colleges and Schools. Schools are increasingly helping to shape the data they want to use in decision-making. Our quality monitoring and review processes have become increasingly data driven as we use data as the starting point for conversations to review remits. Our participation in the current Enhancement Theme has greatly benefited our use of data, in particular how we share data with students and empower them in their roles as Student Representatives.
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Chapter Five covers our collaborative provisions. These are the local, national, and international partnerships that the University holds, which facilitate the delivery of courses and programmes. Because this chapter is all about collaboration, I selected a photograph of Old College at night, with cars and people zooming past. This photograph represents the natural development of the University over the many years of its existence – the easy collaboration between the old and the new. It reminds me how the University is constantly modernising and internationalising, creating connections with people and organisations all over the world. Despite all this rapid development, the University's core commitment to excellence – much like Old College – stay steady.

Vesna Curlic

PhD Intern

5. Collaborative provision

5.1 Key features of the institution's strategic approach (to include collaborative activity, online and distance learning where delivered with others and work-based learning)

Overview

5.1.1 The Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2015 report confirmed: "The University has an effective approach to managing its collaborative activity" (paragraph 145). Since the last ELIR we have continued to strengthen our approach to managing our academic collaborations. This includes strengthening the diligence required on collaborations prior to institutional sign off, and reviewing and increasing the support and guidance required by colleagues involved in setting up and maintaining collaborations.

5.1.2 The following seven guiding principles underpin our strategic approach to collaborations with international partners. Our partnerships must:

1. **Align with the University's strategic vision, purpose and values**

Our partnerships should seek to address tomorrow's greatest challenges through a shared values-led approach to teaching, research and innovation. Our partnerships should help us to deliver impact across our Strategy 2030 focus areas; People; Research; Teaching and Learning; and Social and Civic Responsibility.

2. **Be founded on principles of mutuality and reciprocity**

We seek to develop and build local skills and capacity and contribute to the broader social, cultural and economic well-being of communities whilst strengthening and developing higher education capacity to promote global equity. Through our partnerships we seek new opportunities for our students and staff to experience and benefit from international mobility, exchange and collaboration.

3. **Meet the University's quality assurance standards and comply with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education (Advice and Guidance: Partnerships)**

As a degree awarding body, we are responsible for the academic standards of our credit bearing activity and the student experience from admission to completion. This applies regardless of where the student is studying or how the learning is delivered. The University has a responsibility to deliver a comparable quality of student learning experience and equivalent student support arrangements for all partnership arrangements.

4. **Contribute positively to the University's national and international standing and reputation**

The University of Edinburgh is one of the world's top universities. We are globally recognised for our research, development and innovation and are consistently ranked in the world top 50,²⁵⁰ and placed 20th in the 2020 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings. We expect our partner institutions and organisations, and our collaborative activities to support and enhance the international recognition of the University.

5. Demonstrate financial viability and sustainability

Our partnerships will be with a diverse range of partner organisations and will work towards diverse goals. However, all partnerships should be based on an underpinning consideration of the sustainability of the proposal in terms of resource, costs, benefits and measurement of progress and impact. It is expected that business planning is embedded within all partnership development.

6. Demonstrate compliance with regulatory contexts (such as legal, financial, ethical, political, security risks, health and safety) and with all aspects of proportionate due diligence and risk management

We are responsible for ensuring that our partnership arrangements meet UK regulatory requirements. Legally binding written agreements, where required, which set out the rights and obligations of both parties, should be finalised and signed before the partnership activity starts. As part of the partnership development process, the University should carry out appropriate legal, financial, and academic due diligence checks to assess potential risk and enable informed decision making and risk mitigation.

7. Continuous monitoring and review of all partnerships

To support the maintenance of standards, to assure the consistency of learning opportunities, enhance the quality of the learning experience for students by continually reviewing provision, identifying areas for improvement and aspects of good practice and impact.

5.1.3 In addition to international partners, we are committed to maintaining and developing partnerships with Scottish and other UK Higher Education institutions. In particular, we are seeking to introduce further flexibility in our degree pathways through closer working with strategic partner providers, and through direct entry to second year for undergraduates, and we continue to work in partnership with our regional colleges to offer learner pathways from college to university.

5.1.4 Our current collaborative activity comprises:

- Jointly awarded degrees (both taught and research);
 - Dual degree awards where students receive a separate award from both partner institutions (for example, Zhejiang University, China);
 - Two-plus-two (2+2) and two-plus-three (2+3) undergraduate degrees (where students spend the first two/three years at a partner institution);
 - Various partnerships for the purpose of offering students opportunities to study abroad and/or study at a global partner institution on a virtual basis;
 - A single accreditation agreement with Scotland's Rural College (SRUC);
 - Collaboration with edX for the delivery of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and MicroMasters;
 - Several cohort-based Doctoral Training Programmes with UK universities;
 - The UNA Europa Alliance of eight European universities with plans to develop joint programmes;
 - Third Party Credit rating arrangements with the British Association of Snowsport Instructors (BASi) and The Edinburgh Steiner School, both through Moray House School of Education and Sport.
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- 5.1.5 The International Ventures Group, chaired by the Vice-Principal International, exists to ensure that international projects and partnerships at scale are appropriately assessed and professional support and guidance are provided for staff involved in delivering these. The International Ventures Group regularly reviews the strategic portfolio of international partnership activity across the University and reports twice each year on the portfolio to the University Executive. These projects are subject to ongoing due diligence and review to appropriately manage legal, reputational, educational, security and financial risks. All of the University's partnerships take full consideration and account of ethical, legal, safety and political considerations.
- 5.1.6 The Global Partnerships team at Edinburgh Global is the University's international partnerships hub. It strategically leads on the creation and delivery of new partnerships. A network of International Deans and regional teams also support partnership and engagement with key regions across the world.
- 5.1.7 We maintain a database of all the University's formal collaborative arrangements leading to the award of a University of Edinburgh degree. This list of collaborations is not publicly available, but is available to staff and stakeholders as required, and is provided in the Advance Information Set (AIS). At September 2020, we had collaborative agreements leading to a joint University of Edinburgh qualification with 56 international institutions, and six UK institutions. These figures include arrangements with institutions where students complete one or two years of a programme and articulate onto a programme at the University of Edinburgh. Edinburgh Global maintains details of partnerships and activities which are not necessarily credit-bearing.

Joint and dual degrees

- 5.1.8 The number of students on jointly awarded taught programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level has increased since the last ELIR. In 2015, we reported 482 students on joint programmes, and in 2019/20 we had 715 students, as well as around 200 students articulating onto degree programmes at the University from other institutions. These programmes have been developed jointly with partners from both within the UK and overseas.
- 5.1.9 Our joint and dual PhD offering has also increased since the last ELIR, with partnership arrangements with universities from across the world. The number of students on joint or dual PhD programmes has increased since the last ELIR. In the 2015 ELIR, we reported 44 students on a joint PhD programme. In 2019/20, we had 53 students on joint/dual PhD programmes both within the UK and with partners across the world.
- 5.1.10 Our membership of the prestigious Universitas 21 (U21) Alliance of international universities has enabled a framework for joint PhD arrangements with network members. Specific PhD programmes have been developed with a host of domestic and international partner universities.
- 5.1.11 In an effort to continue to play a strong role in European research and innovation collaborations (post-Brexit), we have created stronger partnerships with six strategic European partners. With KU Leuven we will be awarding joint PhDs. We are funding joint PhD Studentships with the Universities of Leiden, Copenhagen and Helsinki, and with University College Dublin and University
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of Amsterdam we have established a joint fund for research collaboration. The relationships formed with our partners will ensure that the connections we have fostered over the years continue, regardless of the political and economic backdrop.

Articulation arrangements

5.1.12 We have a range of partnerships which facilitate entry into the third year of an undergraduate programme at the University, and we have seen an increase in the number of these partnerships since ELIR 2015. The “2+2” or “2+3” partnership model arrangements allow students to complete two years of a programme at their home institutions, then transfer to the University of Edinburgh to complete the next two or three years of their programme, leading to either an undergraduate or masters award. Arrangements such as these tend to be through the College of Science and Engineering (CSE), although partnerships offering similar articulation arrangements also exist within the School of Veterinary Medicine, and Edinburgh College of Art.

Zhejiang University-University of Edinburgh Institute

- 5.1.13 Since the last ELIR, we have established a strategic joint International Institute with Zhejiang University, through the Deanery of Biomedical Sciences, Edinburgh Medical School, in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM). The International Institute is located in Haining, Zhejiang Province, China.
- 5.1.14 The Zhejiang University-University of Edinburgh Institute is a collaboration in the fields of biomedical sciences and biomedical informatics. The Institute brings together researchers and teaching staff from both universities to translate biomedical research into technologies that improve healthcare. The Institute offers dual degree programmes taught in English at both undergraduate and postgraduate research level. All the teaching is delivered in China and Edinburgh staff spend blocks of time there delivering classes. We have established a four-year dual Integrative Biomedical Sciences PhD and two four-year undergraduate degrees: one in Biomedical Informatics and one in Integrative Biomedical Sciences. Undergraduate students are eligible for two degrees: Bachelor of Science (Hons) from the University of Edinburgh and a Bachelor of Science from Zhejiang University.
- 5.1.15 In order to facilitate this major strategic development, we developed a formal policy on dual, double, and multiple awards and a framework to facilitate their operation.²⁵¹
- 5.1.16 The partnership is China’s first joint undergraduate programme in biomedical sciences and is open to all international and Chinese students. The newly built international campus has excellent learning and teaching facilities as well as student-centred support structures. In addition, it has extensive sports and leisure opportunities, exceptional accommodation and catering services.
- 5.1.17 In 2017/18, a site visit of the Zhejiang University International Campus, led by the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, took place as part of the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) of the Deanery of Biomedical Sciences, focusing on the Dual Award BSc Integrative Biomedical Sciences (iBMS) programme with Zhejiang University, which was then in its second year of operation.²⁵²

251 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/dualawards.pdf

252 www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review/reports/2017-18

UNA Europa Alliance

- 5.1.18 To reinforce a strategic commitment to European engagement and collaboration, in 2019 we joined the UNA Europa alliance, a group of eight leading research-intensive universities seeking to reshape the higher education landscape across Europe.²⁵³ The group is at the early stages of developing and designing long-term cooperation and integration between its members, focusing on innovative teaching and research and boosting international opportunities for students and staff across the network. Mobility is a key focus and increased collaboration across teaching and research programmes with students being able to combine studies in eight nations: Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Spain and the UK (Edinburgh). European partners comprise: KU Leuven; Helsingin Yliopisto; Universidad Complutense de Madrid; Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Freie Universität Berlin and Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie.
- 5.1.19 The goal of the UNA Europa alliance is to create the European university of the future, where students can attend integrated courses in different countries and languages, and university staff and academics will be able to move freely among multiple locations, according to their professional needs. The partner institutions of this network are ready to collaborate with national, European and international organisations on the ideas, policies and choices that will shape the future of education and research.
- 5.1.20 The ultimate objective is for the innovative combined formats of education and mobility developed by UNA Europa to become a point of reference for universities all over the world. We are proud to be one of only three UK universities to be successfully participating in this first phase of this major European Commission flagship programme. We do not currently have any joint awards operational as part of this alliance.

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)

- 5.1.21 We have had a long-standing collaboration with SRUC through CSE and we currently accredit a BSc degree programme delivered by SRUC, and jointly deliver with SRUC taught and research degrees. The majority of SRUC's taught programmes are accredited by the University of Glasgow.

Cohort-based doctoral training

- 5.1.22 CMVM has increased its cohort-based doctoral training programmes as a result of a number of successful funding bids to Research Councils, charities and other funding bodies, building on existing programmes and adding a number of further programmes to this portfolio. The College now hosts an MRC-funded Doctoral Training Programme in Precision Medicine and four Wellcome Trust four-year PhD programmes (in Translational Neuroscience; Tissue Repair; One Health Models of Disease: Science, Ethics and Society; and Health Data Science). It also hosts the Wellcome Trust-funded Edinburgh Clinical Academic Track (ECAT) and the Cancer Research UK Train and Retain Academic Cancer Clinicians (TRACC) clinical PhD programmes.

253 www.una-europa.eu/

- 5.1.23 The CMVM PhD cohort-based studentships include a number of different models of study, with variations in duration (three year, one-plus-three year, three and a half year or four year), inclusion of taught courses (integrated PhDs), courses designed for Medical Students (MB-PhD). In addition, we have a growing number of partnerships for PhDs; for example with the University of Glasgow (Precision Medicine, Train and Retain Academic Cancer Clinicians (TRACC), One Health and we are developing a number of partnership arrangements with European Partners (for example Leiden).
- 5.1.24 The programmes and centres typically have their own management committees and advisory boards to review their ongoing progress; however, no new governance structures were created within the College. The students are all part of the Deanery in which they are based and, therefore, follow the same processes, training and review as other postgraduate research students. Additionally, existing quality assurance processes have been utilised, with extraordinary meetings of the College Board of Studies held to deal with new programme approval and set-up once funding decisions were made known. This ensured that these programmes were considered collectively with, and subject to, the same scrutiny and rigour as any other new degree programme.
- 5.1.25 CSE hosts 10 Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs), two Wellcome Trust four-year PhD programmes and three Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs), as well as partnering on a further 10 CDTs involving nine other universities across the UK. The CDTs and DTPs are funded by four of the seven UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Research Councils, with the majority funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).
- 5.1.26 The programmes and centres typically have their own management committees and advisory boards to review their ongoing progress; however, no new governance structures were created within the College. The students are all part of their School's Graduate School and therefore follow the same processes, training and review as other postgraduate research students. Additionally, existing quality assurance processes have been utilised, with extraordinary meetings of the College Curriculum and Approval Board held to deal with new programme approval and set-up once funding decisions were made known. This ensured that these programmes were considered collectively with and subject to the same scrutiny and rigour as any other new degree programme.
- 5.1.27 In recognising the importance of growing and strengthening our activity in this area, the College recently created and recruited to the post of Doctoral Cohort Coordinator to act as a single point of contact for coordinating and improving support provided to the Schools to enhance the delivery of new and existing cohort-based doctoral training programmes. In addition to this, College-facilitated forum meetings have been introduced for both the administrators and directors of these programmes to share best practice and to identify opportunities to share training and other resources, which is having a positive impact. This has also improved links with colleagues in the other two Colleges.
- 5.1.28 The College intends to build on the success in delivering this type of research training programme through strengthening our ability to provide a coordinated and targeted response to future funding calls that align with University priorities and through enhancing the resources and support available to Schools to run such programmes successfully. The recent success of the Wellcome Trust Four Year PhD programme bids is an example of the positive impact this can have. Additionally, it is
-

hoped that the developing Doctoral College (see Chapter 2) will provide a vehicle through which the cross-School and cross-College elements of these programmes can be better facilitated.

- 5.1.29 The College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) hosts the Directorate of the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS), which is the UK's largest facilitator of funding, training and support for doctoral students in social science. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), and draws on the expertise of 16 Scottish universities, including Edinburgh, to support the research training of postgraduates through its Doctoral Training Partnership. Some discipline-specific and interdisciplinary pathways and workshops are provided by staff in CAHSS. For example, in 2020 a workshop on how to create open research data derived from PhD projects and how to curate a digital archive, and access to a suite of postgraduate research courses run in the School of Social and Political Science (for example, Core Quantitative Data Analysis; Applied Demography).
- 5.1.30 A large proportion of SGSSS-funded students every year are enrolled on University of Edinburgh doctoral programmes, as are students funded by the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH), which hosts the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Doctoral Training Partnership for Scotland and is funded by the AHRC and the SFC. SGSAH, based at the University of Glasgow, draws on the expertise of University of Edinburgh staff as supervisors and as the providers of general, specialist, and interdisciplinary training opportunities for both SGSAH-funded and unfunded students.
- 5.1.31 Like CSE, CAHSS benchmarks its research training programme, and other doctoral provision, against the two DTPs, and enhances the resources and support available to Schools to run training programmes successfully, for example by hosting and delivering the supervisor training for supervisors of SGSAH-funded students.

Third Party Credit Rating

- 5.1.32 We provide Third Party Credit Rating where there is alignment with University and subject area strategies, and a clear rationale can be provided for the relationship. We have entered into Third Party Credit Rating arrangements with two organisations to date: the British Association of Snowsport Instructors (BASI) and The Edinburgh Steiner School. Both of these arrangements are through Moray House School of Education and Sport. Our policy²⁵⁴ for Third Party Credit Rating ensures we provide third parties with a credit rating service that meets Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) expectations.
- 5.1.33 Credit rating is conducted by subject specialists via a credit rating panel, and recommended outcomes are taken to the relevant School Board of Studies for approval. The School maintains oversight of the third party's quality assurance and assessment processes on an annual basis. Specific requirements are detailed in a Memorandum of Agreement for each credit rating arrangement. Institutional oversight is maintained by the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance chairing the third party credit rating panel and the School reporting the activity to Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

Work-based learning

- 5.1.34 The Work-based and Placement Learning Policy²⁵⁵ was developed to ensure that academic standards are maintained, support roles and responsibilities are clear, procedures are in place for monitoring arrangements, and the University's legal responsibilities are met. The Policy was updated in April 2020 alongside the mapping to the UK Quality Code work-based learning advice and guidance theme.²⁵⁶
- 5.1.35 The development of Graduate Apprenticeships is an emerging area of activity within CSE, and two programmes have been developed, the BSc Data Science, in collaboration with the University of St Andrews, and the MSc in Cyber Security (although this programme will not run in 2020/21). Both are linked to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) along with a number of industrial partners.
- 5.1.36 During 2020/21, the manager of our Employability Consultancy was seconded 0.5 full time equivalent (FTE) from the Careers Service to SDS as a Subject Matter Expert on Graduate Attributes in higher education. The secondment supported SDS's work introducing meta skills to Graduate Apprenticeships and the apprenticeship system more broadly, consulting across the university sector to build a landscape and needs analysis, and to ensure the sector's experience, voice and perspectives inform this emerging area of work.

Online and distance learning where delivered with others

- 5.1.37 Our online degree programmes are largely delivered and awarded solely by University of Edinburgh. The main exceptions to this are (non-credit bearing) MOOCs, where we partner with global MOOC platforms for the purpose of making our provision more accessible globally, and credit bearing MicroMasters delivered in partnership with edX.
- 5.1.38 The University of Edinburgh MicroMasters programme is an online postgraduate-level qualification representing 30 SCQF credits, or one sixth of a full masters degree. Learners who complete a MicroMasters programme can use the 30 credits as recognition of prior learning when applying for a related masters degree at the University of Edinburgh. We are developing a range of MicroMasters programmes, but currently offer only one programme: Predictive Analytics Using Python.²⁵⁷

Associated institutions

- 5.1.39 We recognise that partnership working offers value to the University, staff and students. Not all of our partnerships are with academic institutions and we have a number of arrangements with Associated Institutions across the UK. An Associated Institution (AI) is a non-degree-awarding, non-commercial organisation with which the University collaborates to promote teaching and research and services to the community by working together on activities and projects where there is an alignment of strategy and objectives.
- 5.1.40 Collaboration with an AI includes a variety of activities such as sharing information, experience and skills, joint research and publication, providing teaching or research supervision for a University of Edinburgh degree programme. We are working to ensure that all AIs have a current Memorandum of Understanding with the University, prioritising areas where the Associated Institution

255 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/work-based_placement_learning.pdf

256 www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20200423-web.pdf (Papers F and G)

257 www.edx.org/micromasters/edinburghx-predictive-analytics-using-python

provides teaching or research supervision. Schools are responsible for keeping Memoranda of Understanding under review and most are in place with a few due for renewal. However, work in this area has been paused due to impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on School staff.

- 5.1.41 To become an AI of the University, the organisation must meet agreed financial and academic criteria. An AI does not award degrees, so any degree programmes on which the AI and the University collaborate (for example, by supervising research students) are University of Edinburgh awards and are subject to the same scrutiny as all other academic programmes.²⁵⁸
- 5.1.42 As of 31 July 2020, we have 23 AIs, the full list is provided in the Advance Information Set.

5.2 Effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative provision including arrangements for securing academic standards and enhancing the student learning experience.

Overview

- 5.2.1 The ELIR 2015 Report confirmed: “The University has a clear focus on academic standards and academic governance, which is set out in its collaborative provision policies.” (paragraph 135)
- 5.2.2 We believe we have an effective approach to managing collaborative provision that is proportional to the amount of such activity and the risk. Given the importance of collaborative provision to academic standards and reputation, we periodically review our approach. In 2013, prior to the last ELIR, we conducted an Internal Audit of our collaborative activity, including teaching and research. In 2014, work commenced on a project to address the recommendations arising from the Internal Audit report, which noted that there were opportunities to clarify roles and responsibilities in Schools, Colleges and University departments in the approval of collaborative programmes. All academic and professional services staff have access to an internal wiki, which provides guidance for staff, templates and points of contact for assistance when developing academic collaborations.
- 5.2.3 In 2017, we conducted a further Internal Audit, building on the 2013 Audit which assessed the effectiveness of the arrangements with regard to academic collaborations, and examined the progress which had been made since the 2013 Audit. The audit report noted examples of good practice, including the guidance in the wiki which has helped ensure effective scrutiny of proposed academic collaborations. It was noted that this has significantly enhanced the control processes for proposed academic collaborations, and the development of templates for Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Agreement.
- 5.2.4 The key findings from the 2017 Audit requiring action included enhancing the liaison between Schools, Colleges and professional services staff regarding academic collaboration. Approval arrangements for academic collaborations as detailed in the University’s Delegated Authority Schedule (DAS) were identified as requiring clarity, which was reviewed by University Court. Currently, under the DAS, the Principal and/or Vice-Principal International must approve any international collaboration or Memorandum of Understanding at institutional level and any international student education and learning agreements and arrangements.

- 5.2.5 We have robust guidance and processes in place which Schools and Colleges follow independently. Professional services' colleagues signpost staff to the guidance and support available in the College Office to ensure that due processes are adhered to. Our guidance is clear on who the relevant contacts are for each College and within support services staff. Periodically we review our guidance on academic collaborative arrangements, and this information is made available to all staff
- 5.2.6 The day-to-day administration of managing academic collaborations is delegated to individual Schools. Where appropriate, an exercise to remind colleagues that individual agreements are due to expire is conducted. We maintain a database of our academic collaborations, and this is available to University of Edinburgh staff. Electronic and hard copies of signed documentation are currently stored in a central location with access to these documents limited.
- 5.2.7 We have a Global Partnerships team located within Edinburgh Global. In addition to providing the strategic framework and platform for the development and delivery of global partnerships and collaborations, the team coordinates support and provides advice and guidance to academics and professional service colleagues across the University.
- 5.2.8 The Global Partnerships team is in active discussions with key stakeholders, including Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP), Academic Services and Legal Service, to identify areas for potential development and enhancement. Key areas under discussion include;
- Moving towards one central list/repository of partnership agreements;
 - A refreshed central partnerships webpage resource with information and signposting on partnership development support;
 - Creation of a Community of Practice to facilitate a network of practitioners and good practice across the University;
 - Refreshed standard legal templates;
 - Review of academic collaborative process;
 - Refreshed Due Diligence framework for partnership development;
 - Guidance on review and monitoring of partnerships;
 - Stakeholder map outlining role/authority of teams, groups and committees in partnership area;
 - Recommendations for the development, approval and oversight of 'complex'/'major' collaborative arrangements.

International ventures group

- 5.2.8 The International Ventures Group provides a coordinated and consistent approach to complex international partnerships. Regional teams within Edinburgh Global work alongside the Global Partnerships team to assist with advice, guidance and due diligence around international partnerships and collaboration.
- 5.2.9 We recognise and fully support the significant opportunities that are to be achieved through international collaborations and partnerships. However, there can also be challenges in operating overseas, especially in relation to navigating different regulatory/fiscal requirements and cultural
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expectations that may present material reputational and/or financial and/or security risks to the University.

- 5.2.10 The aim of the International Ventures Group is to engender a more joined-up and consistent approach to informing and delivering complex international partnership activity, and strategy at an institutional level. It also aims to provide a source of timely guidance, advice and support (from a range of professional support functions and drawn from experience of other projects) to those staff involved in developing and managing complex international partnerships and ventures.
- 5.2.11 The remit of the Group is not intended to cover all international collaborations or activity, which are covered by existing policy, and is specifically focused on those projects that will ultimately require Court approval. The remit of the Group extends to all University projects or collaborations internationally of this nature including those involving University subsidiaries or companies in which the University has an ownership stake (subject always to the terms of the associated legal agreements).

Arrangements for securing academic standards

- 5.2.12 Our approach to securing academic standards is set out in our collaborative provision policies and framework, which includes a clear focus on academic standards and academic governance.
- 5.2.13 Our policies and procedures for the development, management, and review of partnership arrangements are aligned with the UK Quality Code. Through the policies and processes we have in place, we ensure that the appropriate levels of scrutiny and review are given to collaborative proposals in order to secure academic standards, with approval routes and management proportionate to the assessed risk of individual collaborative proposals. Collaborative partnerships are assessed in terms of their strategic fit as well as associated risk, with the majority of our collaborations being low in terms of risk. New collaborative proposals are considered on a case-by-case basis, with consultation between relevant stakeholders.
- 5.2.14 Currently policy, guidance and advice on setting up collaborative programmes is provided and supported by four areas:
- Edinburgh Global – where a dedicated team, under the direction of the Vice-Principal International, provide advice and support to Schools setting up partnerships, and maintaining links with partner institutions;
 - GaSP – who work closely with Colleges, offering advice on collaborative provision;
 - Academic Services – which provides guidance on academic standards and quality assurance and enhancement; and
 - Legal Services – providing legal guidance regarding the drafting of Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements.
- 5.2.15 Operational procedures have been established with regards to the management and support of collaborative programmes, in line with quality processes identified in Chapter 4. Boards of Studies are responsible for curriculum discussion and approval within a School and ensure that
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any new programme proposals are academically appropriate and supported by evidence and documentation. Clearly defined and effective processes are in place in relation to the management, monitoring and review of our programmes of study, as outlined in Chapter 4. The University retains responsibility for the quality and standards of any award made in its name and ensures that awards meet and align with the expectations of the UK Quality Code.

- 5.2.16 As far as possible, our standard regulations and degree structures are followed in collaborative awards. Where this is not possible, new regulations are agreed for the specific collaborative awards. An example of this is the dual award with Zhejiang University which necessitated specific degree regulations.
- 5.2.17 Collaborative programmes are subject to annual monitoring and review in the same manner as the University's other programmes and as far as possible are included in standard IPRs alongside other Edinburgh provision, unless a separate review is necessary, as was the case for the Zhejiang review and site visit in 2017/18.

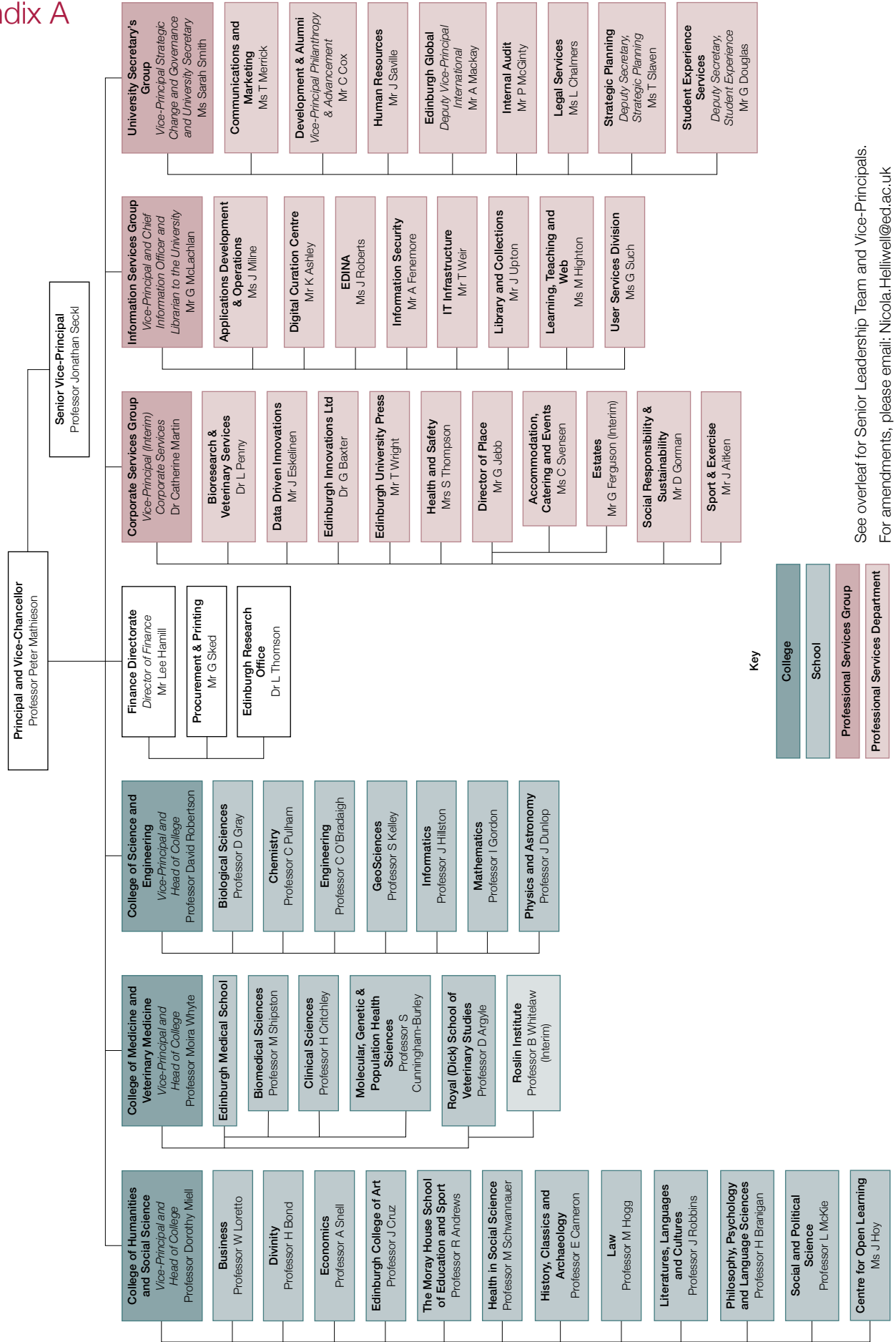
Enhancing the student learning experience on collaboration programmes

- 5.2.18 The ELIR 2015 Report confirmed that the University “had a strong commitment to internationalising the student experience, and has developed effective approaches to: study abroad, online distance learning and collaboration with international partners. It has a proactive approach to the development of joint PhD programmes, and has implemented robust arrangements for their approval.” (paragraph 146)
- 5.2.19 Consistent with the UK Quality Code, a guiding principle is that students on collaborative programmes should have a learning experience equivalent to that which students receive on wholly Edinburgh delivered programmes. This ensures that the standards of any of the awards involving learning opportunities delivered by partners are equivalent to the standards set for other awards that the University confers at the same level.
- 5.2.20 At an early stage in the partnership approval process checks ensure that mechanisms are in place to support the student learning experience. For example, partner institutions are expected to have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that students are provided with opportunities to comment on their experience and engage in decision making through student representation. For the Zhejiang collaboration this involved establishing a student representative system that mirrored the representation system in Edinburgh, since student representation systems are not common in Chinese universities.
- 5.2.21 Arrangements are monitored through site visits, where relevant, and through IPRs, which make recommendations for enhancement as appropriate. The effectiveness of partner arrangements is reviewed as part of the routine quality review processes.
- 5.2.22 Within existing support frameworks all students on collaborative programmes at Edinburgh are given access to pastoral and academic support including students on study exchange, work placement and online distance students who have a Personal Tutor (PT). Additionally, Exchange Coordinators and Work Placement Managers provide a useful point of contact both within the University and may also connect with the partner institution or host organisation.
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- 5.2.23 We also have exchange agreements in place for student mobility and have further improved the Code of Practice on Go Abroad since the last ELIR in 2015. The Code sets out responsibilities and expectations of all roles, including staff and students, to ensure appropriate support for students who are studying at a partner university. The newly established Study and Work Away (SWAY) service is providing further improvements in this area.
- 5.2.24 Student feedback on the academic experience is routinely collected from all students, including those on collaborative programmes and from exchange students returning from their study exchange activity, with supporting data analysis reviewed through embedded quality assurance processes. Students' experiences of studying abroad are gathered and reported on through the International Office's annual quality assurance report which is reviewed by a sub-committee of SQAC at an annual meeting.
- 5.2.25 SRUC is responsible for its own academic standards and quality assurance and enhancement processes, including gathering and responding to feedback from students on their experience of the programmes accredited by the University. Any issues arising from these processes are reported in the annual report to the University at the Accreditation Board. The Accreditation Board also reviews SRUC's progress in meeting the ELIR recommendations. We are currently reviewing the existing Memorandum of Agreement and have recently changed the reporting and arrangements so that the Accreditation Committee now operates at University-level rather than as a committee of CSE as previously. We take an active role in the periodic review of the accredited programme; in 2019/20 an academic colleague from the School of GeoSciences was a panel member on the internal periodic review of SRUCs environmental degrees, including the degree that we accredit.
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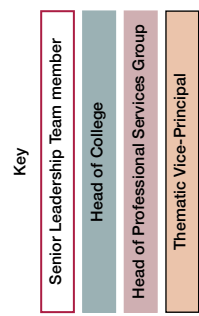
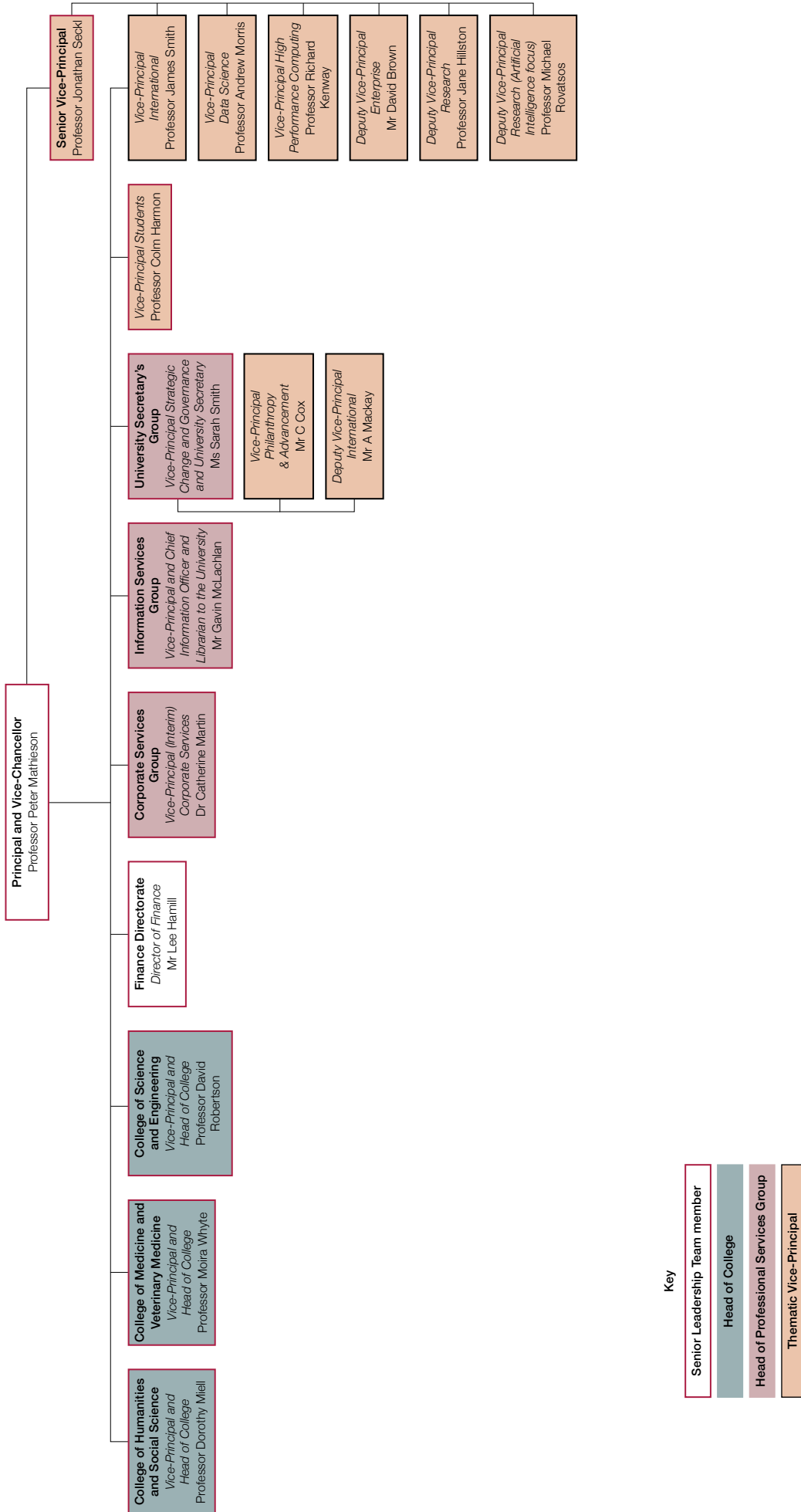
Appendix A

The University of Edinburgh Organisational Structure as at October 2020



See overleaf for Senior Leadership Team and Vice-Principals.
For amendments, please email: Nicola.Helliwell@ed.ac.uk

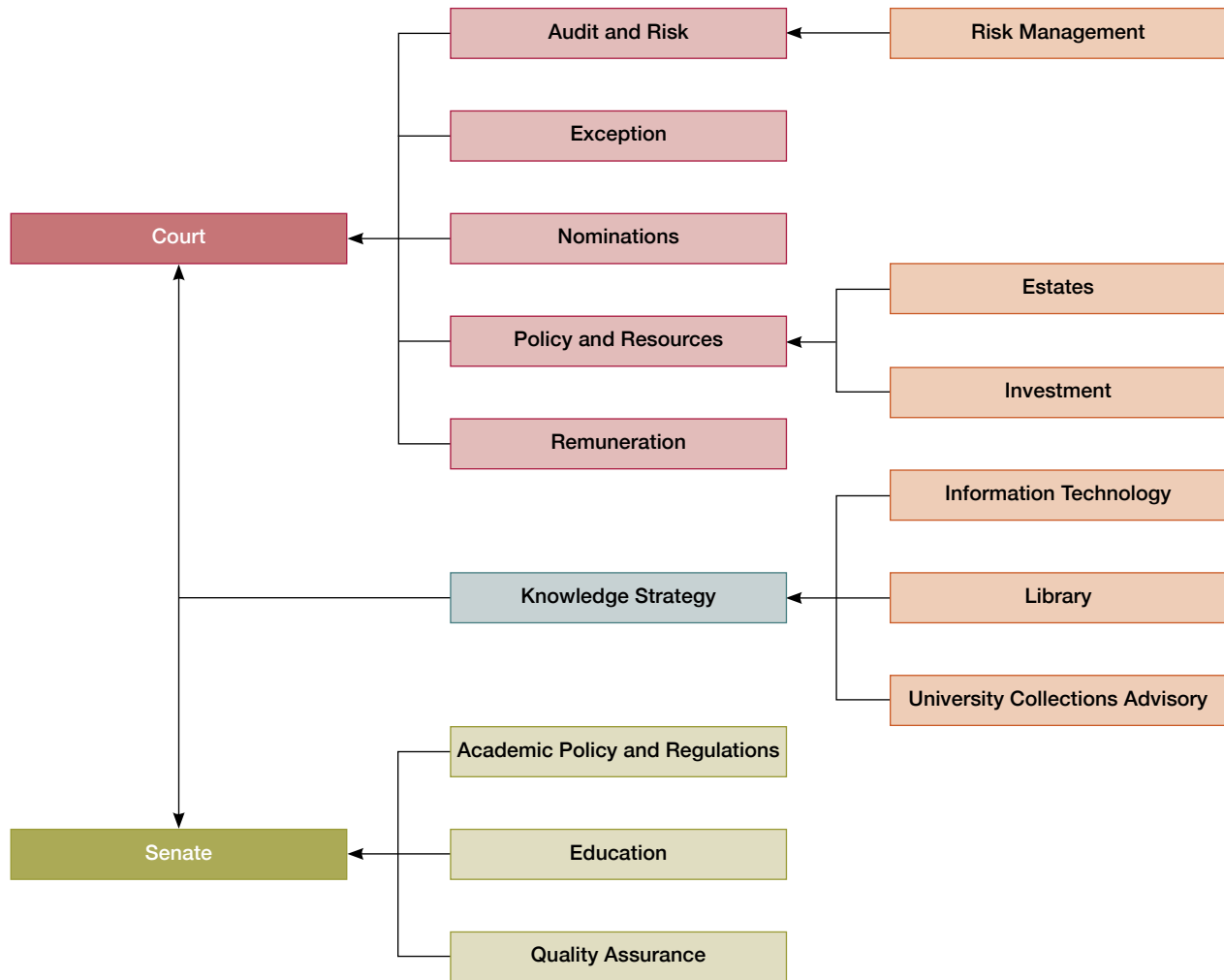
University Senior Leadership Team and Vice-Principal Reporting Structure as at October 2020



For amendments, please email: Nicola.Helliwell@ed.ac.uk

Appendix B

University Court and Senate Committee Structure as at October 2020



— Reports to

Glossary

AFHEA	Associate Fellowship of Advance HE	ELDeR	Edinburgh Learning Design Roadmap
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council	ELE	English Language Education
AI	Associated Institution	ELIR	Enhancement-led Institutional Review
APRC	Academic Policy Regulations Committee	ENGAGE	Edinburgh Network: Growing Approaches to Genuine Engagement
ART	Adaptation and Renewal Team	EngD	Engineering Doctorate
Athena SWAN	Athena (Scientific Women's Academic Network)	EPSRC	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
AV	Audio visual	ERP	Enterprise resource planning
AY	Academic Year	ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
BALEAP	British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes	ESS	Enhancing Student Support
BAME	Black Asian and Minority Ethnic	EU	European Union
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic	EUSA	Edinburgh University Students' Association
CAHSS	College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences	FHEA	Advance HE Fellowship
CAMO	College Academic Misconduct Officer	FTE	Full time equivalent
CDT	Centre of Doctoral Training	GaSP	Governance and Strategic Planning
CEP	Clinical Educator Programme	GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
CEQ	Course Enhancement Questionnaire	HCA	History, Classics and Archaeology
CHP	Complaints Handling Procedure	HEA	Higher Education Academy
CMG	Central Management Group	HEI	Higher Education Institute
CMVM	College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
COL	Centre for Open Learning	HNC	Higher National Certificate
Covid-19	Coronavirus	HND	Higher National Diploma
CSE	College of Science and Engineering	HN Study	Higher National Study
CSG	Corporate Services Group	HR	Human Resources
CSPC	Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee	IAD	Institute for Academic Development
DAS	Delegated Authority Schedule	IC	Intercultural Competence
DDI	Data Driven Innovation	ILCC	Institute for Language, Cognition and Communication
DRPS	Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study	IntroAP	Introduction to Academic Practice
DTC	Doctoral Training Centres	IPR	Internal Periodic Review
DTPs	Doctoral Training Partnerships	ISG	Information Services Group
E&D	Equality and Diversity	KPIs	Key performance indicators
ECA	Edinburgh College of Art	LEAF	Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback
ECAT	Edinburgh Clinical Academic Track	LEAPS	Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools
ED&I	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	LERU	League of European Research Universities
EdHelp	Student Support Hub	LTC	Senate Learning and Teaching Committee
EdTA	Edinburgh Teaching Award	LTPG	Learning and Teaching Policy Group
EERS	External Examiners Reporting System	LTS	Learning & Teaching Strategy
EFI	Edinburgh Futures Institute		

MBChB	Batchelor of Medicine and Surgery	SFC	Scottish Funding Council
MCF	mid-course feedback	SGSAH	Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses	SGSSS	Scottish Graduate School of Social Science
MTP	Making Transitions Personal	SHEEC	Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee
MScR	Masters by Research	SIMD20	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
NICE	Network for Intercultural Competence to facilitate Entrepreneurship	SLICC	Student-led Individually Created Course
NSS	National Student Survey	SMEs	small or medium-sized enterprises
NUS	National Union of Students	SPA	Student Partnership Agreement
PCAM	Programme and Course Approval and Management	sparqs	student partnerships in quality Scotland
PCIM	Programme and Course Information Management	SPQS	School and Programme Quality System
PgCAP	Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice	SPSO	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
PGR	postgraduate research	SQAC	Senate Quality Assurance Committee
PGR HEAR	Postgraduate Research Higher Education Achievement Report	SRA	Student Recruitment and Admissions
PPLS	Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences	SRS	Social Responsibility and Sustainability
PPR	Postgraduate Programme Review	SRUC	Scotland's Rural College
PRES	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey	SSLC	Student -Staff Liaison Committee
PSRBs	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies	SSSAR	Student Support Services Annual Review
PT	Personal Tutor	SSTN	Student Support Team Network
PTAS	Principal's Teaching Award Scheme	StEAP	Student Experience Action Plan
PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education	STN	Senior Tutor Network
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds	SWAY	Study and Work Away
RA	Reflective Analysis	UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admission Service
REC	Senate Researcher Experience Committee	TLG	Theme Leaders Group
RUK	Rest of UK	TRACC	Train and Retain Academic Cancer Clinicians
SA&S	Student Administration and Support	TPR	Teaching Programme Review
SAMO	School Academic Misconduct Officer	U21	Universitas 21
School of PPLS	School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences	UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admission Service
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework	UK	United Kingdom
SCS	Student Counselling Service	UKPSF	UK Professional Standards Framework
SDS (Chapter 5)	Student Disability Service	UKRI	UK Research and Innovation
SDS	Skills Development Scotland	USA	United States of America
SEN	Student Experience Network	USG	University Secretary's Group
SEP	Service Excellence Programme	VLE	Virtual learning environment
SET	Science, Engineering & Technology	WP	Widening Participation
		WTE	Whole Time Equivalent

Further information

www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/elir/elir-2020

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It can also be made available in alternative formats on request.

Email: Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk

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