The University of Edinburgh
External Quality Review Action Plan

In response to the 2021 Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) 4 and the 2023 Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) the University of Edinburgh is implementing the following action plan[1]:

Theme	ELIR 4 Recommendation	QESR Recommendation	Action Taken	Lead	Status
Strategy, growth and planning	**Oversight and planning for growth of student numbers** "… implement an approach to facilitate institutional oversight and the effective planning and monitoring of student numbers, in order to ensure that appropriate and timely actions can be taken where increases in student numbers impact on arrangements for learning and teaching and student support."	QESR deemed "sufficient progress" has been made and there were no further recommendations.	We continue to operate according to our previously reported approach in relation to the size and shape of our student population, focused on growth only where there is a clear strategic rational, and delivered through our Strategic Recruitment Enrolment Plan.	Deputy Secretary, Governance and Strategic Planning	**Completed**

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[1] The action plan is co-ordinated and monitored by the External Quality Review Oversight Group, a sub-group of Senate Education Committee (SEC) and Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

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	Strategic approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching "… in view of the current transition between the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2017 and future plans, the University should provide institutional oversight, and ensure clarity for staff, on the strategic direction underpinning current learning and teaching developments."	**Learning and Teaching Strategy** "The University should expedite the final drafting, approval and implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy to help staff and students understand how major strategic projects work together and provide clarity on the strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching"	Senate Education Committee (SEC) approved the development of a Learning and Teaching Strategy in 2023. Following a series of consultation and engagement events, a draft Strategy was endorsed at the May meeting of SEC. Plans for implementation and evaluation are being developed over Summer 2024. Subject to approval by SEC at its first meeting of the 2024/25 academic year, the Learning and Teaching Strategy will be communicated and implemented with immediate effect.	Vice Principal Students, Deputy Vice Principal Students	**Nearly completed** (On track for implementation at the start of AY 2024/25 when this will be confirmed as completed)
Change management	**Pace of change** "… develop an effective approach to the strategic leadership and management of change that will ensure more immediate and timely implementation of identified solutions in order to support staff and	**Pace of change** "The University should make progress on and accelerate its actions in response to the recommendations from the previous ELIR, ensuring effective and consistent implementation by all Schools, and monitor the	In developing an effective approach to strategic leadership and management of change, we undertook external benchmarking, sought internal feedback and reviewed lessons learned. We have established a University Initiatives Portfolio Board to lead on the governance of major change projects. The Board has oversight of	Jointly owned by VP Students, Deputy VP Students, Deputy Secretary Students, College Heads, College Deans	**Completed** (in terms of establishing an effective approach. Implementation of approach is ongoing).

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	enhance the student experience."	outcomes, in order to evidence significant progress within the next academic year."	initiatives that involve a significant change for a large number of staff and/or students, as well as visibility of significant investment projects (excluding capital expenditure). This approach to strategic change is ensuring a clear link between strategic projects and the delivery of Strategy 2030. Change management training is being rolled out to sponsors and board members of strategic change projects, including the Curriculum Transformation Board, and all members of the University Executive. The QESR Oversight Group is monitoring progress of all outstanding ELIR/QESR recommendations to ensure all recommendations are fully addressed. The Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Oversight Board (chaired jointly by the Provost and Vice Principal Students) has been	and Heads of School	

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			established to provide institutional oversight of agreed actions and deliverables aligned to identified interventions designed to enhance the student experience		
Monitoring consistency of implementation of strategy, policy and practice	**Oversight and implementation of policy and practice** "… recognising the decentralised nature of university structures, the institution should establish a systematic approach to enable effective institutional oversight and evaluation of the implementation of policy and practice. As part of this, the University is asked to increase the range and use of institutionally determined baseline requirements to ensure consistency and accountability. The institution should ensure	QESR deemed "sufficient progress" had been made in recognition of the increased reporting frameworks in relation to the University's development projects.	No additional action was requested by the QESR team. Our ongoing action is focused on ensuring continued effective implementation and evaluation of policy and practice through the Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Oversight Board (established during AY 2023/24), see above.	Jointly owned by VP Students, Deputy VP Students, Deputy Secretary Students, Heads of College	**Completed**

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	that mechanisms are put in place to adequately evaluate the consistency of implementation of strategic objectives across the institution and act when Schools deviate from institutional expectations."				
	Training for postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach "… ensure effective implementation of its policy for the training and support of postgraduates who teach and ensure all PGR students are trained before engaging in teaching activities."	**Training for postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach** "The University should take prompt action, within the current academic year, to consistently implement its updated policy and to ensure that training for PGRs who teach is required at the University and School level, and that this action is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that all PGRs are fully supported in undertaking their teaching duties."	Throughout AY 2023/24, we have taken the following action: 1. Reinforced the expectation in the policy of mandatory induction and training of PGRs prior to teaching. 2. Reviewed training provided by Schools. 3. Required Schools to report on the training provided to PGR tutors by Schools and engagement in that training via the AY 2023/24 annual quality assurance monitoring and reporting process. 4. Senate Education Committee (SEC) approved several actions in support of improving the ongoing implementation of the policy that included: the	University PGR Lead	**Completed** (in AY 2023/24, we have reviewed Schools' training provision and reinforced the mandatory induction and training expectation; gathered baseline data; established appropriate governance for ongoing oversight of the policy)

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			development of guidance around training and recruitment of PGR tutors (developed by IAD); activating a tutor and demonstrator network to share practice; and implementing structural changes to the governance of tutors and demonstrators. 5. A University level PGR Lead has been appointed to improve governance. 6. A subcommittee of Staff Experience Committee will oversee ongoing implementation of the policy and monitor engagement with training. 7. Specific action has also been taken in each of the three Colleges to survey and review the training provided to ensure ongoing relevancy. 8. The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) is taking action to (a) improve regular data returns to Schools to report and record engagement with IAD training for tutors and demonstrators; (b) change the modality of some training to a		**Ongoing** (implementation of new governance arrangements from AY 2024/24 to ensure ongoing effective implementation and monitoring of the policy)

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			self-paced online course to increase opportunity for engagement. Schools will have the ability to include this training in onboarding checklists for new tutors and demonstrators via the HR system where completion also will be recorded. The online introductory provision will continue to be supplemented by additional specialist IAD workshops for tutors and demonstrators, as well as broader IAD provision open to all teaching staff, as well as subject-specific training provided by Schools.		
Student support	**Student Support model** "…make significant progress in implementing plans to ensure an effective approach to offering personal student support. In doing so, and recognising the extended period of time that the University has been developing its approach to	QESR deemed "sufficient progress" had been made	The QESR team made no further recommendations, but a suggestion that "there would be benefit in strengthening communication with students regarding role responsibilities of staff and opportunities for students to provide feedback on the new model" in the interim period while the University is developing an evaluation model to provide ongoing quality assurance	Deputy Secretary Students, Colleges, Schools.	**Completed**

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	personal tutoring, it is asked to reflect on whether the current timescale for implementation of the institutional Student Support and Personal Tutor Plan in 2023-24, is sufficiently ambitious. The University should make demonstrable progress within the next academic year in respect of ensuring parity of experience for students and effective signposting to support services and delivery of an agreed and consistent baseline level of provision. As part of its approach, the University is asked to develop an effective mechanism to monitor consistency of implementation and allow it to evaluate the impact of these changes on the student experience."		for the new Student Support Model (SSM) arrangements.

Throughout AY 2023/24, there has been continued emphasis on monitoring the impact of the SSM on student experience and ensuring consistent ongoing implementation. This has included enhanced communication to students and analysis of student and staff feedback. The national annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2024 results reveal increased awareness of and satisfaction with student support - 4% increase on 2023 on the question – "My School/Deanery has provided advice and guidance on how to access support where needed"

The Project Board has continued to meet monthly throughout AY 2023/24 to ensure appropriate monitoring of such a critical programme dedicated to enhancing student experience. | | |

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			An evaluation approach has been developed underpinned by a logic model. A full evaluation is scheduled for AY 2024/25. The approach integrates existing quality assurance processes with key indicators which have been identified to assess the effectiveness of the model at institutional level. Student voice will continue to be a key component of ongoing evaluation. An example of the evidenced success of the model is that the review team of the Internal Periodic Review of Biomedical Sciences (UG and PGT provision) commended the Student Advisors for the positive impact they have had on the student experience, and their overall commitment to making the transition to the new student support model as smooth as possible.		
Assessment and feedback	**Assessment and feedback** "… over an extended period of time, the	**Assessment and feedback** "The University should take immediate action, within	Throughout AY 2023/24, significant action has been taken to address this recommendation. The Student	Vice Principal Students, Deputy Vice	**Nearly completed** (immediate and

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	University has considered a broad evidence-base which has highlighted concerns about assessment and feedback and this remains an area of challenge for the institution. The University is asked to make demonstrable progress, within the next academic year, in prioritising the development of a holistic and strategic approach to the design and management of assessment and feedback. The University should also progress with proposals for the establishment of a common marking scheme to ensure comparability of student assessment processes across Schools."	the current academic year, to ensure that the new Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities (developed in response to ELIR 4) are fully implemented in all Schools, that feedback turn-round times and quality are monitored effectively, and that prompt action is taken to address any shortcomings."	Experience Delivery and Monitoring Oversight Board, (detailed above), has (a) reviewed and monitored College actions for the implementation of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities, initially focused on the timely return of feedback to students, and (b) developed a framework for gathering and monitoring feedback turnaround times, including the development of data dashboards, as a means of understanding current and ongoing performance. We are using the data to identify and celebrate good practice, understand challenges and to provide support where appropriate. We will continue to monitor turnaround times in AY 2024/25 via a standardised template. Colleges are progressing actions to implement all the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities.	Principal Students, Deputy Secretary Students, Heads of College, Deans for Education, Heads of School	significant action has been taken to establish an appropriate approach to ensure effective and consistent implementation and monitor feedback turnaround times. Ongoing monitoring will continue throughout AY 24/25 to embed and drive improvement)

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			The National Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2024 results show an improvement in assessment and feedback (8.6% increase in returning prompt feedback to 66.8%; 5.1% increase on supervisors providing feedback on dissertation/project to 83.5%). We are in the process of developing a framework for an ongoing programme of feedback quality audits, building on a successful model developed in one of our Schools. This will aim to identify exemplars of good practice in feedback and support ongoing improvement.		
Developing and promoting teaching excellence	**Recognition and support for academic staff development** "… take action to remove barriers which exist that prevent some academic staff from fully engaging with its existing suite of development opportunities	QESR deemed "sufficient progress" had been made. .	The IAD continues to provide a wide range of staff development activities in support of learning and teaching, including, but not limited to: an annual learning and teaching conference; the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and recognition of fellowships at all four categories of the Professional Standards Framework; a wide range of workshops covering different	Institute for Academic Development (IAD)	**Completed**

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	for the professionalisation of teaching."		topics to support enhancement of academic practice; secondments, enabling staff to focus time on specific enhancement projects; the University's Teaching Matters blog; and a range of networks supporting colleagues in specific roles. The QESR team commended the work of the IAD in establishing a network of secondees and associates, embedded within the schools to support pedagogic developments, as a feature of good practice.		
	Promotion of academic staff based on teaching "… progress with work to improve the recognition of teaching excellence across all aspects of the University. In particular, the University should ensure that recognition for teaching is embedded in annual review processes, that clarity of roles and	**Promotion of academic staff based on teaching** "The University should clearly and accurately record data on promotion routes based on teaching excellence so it can effectively evidence the implementation of its goal to achieve parity between teaching and research and	In AY 2022/23, enhancements to HR policy, forms and guidance were implemented which, amongst other things, put greater emphasis on contribution to teaching and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) considerations. These included the forms and guidance for academic promotions, and the procedure for the appointment and operation of Established Chair selection committees, which reflects the	Head of HR, Provost, VP Students	**Completed** (in terms of establishing a mechanism to record data on promotion based on teaching excellence. The recognition of teaching excellence

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	titles is established, and that a clear progression pathway providing parity of recognition for education-focused academics is developed. In addition, the institution should ensure that it has the data available to be able to evidence and evaluate the progress made in all of these areas."	take action to ensure this aim is met."	University's commitment to parity of teaching alongside research. During AY 2023/24 we have put in place a mechanism for recording promotions based on teaching, not only for teaching-focused staff, but also for staff with a balanced portfolio. This should enable us to track the extent to which excellence in teaching and leadership in teaching is being recognised in promotions processes at all grades through to Grade 10. Data will be available from the 2023/24 promotion round. We are in the early stages of developing a framework, consistent with the University's Strategy 2030 and People Strategy, to define the principles that underpin individual policies and processes for key points in the academic staff journey (including recruitment, induction, development, promotion). This will seek to embed as core priorities appropriate recognition of, and		remains an ongoing priority)

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			support to develop, contributions to teaching and teaching excellence. These principles will inform the ongoing review and development of HR policies and procedures and guidance.		
Attainment gaps	**Attainment gap monitoring** "…consider how to address attainment gaps in student performance through the oversight, coordination and monitoring at an institutional level of school-level actions."	**Attainment gap monitoring** "The University should pay particular attention to sharing good practice and supporting staff in understanding the causes of attainment gaps and taking effective action."	We have taken several actions to support ongoing work to address awarding gaps. Throughout AY 2023/24, the University appointed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer (a secondee to the Curriculum Transformation Project) to coordinate work underway across the University to address awarding gaps. The initial focus has been on identifying a range of good practice exemplars and resources to be shared at events currently being planned. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) has established a new Student Data Monitoring Group to explore and recommend a systematic approach to monitoring	University Lead, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	**In progress** (On track for the end of AY 2024/25)

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			student data at university level, taking a student lifecycle perspective including: recruitment and admissions, retention and progression; and attainment. This builds on the work of the Progression and Attainment (ProAttain) Working Group in the College of Science and Engineering and will be implemented during AY 2024/25. The Institute for Academic Development has created an online toolkit. This includes guidance on universal design to help our staff anticipate our students' needs and improve the overall learning experience in an inclusive and accessible way that benefits all our students, and guidance on decolonisation in the curriculum, which includes nine recommendations for positive change to narrow the awarding gap and also to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for every student.		